



Integrated Community - Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac T?l? Landscape of Republic of Congo ? ICOBACPE /PELATEL

Part I: Project Information

Name of Parent Program

The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP)

GEF ID

10298

Project Type

FSP

Type of Trust Fund

GET

CBIT/NGI

CBIT

NGI

Project Title

Integrated Community - Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac T?l? Landscape of Republic of Congo ? ICOBACPE /PELATEL

Countries

Congo

Agency(ies)

UNEP

Other Executing Partner(s)

Ministry of Tourism and the Environment

Executing Partner Type

Government

GEF Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Taxonomy

Focal Areas, Forest, Congo, Climate Change, Climate Change Adaptation, Private sector, Biodiversity, Certification - International Standards, Mainstreaming, Tourism, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Terrestrial Protected Areas, Financial and Accounting, Natural Capital Assessment and Accounting, Payment for Ecosystem Services, Illegal Wildlife Trade, Species, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Community-Based Natural Resource Management, Income Generating Activities, Influencing models, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Demonstrate innovative approaches, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Deploy innovative financial instruments, Stakeholders, Private Sector, Financial intermediaries and market facilitators, Civil Society, Academia, Community Based Organization, Non-Governmental Organization, Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, Beneficiaries, Awareness Raising, Communications, Participation, Type of Engagement, Information Dissemination, Gender Equality, Gender results areas, Access and control over natural resources, Capacity Development, Gender Mainstreaming, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender-sensitive indicators, Women groups, Integrated Programs, Sustainable Commodity Production, Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration, Comprehensive Land Use Planning, Deforestation-free Sourcing, Commodity Supply Chains, High Conservation Value Forests, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Knowledge Generation, Learning, Theory of change, Indicators to measure change, Adaptive management, Targeted Research, Knowledge Exchange, Innovation, Biomes, Lakes, Tropical Rain Forests, Wetlands, Threatened Species, Wildlife for Sustainable Development, Community Based Natural Resource Mngt, Productive Seascapes, Productive Landscapes, Agriculture and agrobiodiversity, Forestry - Including HCVF and REDD+, Certification -National Standards, Land Degradation Neutrality, Land Productivity, Carbon stocks above or below ground, Land Cover and Land cover change, Sustainable Forest, Ecosystem Approach, Sustainable Livelihoods, Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Fire Management, Integrated and Cross-sectoral approach, Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands, Forest and Landscape Restoration, REDD - REDD+, National Adaptation Programme of Action, Least Developed Countries, Livelihoods, Climate Change Mitigation, Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use, Deforestation-free Sourcing, Sustainable Commodities Production, High Carbon Stocks Forests, Financial Screening Tools, Smallholder Farmers, Adaptive Management, Food Value Chains, Sustainable Food Systems, Integrated Landscapes, Smallholder Farming, Landscape Restoration, Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa, Resilience to climate and shocks, Land and Soil Health, Sustainable Production Systems, Diversified Farming, Agroecosystems, Small and Medium Enterprises, Integrated Land and Water Management, Multi-stakeholder Platforms, Gender Dimensions, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, SMEs, Non-Grant Pilot, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Partnership, Consultation, Education, Public Campaigns, Behavior change, Participation and leadership, Access to benefits and services, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Enabling Activities

Rio Markers

Climate Change Mitigation

Climate Change Mitigation 1

Climate Change Adaptation

Climate Change Adaptation 0

Submission Date

12/10/2020

Expected Implementation Start

6/1/2021

Expected Completion Date

7/31/2025

Duration

60In Months

Agency Fee(\$)

549,995.00

A. FOCAL/NON-FOCAL AREA ELEMENTS

| Objectives/Programs | Focal Area Outcomes | Trust Fund | GEF Amount(\$) | Co-Fin Amount(\$) |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| IP SFM Congo | Multifocal Area/IP CBSL | GET | 6,111,055.00 | 42,306,000.00 |
| Total Project Cost(\$) | | | 6,111,055.00 | 42,306,000.00 |

B. Project description summary

Project Objective

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

| Project Component | Financing Type | Expected Outcomes | Expected Outputs | Trust Fund | GEF Project Financing(\$) | Confirmed Co-Financing(\$) |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

| Project Component | Financing Type | Expected Outcomes | Expected Outputs | Trust Fund | GEF Project Financing(\$) | Confirmed Co-Financing(\$) |
|--|----------------------|--|--|------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Supporting development and implementation of LUPs for RoC Lac Tele landscape protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on ensuring and formalizing community involvement | Technical Assistance | <p>1.1. The government of the RoC adopts a national legal framework in support of local land tenure rights, community governance and management of forest and natural resources and supports local enforcement in the Lac Tele Landscape</p> <p><i>Indicators</i></p> <p>? Number of sectors with revised regulatory frameworks on community governance and management of forest and natural resources adopted by the government of the RoC.</p> <p>? Percent of participating stakeholders at all levels contributing credible data to feed the database to monitor the peatlands resources.</p> <p>? Percent of District</p> | <p>1.1.1. National administrative and political stakeholders supported to analyze national policy and legal framework for community engagement in peatlands and biodiversity management and submit recommendations for amendments to relevant political structures for adoption</p> <p>1.1.2. Government and local/district and regional hubs trained on the governance and management of participatory decision-making structures, including their formalization as registered entities and on community and transboundary engagements and conservation of peatlands, fighting Illegal Wildlife Trafficking, etc.</p> <p>1.1.3. Natural Capital</p> | GET | 2,100,000.00 | 6,186,805.00 |

| Project Component | Financing Type | Expected Outcomes | Expected Outputs | Trust Fund | GEF Project Financing(\$) | Confirmed Co-Financing(\$) |
|--|----------------|---|--|------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2. Community management of natural resources | Investment | <p>2.1. Local communities in the Lac T?l? Landscape adopt integrated participatory conservation models for the sustainable use and management of peatland ecosystems</p> <p><i>Indicators</i></p> <p>? Percent (%) of land users that undertake sustainable land management on peatlands in the project area.</p> <p>? Number of functioning community based structures to manage peatlands with women in decision making positions</p> | <p>2.1.1. Local community management structures and related bylaws allowing for sustainable management of hunting and fire, are established based on the successful experience of community-based fisheries regulations in the last 3 years</p> <p>2.1.2. Local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples trained to develop and implement environmental projects including the reforestation of gallery forests that are crucial for ecosystem services and fisheries production</p> <p>2.1.3. Action-based research and monitoring allowing for adaptive management by communities and the government (including research on threats to peatlands from a changing climate) are conducted, results</p> | GET | 500,000.00 | 12,068,391.00 |

| Project Component | Financing Type | Expected Outcomes | Expected Outputs | Trust Fund | GEF Project Financing(\$) | Confirmed Co-Financing(\$) |
|--|----------------|---|--|------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 3. Diversifying communities? income sources e.g. through promotion of ecotourism and certified cacao | Investment | <p>3.1. Local communities in the Lac Tele landscape implement alternative income generating activities to increase productivity and protect the environment</p> <p><i>Indicators</i></p> <p><i>? Number of small producer organizations undertaking sustainable nature-based income-generating activities</i></p> | <p>3.1.1. Institutional and technical support (leveraging expertise to develop tourism products and a business model, training community guides, working with departmental tourism actors in Impfondo and establishing basic infrastructures) are provided to communities to develop a foundation for community-based tourism enterprises, results documented and made available in the project site</p> <p>3.1.2. Sustainable income-generating activities and economic diversification such as certified cacao production, are promoted with focus on peatlands, Protected areas and wildlife conservation), results documented and made available in the project site</p> <p>3.1.3. Local</p> | GET | 2,400,000.00 | 14,569,393.00 |

| Project Component | Financing Type | Expected Outcomes | Expected Outputs | Trust Fund | GEF Project Financing(\$) | Confirmed Co-Financing(\$) |
|--|----------------|--|---|------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 4. Engaging the private sector in conservation | Investment | <p>4.1. Private sector adopts sustainable peatland management practices and enter into public-private-partnerships to contribute to the integrity of peatland ecosystems</p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p> <p>? Percent (%) of organic cocoa producers and ecotourism operators in the project area meeting the requirements of internationally recognized green Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS).</p> <p>? Percent (%) of companies operating concessions in the Tele Lac Landscape signing commitments to adhere more strictly to prevailing legal and institutional frameworks.</p> | <p>4.1.1. Training and technical assistance provided to existing concessions on resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem</p> <p>4.1.2. Study to assess legislative, administrative and operational modalities for the allocation of concessions completed, recommendations made and submitted to key decision makers for adoption</p> <p>4.1.3. A model of private sector involvement in sustainable peatland management and solutions to IWT in the project area developed and pilot tested, results documented and made available through the project site</p> | GET | 520,055.00 | 7,890,389.00 |

| Project Component | Financing Type | Expected Outcomes | Expected Outputs | Trust Fund | GEF Project Financing(\$) | Confirmed Co-Financing(\$) |
|--|----------------------|--|---|------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 5. Communication, Knowledge Management and Project Monitoring and Evaluation | Technical Assistance | <p>5.1. Stakeholders at the local, national and regional level adopt an agreed communication strategy to mainstream principles of peatland adaptive management and IWT.</p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p> <p>? Percent (%) of key actors in the Lac Tele Landscape contributing with knowledge products to the project Portal.</p> <p>? Percent (%) of participants in project trainings that state in the training evaluation form that the information provided by the project through the different channels reached them and is appropriate.</p> | <p>5.1.1. Communication and knowledge products are generated by the project uploaded in a dedicated Portal on the project host website and disseminated at local, national and regional levels through different channels, including the Congo IP to create awareness for community based peatlands and natural resources conservation</p> <p>5.1.2. RoC key actors including those involved in peatlands and natural resources management are actively engaged and exposed to experiences from peers in other locations.</p> | GET | 300,000.00 | 574,199.00 |

| Project Component | Financing Type | Expected Outcomes | Expected Outputs | Trust Fund | GEF Project Financing(\$) | Confirmed Co-Financing(\$) |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| | | | | Sub Total (\$) | 5,820,055.00 | 41,289,177.00 |
| Project Management Cost (PMC) | | | | | | |
| | | GET | 291,000.00 | | 1,016,823.00 | |
| | | Sub Total(\$) | 291,000.00 | | 1,016,823.00 | |
| | | Total Project Cost(\$) | 6,111,055.00 | | 42,306,000.00 | |

C. Sources of Co-financing for the Project by name and by type

| Sources of Co-financing | Name of Co-financier | Type of Co-financing | Investment Mobilized | Amount(\$) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Recipient Country Government | Ministry of Environment and Tourism | Grant | Recurrent expenditures | 22,706,000.00 |
| GEF Agency | UNEP | In-kind | Recurrent expenditures | 50,000.00 |
| Other | WCS | Grant | Investment mobilized | 2,400,000.00 |
| Other | WWF | Grant | Investment mobilized | 1,600,000.00 |
| Other | UNDP Rep of Congo | Grant | Investment mobilized | 550,000.00 |
| Civil Society Organization | REPALEAC Rep of Congo | | Investment mobilized | 15,000,000.00 |
| Total Co-Financing(\$) | | | | 42,306,000.00 |

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

Costs that need to be budgeted for were considered as investment mobilized.

D. Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

| Agency | Trust Fund | Country | Focal Area | Programming of Funds | Amount(\$) | Fee(\$) |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| UNEP | GET | Congo | Multi Focal Area | IP SFM Congo Set-Aside | 6,111,055 | 549,995 |
| Total Grant Resources(\$) | | | | | 6,111,055.00 | 549,995.00 |

E. Non Grant Instrument

NON-GRANT INSTRUMENT at CEO Endorsement

Includes Non grant instruments? **No**

Includes reflow to GEF? **No**

F. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

PPG Required

PPG Amount (\$)

137,615

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

12,385

| Agency | Trust Fund | Country | Focal Area | Programmin g of Funds | Amount(\$) | Fee(\$) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| UNEP | GET | Congo | Biodiversity | BD STAR Allocation | 51,401 | 4,626 |
| UNEP | GET | Congo | Land Degradation | LD STAR Allocation | 20,144 | 1,813 |
| UNEP | GET | Congo | Climate Change | CC STAR Allocation | 20,198 | 1,818 |
| UNEP | GET | Congo | Multi Focal Area | IP SFM Congo Set-Aside | 45,872 | 4,128 |
| Total Project Costs(\$) | | | | | 137,615.00 | 12,385.00 |

Core Indicators

Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use

| Ha (Expected at PIF) | Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Ha (Achieved at MTR) | Ha (Achieved at TE) |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 0.00 | 866,160.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

| Ha (Expected at PIF) | Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Total Ha (Achieved at MTR) | Total Ha (Achieved at TE) |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

| Name of the Protected Area | WDP A ID | IUCN Category | Total Ha (Expected at PIF) | Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Total Ha (Achieved at MTR) | Total Ha (Achieved at TE) |
|----------------------------|----------|---------------|----------------------------|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|
|----------------------------|----------|---------------|----------------------------|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|

Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

| Ha (Expected at PIF) | Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Total Ha (Achieved at MTR) | Total Ha (Achieved at TE) |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 0.00 | 866,160.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

| Name of the Protected Area | WDP A ID | IUCN Category | Ha (Expected at PIF) | Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Total Ha (Achieved at MTR) | Total Ha (Achieved at TE) | METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement) | METT score (Achieved at MTR) | METT score (Achieved at TE) |
|----------------------------|----------|---------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|----------------------------|----------|---------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

| Name of the Protected Area | WDP ID | IUCN Category | Ha (Expected at PIF) | Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Total Ha (Achieved at MTR) | Total Ha (Achieved at TE) | METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement) | METT score (Achieved at MTR) | METT score (Achieved at TE) |
|---|--------|---|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Akula National Park Lac T?I? Community Reserve | 125689 | SelectH abitat/Species Management Area | | 438,960.00 | | | 51.00 | | |
| Akula National Park Ntoko u-Pikounda National Park | 125689 | SelectW ilderness Area | | 427,200.00 | | | | | |

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

| Ha (Expected at PIF) | Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Ha (Achieved at MTR) | Ha (Achieved at TE) |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 0.00 | 351957.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

| Ha (Expected at PIF) | Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Ha (Achieved at MTR) | Ha (Achieved at TE) |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | 248,057.00 | | |

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes that meets national or international third party certification that incorporates biodiversity considerations (hectares)

| Ha (Expected at PIF) | Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Ha (Achieved at MTR) | Ha (Achieved at TE) |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | 103,900.00 | | |

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

| Ha (Expected at PIF) | Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Ha (Achieved at MTR) | Ha (Achieved at TE) |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | | | |

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) loss avoided

| Ha (Expected at PIF) | Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Ha (Achieved at MTR) | Ha (Achieved at TE) |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | | | |

Documents (Please upload document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

| Title | Submitted |
|-------|-----------|
| | |

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

| Total Target Benefit | (At PIF) | (At CEO Endorsement) | (Achieved at MTR) | (Achieved at TE) |
|--|----------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (direct) | 0 | 52422220 | 0 | 0 |
| Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (indirect) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Indicator 6.1 Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided in the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) sector

| Total Target Benefit | (At PIF) | (At CEO Endorsement) | (Achieved at MTR) | (Achieved at TE) |
|--|----------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (direct) | | 52,422,220 | | |
| Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (indirect) | | | | |
| Anticipated start year of accounting | | | | |
| Duration of accounting | | 20 | | |

Indicator 6.2 Emissions Avoided Outside AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) Sector

| Total Target Benefit | (At PIF) | (At CEO Endorsement) | (Achieved at MTR) | (Achieved at TE) |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | | | | |

| Total Target Benefit | (At PIF) | (At CEO Endorsement) | (Achieved at MTR) | (Achieved at TE) |
|--|----------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (direct) | | | | |
| Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (indirect) | | | | |
| Anticipated start year of accounting | | | | |
| Duration of accounting | | | | |

Indicator 6.3 Energy Saved (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

| Total Target Benefit | Energy (MJ) (At PIF) | Energy (MJ) (At CEO Endorsement) | Energy (MJ) (Achieved at MTR) | Energy (MJ) (Achieved at TE) |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Target Energy Saved (MJ) | | | | |

Indicator 6.4 Increase in Installed Renewable Energy Capacity per Technology (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

| Technology | Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF) | Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR) | Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE) |
|------------|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | | | |

Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment

| | Number (Expected at PIF) | Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement) | Number (Achieved at MTR) | Number (Achieved at TE) |
|--------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Female | | 14,250 | | |
| Male | | 6,250 | | |
| Total | 0 | 20500 | 0 | 0 |

Part II. Project Justification

1a. Project Description

DESCRIBE ANY CHANGES IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE PROJECT DESIGN WITH THE ORIGINAL PIF

| PIF Stage | Modification and Rational | Reference |
|---|---|--|
| At the PIF stage, it was estimated that emissions that will be avoided as a result of implementing this project will be 20,675,796 tCO ₂ eq. A note was indicated that these measures will be better defined during the PPG. | Based on calculations done during the PPG, this project will lead to 52, 422, 220 tCO ₂ eq avoided emissions in terms of lifetime direct as well as consequential GHG emissions avoided over a time horizon of 20 years. | Found at different sections of the document where the project's impact on GHG emissions is mentioned |

1A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION. ELABORATE ON:

1) The global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description).

In 2017, the Cuvette Centrale peatlands in the central Congo Basin were mapped, revealing that they cover 145,500 sq km ? an area larger than England[1]. This study revealed that carbon has been building up in the Congo basin's peat for nearly 11,000 years. It places the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Republic of Congo (RoC) as the second and third most important countries in the world for tropical peat carbon stocks. The peat covers only 4% of the whole Congo basin, but stores the same amount of carbon below ground as that stored above ground in the trees covering the other 96%[2]. The swamps could lock in 30bn tons of carbon that was previously not known to exist, making the region one of the most carbon-rich ecosystems on Earth. The Congo basin peatlands store the equivalent of nearly 30% of the world's tropical peatland carbon - that's about 20 years of the fossil fuel emissions of the United States of America[3].

Peat is an organic wetland soil made from part-decomposed plant debris, more commonly found in cool environments, such as northern Russia, Europe and Canada. Healthy peatlands act as carbon sinks, removing carbon from the atmosphere through plant growth. Further decomposition of the peat is prevented by its waterlogged environment, locking up carbon[4].

Year-round waterlogging is needed for peat to form in the tropics. If peatlands dry out, either through changes in land use such as drainage for agriculture or reduced rainfall, further decomposition resumes, releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. In the tropical peatlands of the Congo Basin (including those of the project area) contributing man-made factors to the potential drying up of these peatlands could include forest fires, deforestation and future potential for drainage for agricultural plantations, particularly for palm oil, as is happening in Indonesia. The peat can be vulnerable to the effects of climate change ? increased evaporation due to rising temperatures or reduced rainfall could cause it to dry out and begin to release its carbon to the atmosphere. The discovery of these tropical peatlands could have a huge impact on the climate if released, and hence have serious implications for conservation policies and practices of the DRC and the Republic of Congo[5]. With so many of the world's tropical peatlands under threat from land development and the need to reduce carbon emissions to zero over the coming decades, it is essential that the Congo basin peatlands remain intact[6]. The maintenance and protection of the peatlands of the Congo Basin, through initiatives such as those of the current project, alongside protecting our forests, could be central Africa's great contribution to the global climate change problem. This project will contribute to 52, 422, 220 tCO₂eq avoided emissions in terms of lifetime direct as well as consequential GHG emissions avoided over a time horizon of 20 years.

Root causes

Urban population growth and demand for environmental resources: While the population in the immediate vicinity of the Lac Tele region has not grown much, urban population growth outside of the project area is one of the major underlying factors for land use and land cover changes in many parts of Congo. The majority of the population in the Lac Tele Landscape for example is local people including some indigenous groups ? specifically the Pygmies (see more on indigenous peoples of Congo in Supplement 1). This population growth in neighbouring urban areas has fuelled increased demand for land (for farming, habitation, etc.), together with increased in forest-based resources (timber, thatch, bushmeat, etc.)[7]. A vast majority of the local population continues to rely on the forest and other environmental resources to support their livelihoods through very basic and meagre means[8]. The main livelihood of the people is mostly from farming and fishing. A vast majority of the population are still dependent on the forest for food, medicine, housing, and wood for boat construction[9].

Unsustainable levels of urban demand for wild meat from peatland areas threatens their ecological integrity: Bush meat hunting is widespread in the Republic of Congo. Although forest dwelling peoples have relied and continue to rely on animal protein as part of their diet, commercial trade of wildlife species takes a significant toll on wildlife populations and overall ecological integrity of North Congo rainforest ecosystems[10]. The most commonly hunted species in North Congo forests are small ungulates (duikers, a type of antelope), monkeys, and rodents (porcupines), usually trapped with wire and snares. However, new hunters with guns increasingly target large species such as forest elephants and apes leading to rapid population declines[11]. The overall extraction of bush-meat is very high, due to the high market demand from Congo's big cities[12]. The levels of awareness on the impact of bushmeat consumption on biodiversity, ecosystem health and the provision of ecosystem services is low among local populations and even some decision-makers.

Insufficient community ownership of wildlife and other biological resources and low involvement in conservation. The Congo traditional governance era on biological resources (up to the middle of 20th century) used to set for informal community based ownership rights on forest and wildlife resources for each local community known and accepted by all communities. But last few decades vast majority of the forest in Congo has been allocated as logging concessions or as strictly protected areas. Thus, today 74% of all Congo forests are under logging concessions (often managed

by foreign logging companies), 20.5% - covered by Protected Areas, and 0% - formally allocated to local communities [13]. As a result of this change of ownership, started an abandon the local rules and regulations and consequently led to wide spread illegal logging, poaching, and slash and burn agriculture. Vast majority of protected areas in the Republic of Congo were established without taking into account the customary rights to land or the historical, cultural or socio-economic realities that have shaped these areas and ecosystems over millennia of habitation and use by indigenous forest peoples.

Lack of robust enabling framework (policies and legislation) for IWT control. There is a National IWT Strategy to consider wildlife crime as a serious national threat in the country, with clear goals, objectives, and plans to fight poaching and illegal wildlife trade is missing in Congo. This strategy suffers from a number of changes vis-?-vis fighting these changes in the ac Tee Landscape, including: (i) The remoteness of the region which limits the ease with which the national enforcement mechanisms on IWT can be implemented. (ii) Some crucial changes are necessary in the national legislation to provide a robust legal framework for effective prosecution of poachers and IW traders (currently no more than 5% of arrested poachers and traders are prosecuted in the country). (iii) Prosecution of illegal activities on landscape resources (including IWT) is weak and easily coopted by corrupt practices.

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

Threats

Threats to sustainable peatland management, enhanced protection and conservation of protected areas, as well as elimination of IWT include the following:

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

Logging (forest exploitation): Commercial logging, both legal and illegal, in the Congo Basin is selective, only harvesting a limited number of high-value timber species. In most areas, however, this exploitation is generally not done in an ecologically sustainable way. During the preparation of this

project, it was established that there are currently six major forest concessions operating in the Lac Tele Landscape. Such logging is also generally not socially equitable, in terms of benefits accrued to local communities or national governments. An added impact of commercial logging is that it opens up the forests for hunting and agriculture, tends to bring in large populations of workers and job seekers that place demands on the local resource base, and facilitates unsustainable bushmeat trade by providing access and markets (see "Forest concessions and Protected areas on the outskirts of the Lac Tele Landscape" in Outcome 4.1).

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

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

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

Barriers

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

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

A lack of policy level and field-level coordination among key government institutions has meant interventions related to the sustainable management of some natural resources (including peatlands, forests, biodiversity, and others) to be inefficient and sporadic [14]. Some crucial changes are necessary in the national legislation to provide a robust legal framework for effective prosecution of poachers and illegal wildlife traders (currently no more than 5% of arrested poachers and traders are prosecuted in the country). Successful conservation of biodiversity in the RoC's protected areas needs increased level

of punishment for illegal activities on the one hand and much more wide involvement of local communities in the park management and CBNRM on the other hand (see Supplement 1 for a more detailed look at these issues). It also requires a revision of what activities are classed as illegal, as you may have people 'punished' for activities which are economically necessary and irreplaceable. These regulations need to be supported by relevant legislative changes of protected area regulations.

Barrier 2: Limited community participation in the management of natural resources: A lack of community participation in the management of wildlife and other biological resources is a common phenomenon in this part of the country[15]. In Congo, traditional governance of biological resources (up to the middle of 20th century) used to allow for informal community-based ownership rights of forest and wildlife resources for each local community, with these rights known and accepted by other communities. But during the last few half-century, the vast majority of the forest in Congo has been allocated as logging concessions, as strictly protected areas or has moved under state ownership. Thus, today 74% of all RoC forests are under logging concessions (often managed by foreign logging companies), 20.5% are covered by Protected Areas, and none are formally allocated to local communities[16] and [17]. As a result of this change of ownership from communities to the state and corporations, communities started to abandon the local rules and regulations and consequently led to wide spread illegal logging, and poaching. Vast majority of protected areas in the RoC were established without taking into account the customary rights to land or the historical, cultural or socio-economic realities that have shaped these areas and ecosystems over millennia of habitation and use by indigenous forest peoples. Several protected areas are reported to aggravate conflictual situations related to forest resource use, particularly between Bantu farmers and indigenous hunter-gatherers, as restrictions to access create further pressure on the surrounding areas. Many communities also report abuse and human rights violations, particularly by the park rangers. Indigenous communities feel marginalized by the protected and conserved areas[18] (also see more on indigenous peoples of Congo and their relationships to natural resources in Supplement 1). They have limited rights over the lands they depend on and have virtually no means of political representation, voice, or participation in the NRM. Their subsistence way of living and using forest resources has contributed to forest protection (and possibly even enrichment) for centuries, but now it is increasingly difficult to maintain this livelihood[19]. However, local people can become owners of private forests if they are located on land owned by them, or owners of private forest plantations if these forests were planted on land owned by the State (cf. art. 33 34, 35 16-2000 of 20 November 2000 on the Forest Code). In addition, Article 31 of Law No. 10-2004 of 26 March 2004 laying down the general principles applicable to federal land and plan proclaims the recognition of customary land rights for people occupying the land for 30 years. Unfortunately, this recognition is subjected to timely and costly fiscal and technical conditions. These conditions can rarely be met by local communities or members of indigenous people without capacity building or external support.

Barrier 3: Limited alternative and income generating and livelihood choices: According to Wright et al. (2016), livelihood-focused interventions can be grouped into 3 broad and overlapping categories: alternatives, compensation, and incentives. Alternatives partially or completely substitute for the benefits (monetary and nonmonetary) that would normally be obtained from the exploitation of particular natural resources[20]. The assumption often underlying this approach is that pressure on natural resources is primarily caused by poverty and a lack of options. There are 3 categories of alternatives[21]: those that provide an alternative resource to the one being exploited, for example promoting imported animal protein as an alternative to locally hunted bushmeat; those that provide an alternative occupation so as to reduce the need to exploit natural resources for income, for example promoting butterfly farming as a substitute for expanding agriculture; and those that encourage an alternative method of exploiting a resource that has a lower impact than the original method, for example promoting fuel-efficient stoves to reduce the need to fell trees for firewood or changing marketing strategy to increase incomes from the sale of wild coffee, thus reducing the need to convert more forest into farmland. Limited alternative and income generating activities restrict the ability of local communities to adopt sustainable livelihoods and practices, and diversify their sources of livelihood support in the Lac Tele Landscape. Local communities (including indigenous peoples) mainly rely on natural resources harvested from the forests around them to meet the needs of their households. These include among many others, forest trees for fuelwood and subsistence and in some cases commerce, non-timber forest products for food, medicine, and fiber, as well as agricultural and

pastoral land for subsistence and to generate income. Increased population pressure and poor management of the existing natural resource base in some cases is contributing to overexploitation of these resources and environmental degradation.

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

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

Barrier 5: Inadequate information on peatland management - There is inadequate information available on sustainable peatland management methods and practices. This is due in part to limited information sharing by the respective government agencies, departments and ministries related to peatlands and their resources, as well as between countries in the sub-region. An illustration of how the lack of information is leading to poor land use management is in the case of the use of peatlands for agriculture or forestry. One of the prominent natural characteristics of peatlands is their high water table. This naturally occurring high water table is an important factor in their formation and stability. Over-drainage of peatlands can have detrimental effects on the ecosystem. Agricultural and forestry practices may involve poor water management practices in peatlands, which significantly lower the water table and lead to the drying and breakdown of peat soils, i.e. peat subsidence. This in turn affects the floral and faunal biodiversity. In severe cases of over-drainage, subsidence of up to 5 m have been recorded over a period of 40 years[22]. Such negative impacts tend to be exacerbated during the dry season or periods of drought.

2) The baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects

Baseline scenario

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

Peatlands (including peat swamp forests) possess a distinctive ecosystem and therefore possess unique biodiversity of flora and fauna that are specially adapted to this type of environment[23]. Peat swamp forest vegetation of the Lac Tele Landscape has been recognized as an important reservoir of plant diversity. Deforestation, IWT, and other forms of unsustainable land-use are contributing to the deterioration and endangerment of some niche-specific species. This has the potential of disrupting ecological systems and destabilizing ecosystems of the Lac Tele Landscape in particular, and of the Congo Basin in General. The rich biodiversity available in peatlands is also a source of food, medicine and livelihood for local communities. The depletion or loss of these biodiversity values will have negative impacts on local communities dependent on peatland resources and contribute to poverty. Without GEF funding, initiatives towards preventing and abating these losses in biodiversity-rich landscapes and endemic flora and fauna will not be possible.

Globally, peatlands are considered to be significant stores of carbon containing 20-35% of the carbon on the terrestrial biosphere/soils. While they only cover 3% of the land surface they store 30% of the carbon[24]. Tropical peatlands store ~150 - 250 t C ha⁻¹ above-ground and ~250 - >10,000 t C ha⁻¹ below-ground, compared to the average of about 270 t C/ha⁻¹ on average in the world's forest ecosystems. However, this storage function is now being reversed due to human intervention. Activities related to land conversion and fire incidences release this stored carbon to the atmosphere, and in significant amounts it can have detrimental implications on climate change. Drainage releases 50-200 tC/ha/yr and fire may release 500-1000 t C/ha/fire. GEF funding will support sustainable management to ensure that these peatlands of the Lac Tele Landscape and those of the Congo Basin by extension continue to serve the RoC and global community as the extensive carbon sink they have been.

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

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

Associated baseline projects

Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) (53 million Euros): Launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in September 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa, the Congo Basin Partnership is an association of 36 governmental and non-governmental organizations (regrouping 175 representatives of COMIFAC member governments, donor governments, international institutions, international NGOs, regional and national institutions). The CBFP provides support to improve the management and conservation of the six forest-rich countries of the Congo Basin by creating synergies and attracting substantial external funding to support innovative approaches to address existing threats and challenges. The partnership's activities are organized within the framework of the COMIFAC

Convergence Plan. As of October 26, 2007, Germany has taken over the facilitation of the CBFP from France and will make available a total of more than 53 million Euros for the protection of the tropical forests in the Congo Basin. COMIFAC organizes its collaboration with most donor partners, both in providing information about the state of engagement in the Operational Plan, and more generally in relation to the availability of funds for particular elements of the Plan, through the mechanism of the CBFP.

Forest Carbon Partnership Fund (FCPF) (900 million USD): National REDD+ Readiness: The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) is a global partnership of governments, businesses, civil society, and indigenous people's organizations focused on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, forest carbon stock conservation, the sustainable management of forests, and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries, activities commonly referred to as REDD+. All six Congo Basin countries participate in the FCPF and are supported with the development of their National REDD Strategies and their broader "readiness for REDD", including the establishment of a REDD+ implementation framework, elaboration of reference scenarios, development of Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems. This Project is directly linked to FCPF activities, as it provides the regional umbrella and coordination for REDD readiness complementary to the national-level efforts supported by the FCPF. In addition to the regional coordination aspects on REDD readiness, the GEF-financing for this Project will also provide incremental capacity building support to national REDD+ coordination teams to help maintain regional cohesion. As per the subsidiarity principle of the Project, GEF financing will not duplicate or substitute national level activities that have already been earmarked for FCPF financing[25].

German Technical Cooperation and French Development Cooperation: Support to the Central Africa Forest Commission (COMIFAC) (6 million Euros): Both bilateral agencies are supporting the COMIFAC and its Executive Secretariat with the coordination of activities to implement the Convergence Plan. More specifically, France is focusing on Technical Assistance related to institutional and organizational strengthening of COMIFAC, as well as the improvement of forest governance in the COMIFAC member countries. Amongst other, Germany is focusing on long-term financial sustainability of COMIFAC and furthering an inclusive dialogue that involves all stakeholders in the regional dialogue. The support provided by Germany and France will directly complement Global Environment Facility (GEF)-financed activities related to strengthening regional coordination on REDD, specifically through the Regional Climate Change Working Group, as well as activities related to supporting national representative networks of indigenous people. These include: support for indigenous people through Réseau des Populations Autochtones et Locales pour la Gestion des Ecosystèmes Forestiers d'Afrique Centrale (REPALEAC), the Conférence sur les Ecosystèmes des Forêts Denses et Humides d'Afrique Centrale (CEFDAHC) umbrella, among others. Close alignment can be found with this project in the involvement of indigenous peoples and in the support for local participation in natural resources management.

African Development Bank managed Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF): National MRV Systems with a Regional Approach for the Congo Basin Countries: The African Development Bank managed CBFF supports the development of MRV systems for all ten COMIFAC countries. Clear synergies exist for the activities planned under Component 1 of this GEF Project as allometric equations will serve as an important element to establish accurate carbon stock baselines and later carbon fluxes for the Lac Tele Landscape. Capacity building activities for the benefit of national institutions responsible for forest monitoring financed under the GEF Project will be closely coordinated with the CBFF's program for MRV under a regional approach (see Output 1.1.3).

Congo Basin Forest Fund: REDD+ Pilot Projects: The Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF), which has received major funding from the governments of the United Kingdom and Norway, is administered by the African Development Bank. The CBFF aims to reduce poverty and fight climate change through reduction, mitigation and possibly reversing the rate of deforestation in the Congo Basin. It supports early action in the region, such as pilot payments for ecosystem services, community forest initiatives, and other innovative pilot projects. Synergies exist between CBFF-financed pilot projects at the local and sub-national level, and GEF-financed activities to support knowledge sharing and learning amongst REDD pilot project practitioners as well as GEF-support to feed experiences from the field into national REDD Strategy development.

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

The Forest Investment Program (FIP) (24 million USD): The FIP is one of three Climate Investment Funds. It aims to fund new approaches to the battle against climate change with transformation and scaling potential. In March 2015, the Republic of Congo submitted an expression of interest to the FIP with a view to support the Sangha-Likouala ER-Program and a renewable wood-energy supply project in the Pool and Plateaux departments. The FIP reserved an indicative amount of 24 million USD, 18 million of which would be in the form of concessionary rate loans, and 6 million of which would be a grant. Republic of Congo benefited from a preparatory subvention of 250 000 USD to support the development of the present Investment Plan. The improved management of forests and peatlands in this project will be complimentary to the goals of the FIP.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF): The GCF is a funding mechanism dedicated to funding climate change mitigation and adaptation. In the area of mitigation, the GCF supports, amongst others, initiatives for the sustainable management of lands and forests. The Republic of Congo has obtained a preparatory subvention of 300 000 USD to operationalise its national structure for the GCF, and will benefit from a second subvention in order to finalise its readiness phase. Within this framework, the GCF focal point is working with FAO and AFD to submit a first mitigation project for the implementation of the Republic of Congo's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) in the Land use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry (LULUCF) sector (2018-2025). In parallel to this, a project appeal was launched with the aim to suggest other projects and programs to the GCF in the areas of mitigation and adaptation. The GCF Focal Point has already received 8 project proposals from international organisations, including UNDP, local NGOs and governmental institutions. Included amongst these are projects for the improvement of energy efficiency, electricity production and distribution, drinking water distribution, etc. The program for the implementation of Congo's INDC in the LULUCF sector (2018-2025). This project will be in good alignment with the objectives of the RoC with regards to its INDC obligations. This is because sustainable forest and peatland management reduces potential carbon emissions and the country's drive towards meeting these obligations. It has been estimated that by implementing this project, emissions to the amount of 52, 422, 220 tCO₂eq will be avoided (see details in Supplement 3).

The U.S. Forest Service: In the areas surrounding the L'fini and L'sio Louna Reserves on the Bat'k Plateau, the U.S. Forest Service has been working with a group of community representatives, protected area managers, technical partners, and ministry officials to develop participatory fire management plans. Developing a comprehensive fire management plan requires identifying how land is being used, how different interest groups would like to use the land, and how fire can be used to achieve land use management objectives. The aims are to use this experience to inform the adoption of fire management planning at the national level, eventually integrating the approach into national forest policy guidelines. As part of a larger effort to strengthen the capacity of the Republic of the Congo's National Protected Areas Agency (ACFAP), the U.S. Forest Service is also using ongoing work in the L'fini Reserve as an opportunity to train Agency staff about how to involve communities in the planning processes. The U.S. Forest Service is also seeking to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of the Ministry of Forest Economy, focusing on forest inventory and monitoring, fire management, sustainable ecotourism development, and institutional capacity development. With

activities at the national level as well as in the field, the U.S. Forest Service collaborates with a range of local and international NGOs and universities. To support the implementation of the Republic of the Congo's National Forest Monitoring System, the U.S. Forest Service, through the U.S. Department of State's Climate Fellow program has embedded a technical advisor in the Ministry of Forest Economy who is specifically working on the development of a REDD+ Measurement, Reporting, and Verification System.

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

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

Linkages with other GEF and non-GEF interventions

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

Forest and Economic Diversification Project (PFDE 2) (2018-2021) is funded by the World Bank for a total budget of USD 6.5 million. The Project Development Objective (ODP) is to strengthen the

capacities of the Forest Administration, of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples (CLPAs) in participatory forest management. The project seeks to support the participation of local communities and indigenous peoples in the management of forest resources (USD 2.33 million): continuous strengthening of capacities for the implementation of Simple Management Plans, while funding IGAs that reduce deforestation and degradation of forests. Current efforts are mainly focused on cocoa production, and this activity will be expanded, particularly in the areas surrounding the protected areas[26]. It will also support the development of national parks (2.85 million USD), with the aim to increase the protection of virgin forest areas in the ER-P zone with a triple objective of supporting REDD + efforts, protect biodiversity and create income generation opportunities. The sub-component would have two main activities. The project will fund the development of a park management plan, the construction of infrastructure, hiring, training and equipment of staff, efforts to include the community in the management of the park and to provide drinking water and community management of the park. Targeted investments in tourism development will also be financed in order to support efforts aimed at the economic viability of this virgin protected area. Lastly, the project will support the implementation of the national strategy against poaching (1 million USD): implementation of priority recommendations resulting from the application of the analytical tool of the International Consortium to Combat Related Crime to Wildlife (ICCWC), including the establishment of a criminal records management system, training in the conduct of regional wildlife crime investigations, legislative reviews and the creation of canine units in certain eco-guard units.

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

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

Using these lessons learnt from other projects in the sub-region, WCS is now developing a strategy to evaluate and promote community-based tourism potential in Lac Tele starting in 2020. WCS has also been successful in developing a framework for community-led sustainable natural resources management, so far focused on fisheries under implementation with local communities in both the Ndoki and Lac Tele landscape. WCS helps to lead a multi-partner program to support the development and implementation of community-led sustainable hunting practices in Northern Congo which can then be replicated to other sites (the Sustainable Wildlife Management project with FAO, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD). WCS has provided long-term support to the government in legal reforms

(wildlife related law, fisheries law, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)) and the development and implementation of national strategies such as the National Ivory and Elephant Action Plans. As a partner in the implementation of the current project, WCS will draw on its rich experience in the project area to support implementation of three Outputs: 1.1.4. Land-use management plans (LUMPs) developed for selected districts in Lac T?l? landscape with due consideration of gender, formalized community involvement, peatlands conservation and promotion of ecotourism; 1.1.5. Investments in supporting implementation of land-use management plans for the target geography?s protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on peatlands, ecotourism, gender consideration, fighting illegal wildlife trade and transboundary cooperation; 3.1.2. Sustainable income-generating activities and economic diversification such as certified cacao production, are promoted with focus on peatlands, protected areas and wildlife conservation.

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

GEF/UNDP: Integrated and Transboundary Conservation of Biodiversity in the Basins of the Republic of Congo (GEF ID number: 9159, from 2017-2023): The objective of the project is to strengthen the conservation of globally threatened species in ?the basins of the Republic of Congo by improving biodiversity enforcement. The project is therefore designed to change the current situation of the unprecedented massacre of fauna of global importance and destruction of key habitats by building strong national capacity to fight IWT, and promote collaboration and cooperation between local communities and protected areas in the Tri-national Dja-Odzala-Minkebe transboundary area. The current project will collaborate with the ?Integrated and Transboundary Conservation of Biodiversity in the Basins of the Republic of Congo? in the field of designing and incorporating enforcement procedures for IWT control, as well as in the establishment of collaborative relationships with transboundary partners. Strong synergies with the current project exist in the areas biodiversity conservation, monitoring and management; as well as in combatting IWT.

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

Integrated management of mangrove and associated wetlands and coastal forests ecosystems of the Republic of Congo - CBSP (GEF Project ID: 4083): This project is implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The goal of this project was to strengthen the

conservation of biodiversity and reduce degradation in Congo's mangrove ecosystems through: (i) strengthening the legal and institutional framework; (ii) increasing the knowledge and availability of information on trends, status and threats to the mangrove ecosystems in order to inform decision-making; and (iii) building capacity for sustainable management of mangrove resources at the community level. The current project can build on many of the efforts laid down by the CBSP, including building on the institutional and legal framework for biodiversity conservation for revisions to reflect the conservation of sensitive ecosystems and peatlands of the Lac T?l? Landscape. It will also identify gaps at the community, district and national level in capacities for environmental management beyond mangroves which would need to be enhanced in its capacity-building activities.

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

WB/GEF project ?Strengthening the management of wildlife and improving livelihoods in northern Republic of Congo? (2017-2021): The geographic focus of this project is the Ntokou-Pikounda protected area and surrounding area. The focus of this project is on sustainable forest management, strengthening anti-poaching capacity at national and local level, development of sustainable livelihood options for local communities in the Ntokou-Pikounda project area[27]. The components of this WB/GEF project aligns with the broad aims of the current project, and strong avenues for collaboration in knowledge sharing, joint approaches for community engagement, and alignment of strategic goals to cross-fertilize each other in IWT and livelihood development strategies will be forged. Collaboration with the current project will be established in capacity building and institutional strengthening regarding peatland management, the monitoring of hotspots of poaching and IWT, involvement of local communities and indigenous people in forest resource management; and habitat and biodiversity conservation.

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Forest and Economic Diversification Project (PFDE 2) (2018-2021) is funded by GEF 6 for a total budget of USD 6.5 million. The Project Development Objective (ODP) is to strengthen the capacities of the Forest Administration, of the CLPAs in participatory forest management. The project seeks to support the participation of local communities and indigenous peoples in the management of forest resources (USD 2.33 million): continuous strengthening of capacities for the implementation of Simple Management Plans, while funding IGAs that reduce deforestation and degradation of forests. Current efforts are mainly focused on cocoa production, and this activity will be expanded, particularly in the areas surrounding the protected areas[29]. It will also support the development of national parks (2.85 million USD), with the aim to increase the protection of virgin forest areas in the ER-P zone with a triple objective of supporting REDD + efforts, protect biodiversity and create income generation opportunities. The sub-component would have two main activities. The project will fund the development of a park management plan, the construction of infrastructure, hiring, training and

equipment of staff, efforts to include the community in the management of the park and to provide drinking water and community management of the park. Targeted investments in tourism development will also be financed in order to support efforts aimed at the economic viability of this virgin protected area. Lastly, the project will support the implementation of the national strategy against poaching (1 million USD): implementation of priority recommendations resulting from the application of the analytical tool of the International Consortium to Combat Related Crime to wildlife (ICCWC), including the establishment of a criminal records management system, training in the conduct of regional wildlife crime investigations, legislative reviews and the creation of canine units in certain eco-guard units.

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

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

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learned during the implementation of this project. The geography of the ?Creation of Loungo Bay Marine Protected Area to support Turtles ?Conservation in Congo? project and the types of economic activities carried out by local populations (marine protected areas with important biodiversity significance) bears similarities with the reality of the Lac T?l? Landscape, and can therefore offer important lessons on how to approach the current project.

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National initiatives

The *Congo's National Development Plan (NDP)* is a common roadmap for moving Congo forward and to integrate multilayer and multi-sectorial strategic planning framework that gives life to the President's vision, embodied in the "Future Path". Its primary objective is to expedite the modernization of society and industrialization of Congo, with a view to creating greater prosperity and thus set the stage for Congo's emergence in the global economy. It is recognized that protection of the environment and the sustainable management of natural resources are an integral part of this plan. The main purpose of the NDP is to translate the vision and program of the ?Future Path? into a medium-term strategic framework for the 2012-2016 period, coupled with action programs, consistent fiscal objectives, strategic priorities, and an improved mechanism for taking action, monitoring outcomes, and assessing the impact on development. To that end, as shown in Figure 1, the NDP includes the Growth, Employment, and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (DSCERP), the programming and budgeting documents (PAP-MTEF), and the document for monitoring and assessing the country?s development strategy. It also includes the forward-looking document ?Congo Vision 2025?.

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

dreams of emergence, (iii) sustainable development goals, and (iv) the aspirations of the Congolese people.

The *Forestry and Wood Industries? Cluster of the NDP* is another very important dimension with direct implications on the current project. The second most productive sector in the country, forestry contributes 5.6 percent to GDP formation and accounts for 10 percent of the country's foreign trade, with nearly 11,000 direct jobs and approximately 5,000 induced jobs[30]. Nevertheless, the country still does not earn enough revenue from its forests, owing to deficient processing rates, little control of the value chain, and inadequate taxation. Moreover, the production of non-wood products is still an informal activity. Congo's sectoral strategy is set out in the *Wood and Forestry? plan*, which aims at better governance of forests, dissemination of the principles of sustainable forestry management to all forestry operations, and the adoption of a genuine industrial strategy organized around the forestry cluster. The main programs include: (i) for the sustainable management and development of forestry and wildlife resources: development of production forests (9,519,690 hectares); economic development of the wood subsector (second- and third-degree processing) and of non-wood forestry products (production of resins and oils); reforestation and regeneration of forestry resources (600,000 hectares of plantations out of the projected one million in ten years); and development of parks and protected areas (3,680,424 hectares of protected areas); (ii) for sustainable development: strengthening of the legislative framework through the definition of a sustainable development strategy, including standards and indicators, and the creation of a National Sustainable Development Commission; (iii) for environmental protection: protection of the environment and preservation of biodiversity through the establishment of an environmental education program, the promulgation and dissemination of the law on the environment, and the management of wetlands.

On-going private sector activities in the project area

The private sector is an important group of stakeholders in the project region. In recognition of this fact, a high-level meeting was organized between the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment (the Executing Agency of this project) and private sector actors present in the Lac T?l? landscape area (the project location) in Brazzaville on June 4th 2020. The aim was to have a conversation with investment managers and business leaders of the private sector concerned about the UNEP-GEF project preparation, and to call for their involvement in the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Congo for the effective conservation of peatlands and natural resources in the project area. The meeting achieved the following: (i) Awareness was built on the project, its objectives, goals, expected results, and activities for private sector operating in the project area; (ii) Initiatives and visions of the Government of the Republic of Congo in the Lac T?l? area for community-based conservation of peatland ecosystems were articulated; (iii) Potential areas of collaboration with the private sector in the achievement of some of the project goals were articulated and discussed; (iv) Opinions and observations the private sector on the objectives of the project in relation to their involvement were gathered (see the Table 3 below); and (v) Various levels of commitments on effective participation of the private sector were received.

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

| Company Name | Activities | Sustainable management policy | Public participation | Expectations of the UNEP-GEF project |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| | | | | |

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

| | | | | |
|---|----------------|--|--|--|
| <p>Soci?t? THANRY Congo Located in Likouala</p> | <p>Logging</p> | | | <p>Collaboration for restoration and reforestation. Capacity building for the supervision and education of populations in the management of development funds set up by companies.</p> |
|---|----------------|--|--|--|

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

Legal and policy context

The Government and peoples of the Republic of Congo are cognizant of the value of biological diversity for social and environmental welfare in the country and the Congo regional as a whole, and have undertaken several initiatives (legal, political, national, regional and international) to address some of the challenges of biodiversity conservation within its national borders. For example, the spatial planning law (Law n° 43-2014 on Guidance for Planning and Development of the Territory) provides an opportunity for RoC to share with other Congo Basin countries an example of a policy supportive of SFM, biodiversity conservation and local community livelihoods. To support the conservation and sustainable management of its biodiversity, a system of protected areas has been established, which at present covers a surface area of around 4,353,500 ha (13% of the national territory). The 2014-2025 Forest Policy includes, inter alia, the fight against poverty, the participatory management of forest and wildlife resources and the integration of forestry into local development and the National Strategy to Combat Illegal Exploitation and Illicit Trade in Wildlife Products (2017) are aligned to the Program's outcomes of safeguarding forest resources, mitigate Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) emissions and sequestering carbon and reduce the loss of biodiversity. A National Strategy and Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism of Republic of Congo has been developed ? sustainable tourism directly responds to the mentioned environmental benefits of the program. The country has also aligned itself to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), which affirms that indigenous peoples have the right to internal self-determination, that they cannot be expelled from their lands and are entitled to the natural resources located on their lands[31].

On the side-lines of Third Partners Meeting of Global Peatlands Initiative in Brazzaville in 2018, the RoC, DRC and Indonesia jointly signed the Brazzaville Declaration. The Brazzaville Declaration aims to implement coordination and cooperation between different government sectors to protect the benefits provided by peatland ecosystems (Figure 4 & 9). The agreement is the beginning of a deep collaboration between Indonesia - covered by vast expanses of peatlands - and the Congo Basin. At the sub-regional level, there is the Treaty on the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Forest

Ecosystems in Central Africa and the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC). COMIFAC is an intergovernmental organization established between several Central African Countries. Its goal is to sustainably manage the forests of Central Africa and to protect the rights of people that rely on those forest resources. By establishing this inter-governmental body, COMIFAC governments are trying to increase awareness of the important ecological role forests play in the region. In 2005, COMIFAC developed a Convergence Plan for Central African countries to reach these conservation management goals. The Plan was revised and a New Convergence Plan 2015 ? 2025 was approved in 2014[32]. The Brazzaville declaration was signed to promote better management and conservation world's largest tropical peatlands - Cuvette Centrale region in Congo Basin from unregulated land use and prevent its drainage and degradation[33].

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

Outstanding gaps and remaining challenges

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

Legal, regulatory and administrative gaps including (i) Weaknesses in the implementation of policies based on the sustainable management of peatland ecosystems at several institutional levels. In spite of the commitment of the states to this approach, institutions are not well prepared. There are gaps in existing sectoral policies, and the failure to incorporate environmental and social considerations into the decision-making process, and an absence of effective mechanisms for information sharing, integrated planning and collaboration among agencies and stakeholders. (ii) The private sector has been motivated by short-term considerations. As a consequence, the public-private partnerships necessary to sustain biodiversity are limited. Existing models of development in Congo and in the project location have not sufficiently engaged the private sector in the search for sustainable alternatives to current natural resources and landscape management practices. (iii) At the policy level, there is high institutional fragmentation and lack of adequate human resources. (iv) Many of the causes of peatland degradation and vulnerability also fall on the medium and large-scale farmers who historically received incentives from rural policies to prioritize mono-cropping and extensive cattle-raising. In and around the project location, large-scale oil palm cultivation is present and growing. (v) Absence of sufficient data and systematized information, and consequently, an almost complete absence of monitoring and

evaluation processes. This lack hinders decision-making process and has impeded ecosystem considerations to be mainstreamed into public policies for productive activities.

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

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

3) The proposed alternative scenario with a description of outcomes and components of the project;

Proposed alternative scenario

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

The project drives elements of change within each individual theme and geography over time, while encouraging synergies amongst and between the elements that further magnify the individual changes. Given the complexity of each of these dimensions, they are presented separately below. In each case, the direct project actions and outputs are highlighted in bold as drivers of expected change.

A significant portion of the allocated national resources would focus on monitoring and controlling environmental problems and challenges associated with this sensitive landscape, including peatland fires, peatland deforestation, IWT, as well as providing support and services to communities negatively impacted by these challenges through alternative activities with built-in replicability and sustainability. Significantly fewer, and in some cases inadequate, resources would be available for: translating national laws into local level action plans, clarifying jurisdictional responsibilities for peatland and protected area management, as well as for the prevention of IWT. Resources will also be unavailable for building multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms at different levels, engaging small to large-scale land users to convert into more sustainable land use and management practices, and for the mapping of peatland units and hotspots of poaching in support of efforts to reduce or eliminate IWT. GEF funding will also contribute to rehabilitating degraded peatland forests, engaging a broader group of peatland research institutions into understanding the issues and challenges around peatlands, and in maintaining political and community interest in peatland and biodiversity management.

The proposed project will help catalyze an alternative scenario under which the extent of protected areas as well as peatland resources under protection will increase substantially, with increased levels of local stakeholder support. An increase in the participation of local communities and stakeholders in the management of local resources will improve the outcomes of conservation efforts and enhance the benefits reaped through improved ecosystem services to both local communities and the global environment. Public-private partnerships in natural resources management will support the attainment of sustainable outcomes in conservation benefits, and ecosystem service provision. The area of high-value terrestrial and peatland biodiversity being managed sustainably will increase, and models will be developed which demonstrate that conservation and development can be successfully integrated at the community level in the RoC.

Project components and outcomes

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

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

The development and implementation of land use plans for the Lac T?I? Landscape protected areas and surrounding landscape will build on activities being undertaken at the regional level through the Congo IP. The Congo IP will develop an enhanced methodological process and make available other tools for land use planning that will help the child projects to develop ILUMPs in their respective targeted priority transboundary landscapes. This project will therefore be guided by this methodological guidance that will build on past and ongoing regional collaborative efforts that include not only treaties, bilateral and multilateral agreements, but also on specific case studies on the development of landscape management strategies and approaches. This methodological guidance will include the integration of tools for valuing natural capital (e.g., natural capital accounting, economic valuation of ecosystem services)[34]. This child project will enhance the impact of land use planning by leveraging the value-adding cross-sectoral approach of the Congo IP. The project will make use of the knowledge management platform and other tools and methods developed by the regional planning for land use planning that use a systems approach in the development of integrated land use management plans (ILUMPs).

There are major challenges related to current capacity at national and local/district levels to implement viable natural resources management programmes and incorporating best practices like Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) with local indigenous communities. One of such challenges includes formalizing the involvement of local communities (including indigenous peoples and women) into the management of natural resources at the local level[35]. These include the design and implementation of viable Access Benefit Sharing models that support local initiatives and desires to participate as active stakeholders in the conservation, preservation and sustainable management of natural resources. Another key challenge includes that of understanding the multiple impacts of large-scale land-use projects such as infrastructure, mining and/or industrial agriculture, and the lack of effective tenure and land rights for forest-dependent communities. Finally, there is the problem of the lack of, or inability to implement land use planning in the process of achieving planned development use of land resources.

The planned development is essential for sustainable development and thus the optimal use of available resources. Since resources are limited it becomes necessary to use the resources wisely. Land use planning is essential for governing the growth of the different activities. A certain percentage of land is reserved for various activities. This helps in balancing all the activities and avoiding the excess of a

particular activity. It also helps in keeping a check on conflicting activities. It also helps in environmental management by segregating different activities using certain restrictions and regulations. These restrictions and categorizations are called zoning, categorization of permissible and non-permissible activities, conforming and non-conforming land uses, etc. Land use plans provide both theoretical and spatial information, which will govern the growth of the towns and cities. Land use planning forms most crucial part in these plans and is shown in the land use map of such plans.

The Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) invested resources in the developing and implementation land use plans for Extractive Resource Zones (ERZ) within the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) Landscapes. ERZs include forest concessions, large-scale private plantations, mining, oil and gas, safari hunting zones, and other energy infrastructure[36]. These include Landscapes of the Lac Tele. However, these land use plans have not been put into use, because of not having been endorsed by relevant national institutions. This project will therefore direct resources to ensure the endorsement of land use plans, as well as their anchoring into national policies and development processes. In cases where these plans do not exist, they will be developed based on the model and approach already adopted and used by the CARPE initiative to ensure conformity and alignment with existing plans.

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

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

Secure tenure rights to commons are crucial for women and men, indigenous peoples and local communities in various contexts, including fisherfolk, pastoralists, farmers, landless people, and other vulnerable, food insecure and marginalized groups. They depend on commons for their fundamental well-being: for access to food, for sustaining their livelihoods, and for their cultural and social identity[37]. The FAO recognizes the responsibility of states to recognize legally, and protect, legitimate tenure rights to commons, their rights holders, and related customary tenure systems. Legislation should enable these rights holders to take the authority and responsibility to govern the commons at the local level collectively. It notes that this devolution comes with legal requirements for communities to strengthen or set up processes for inclusive, accountable and sustainable governance and decision-making, in accordance with the principles laid out in the Guidelines (Strategy 1). The legal framework should focus on procedural rather than substantive rules (Strategy 2), to accommodate the complexity, diversity and flexibility of tenure rights to commons and to provide for context-specific and flexible adjustment by community rules. The community needs to engage in an inclusive local process to agree on rules for the sustainable utilization of the commons, to identify and map the outer boundaries of the commons, and to register them with the support of state authorities (Strategy 3). To ensure transparency, accountability and effectiveness of legislation, the state should establish an inclusive and deliberative policy-making and law-making process that facilitates the participation of civil society and rights holders. To this end, scientists, lawyers, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the state need to innovate on new legal concepts and terms (Strategy 4). Advocacy work plays a crucial role in supporting the process of political, public and personal acceptance of tenure rights to commons and community-based governance, and the structures to ensure the implementation and enforcement of these rights (Strategy 5)[38].

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

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

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

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

According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), there are a number of governance and capacity challenges in extractive resource zones in the Congo Basin Region, which limits the effectiveness of Government forest sector-related systems, frameworks, and their implementation at the local level[39]. These include: (i) The legal/regulatory framework in several countries is incomplete because many of the detailed implementing regulations (*d?crets, arr?t?s, etc.*) and/or handbooks/manuals are either non-existent or exist in draft form only. (ii) The judicial system is described as unable to enforce forest/mining/wildlife laws (e.g., judges are uninformed about forest/wildlife laws, and there are insufficient prison facilities and resources, etc.). (iii) Insufficiency of inter-ministerial collaboration and information sharing, leading to actions being uncoordinated or not communicated appropriately among government agencies (e.g., exploration mining permits being attributed in forest concessions without notice to any local actors?government, NGO, community, logging company). (iv) In many cases, multi-level, multi-departmental governmental reviews delay communities? participation in natural resource management activities. (v) Lack of respect and or application of international conventions/treaties such as CITES.

The goal of this Output is to increase the capacity of key stakeholders in understanding governance issues relevant for the sustainable management of peatlands, through training workshops at national and district levels. This Output will seek to strengthen knowledge on the policy and legal frameworks for the sustainable management of peatlands through national strategies, action plans and national and sub-national policies and regulations. The training will cover a number of key features, such as: (i) strengthening the capacity of existing protected areas to deal with the external and internal threats and constraints; (ii) promoting closer collaboration with communities living in or in proximity to protected areas (including transboundary communities and initiatives) in the conversation and management of biodiversity; (iii) creating new nature reserves and corridors designed to improve the ecological integrity of the area under protection; and, (iv) promoting a series of cross-CBNRM activities focusing on the development and implementation of species-specific conservation action plans and ecological monitoring[40]. This Output will be implemented by the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment, with collaboration from the Ministry of Forest Economy and the WWF.

Output 1.1.3. Natural Capital Assessment targeting peatlands, protected areas and surrounding landscape conducted to collect data for land?use management plans for selected districts with due gender consideration and formalized community involvement protected areas and surrounding

landscape with a focus on peatlands, ecotourism, gender consideration, fighting illegal wildlife trade and transboundary cooperation and made available in the project website.

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

Six main elements will be addressed under this Output:

i) Assessment of size, value, functions, challenges, and land uses of peatlands: This Output will support the assessment for the entire Lac T?l? landscape. This assessment will generate understanding of the size, value, functions, challenges, and land uses of peatlands, protected areas, and surrounding landscapes of the project area. The assessments will also report on the factors such as the biophysical condition of ecosystems within the Lac T?l? Landscape, ecosystem services (flood control, water supply, climate change mitigation, NTFPs) and relevance to local communities. Local communities (men and women) will be involved in the surveys in order to ensure an inclusive process and the use of local knowledge. Considerable work has recently been put into forest cover monitoring in the Congo Basin region by other initiatives (see for example, the Global Forest Atlas <https://globalforestatlas.yale.edu/region/congo>; and work done by the World Resources Institute <https://www.wri.org/our-work/project/forest-atlases>; NASA <https://www.nasa.gov/feature/jpl/nasa-survey-technique-estimates-congo-forest-s-carbon>; and others). This Project aims to leverage that knowledge. Building on the assessment of the characteristics of the Lac Tele peatlands, a national assessment will be carried out to provide a nation-wide understanding of the extent and challenges of peatlands and challenges for their conservation and protection.

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

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

of clearing and extraction of forest resources and peatland rehabilitation. Compute and document changes in GHG emission and trends.

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

iv) Develop Standard Operating Procedures for real-time action of peatland fires: This will involve three main activities: (i) Validate hotspots and improve fire detection using the following technology options in collaboration with partner agencies through the following possible measures: i) thermal Forward-Looking Infrared (FLIR) imaging cameras or relevant remote sensing sensors, ii) high resolution satellite based thermal imagers (a newly launched satellite is delivering 30m resolution data, including a thermal imager, but as yet this is untested in the RoC); iii) satellite based application from VIIRS satellite which can measure live and smouldering fires down to a 50-100 m accuracy on-ground; and iv) Feedback from site-based observers and fire suppression teams. (ii) Develop and refine Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in collaboration with the relevant Ministries and other governmental agencies for reporting and response at national, provincial and district levels to different Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS) warning categories and hotspot occurrence and density. Disseminate and test SOPs at different levels and with different agencies. (iii) Develop a guideline and information/training materials on Integrated Fire Management. In order to introduce the Integrated Fire management concept it will be necessary to develop national guidelines and training materials on the system in partnership with key national stakeholders led by the relevant agency in the Ministry of Forest Economics.

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

vi) Information management and monitoring system: The Output will also support the establishment of an information management and monitoring system on peatland resources, protected area conservation, and the dangers and scale of IWT in the project area. The information system will allow storing, managing, and analysing technical and scientific information and participatory monitoring related to the Lac T?I? landscape. The information management and monitoring system be cross?institutional and cross? disciplinary; thus, it will be a key tool for decision?making regarding

conservation and ecological monitoring and will be developed with the participation of public institutions, the private sector (agriculture, tourism, urban development, and fishing), members of academia, and civil society, who will become the main users. The information management and monitoring system on protected areas and peatland biodiversity in the project area will include indicators to assess the health of such biodiversity as well as protocols for data gathering. The system will serve as an information exchange platform for promoting the agreement and participation of the different stakeholders, and will include a well-equipped office (databases, software, hardware, etc.) to be hosted by the project host institution, which will provide the necessary staff for its operation and maintenance.

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

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

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

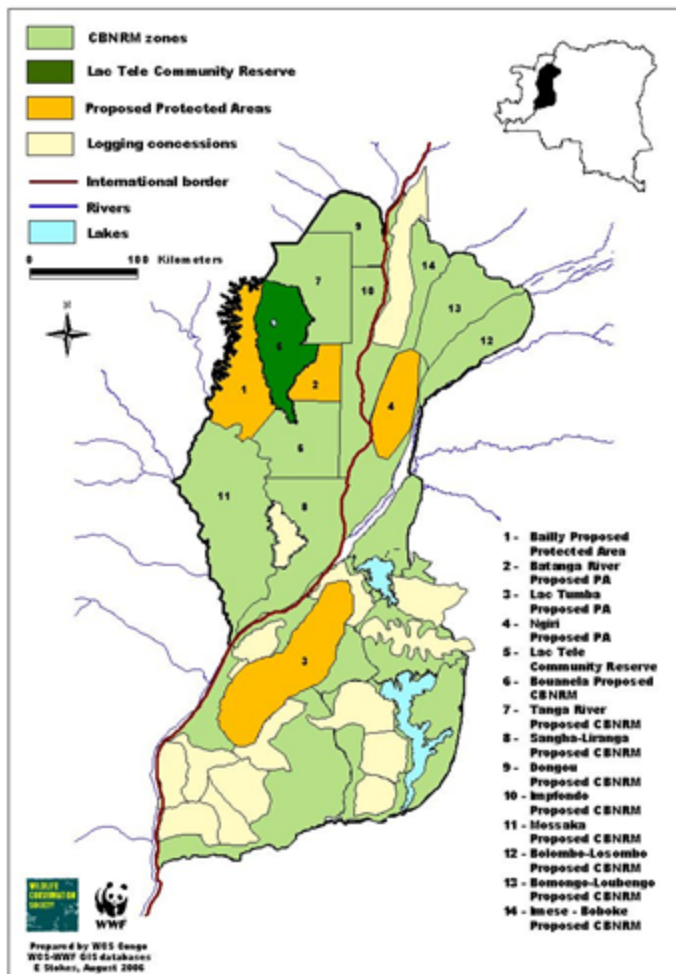


Figure 12. Key conservation and livelihood zones of the Lac T?l? Landscape (source: World Conservation Society, Congo).

In cases where land use management plans do not exist, this project will support the development of such plans, by funding the 10-step process defined by the FAO in its guidelines for land use planning[41]. During the inception workshop, the degree of coverage of the CARPE developed land use management plans will be ascertained, to determine if all areas in the project area already have such plans. The steps to be funded for the development of land use management plans in the absence of any will include: *Step 1. Establish goals and terms of reference.* Ascertain the present situation; find out the needs of the people and of the government; decide on the land area to be covered; agree on the broad goals and specific objectives of the plan; settle the terms of reference for the plan. *Step 2. Organize the work.* Decide what needs to be done; identify the activities needed and select the planning team; draw up a schedule of activities and outputs; ensure that everyone who may be affected by the plan, or will contribute to it, is consulted. *Step 3. Analyse the problems.* Study the existing land-use situation, including in the field; talk to the land users and find out their needs and views; identify the problems and analyse their causes; identify constraints to change. *Step 4. Identify opportunities for charge.* Identify and draft a design for a range of land-use types that might achieve the goals of the plan; present these options for public discussion. *Step 5. Evaluate land suitability.* For each promising land-use type, establish the land requirements and match these with the properties of the land to establish physical land suitability. *Step 6. Appraise the alternatives: environmental, economic and social analysis.* For each physically suitable combination of land use and land, assess the environmental, economic and social impacts, for the land users and for the community as a whole. List

the consequences, favourable and unfavourable, of alternative courses of action. *Step 7. Choose the best option.* Hold public and executive discussions of the viable options and their consequences. Based on these discussions and the above appraisal, decide which changes in land use should be made or worked towards. *Step 8. Prepare the land-use plan.* Make allocations or recommendations of the selected land uses for the chosen areas of land; make plans for appropriate land management; plan how the selected improvements are to be brought about and how the plan is to be put into practice; draw up policy guidelines, prepare a budget and draft any necessary legislation; involve decision-makers, sectoral agencies and land users. *Step 9. Implement the plan.* Either directly within the planning process or, more likely, as a separate development project, put the plan into action; the planning team should work in conjunction with the implementing agencies. *Step 10. Monitor and revise the plan.* Monitor the progress of the plan towards its goals; modify or revise the plan in the light of experience.

These plans will address in a consultative manner all aspects of land use and potential natural resources extraction activities in the project area, including sustainable use of wildlife, forest resources and biodiversity-friendly initiatives (e.g., sustainable game and bushmeat hunting, ecotourism, harvest of forest fruits, honey production, aquaculture and multiple use tree plantations in degraded forest). These identification and development of frameworks governing these extractive methods will be based on the principles of The Access Restriction Mitigation Process[42].

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

In the participatory processes setting the scene for the demarcating of land uses in each community, potential threats stemming from human use should be identified, and measures designed for their use, management, conservation or protection. CBNRM rules and regulations will be developed, and serve to manage any unsustainable use of wildlife and forests such as harvesting of non-ripe fruits, poaching traps, hunting in closed seasons, and unsustainable logging. In general, the LUMPs along with will create management basis for strengthening law enforcement in combating IWT, the use of protected landscapes (including peatlands) and the implementation CBNRM and the sustainable management of environmental and biological resources in the project area[43].

Minimum standards and guidelines for resource extraction plans should include most or all of the following[44]: (i) low-impact road construction and access. (ii) Special provisions for mining and harvesting timber in or near streams or other water bodies. (iii) Protection of locally important or rare habitats. (iv) For logging operations, provisions for tree extraction on slopes, such as the use of cables and winches to pull felled trees to skid trail locations. (v) Tree felling and extraction procedures for other conditions. (vi) Inventory and monitoring requirements. (vii) Placement of logging or mining camps and landings. (viii) Access of indigenous and other local populations to the forest for hunting, gathering and other resource use. (x) Including local populations in natural resource planning; and (xi) Reducing impacts on wildlife and other non-forest products.

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

The project will adopt and implement the multi-sector landscape governance structure being proposed by the Congo IP, which will include enhancing the negotiating capacity of local stakeholders, such as

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

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

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

Component 2. Community management of natural resources

This component responds to two key components of the Congo IP (Components 2 & 3). Component 2 of the regional program envisages a long-term viability of forests and area-based management of critical high conservation value forest providing important habitat to endangered species and critical ecosystem services. Component 3 seeks to catalyse more effective participation of communities and amplify the ability of businesses to divert capital from degrading activities to supporting SFM enterprises, at scale. An inclusive vision of natural resources management in which local communities are engaged as partners in conservation and management is therefore required to ensure sustainable outcomes. In this Component ensuring biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration in forest landscapes will make use of a broader definition of forest resources management[45]. In this case, forest resources management means the application of business methods and technical forestry principles to the operation of a forestry property. It involves the task of building up, putting in order, and keeping in order a forest business. One or a multiplicity of parties (stakeholders) can do this.

CBNRM is a people-centered approach to the integration of conservation of the natural resource base (water, soil, trees and local biodiversity) and development to overcome poverty, hunger and disease. The community-based natural resources management model will be promoted to achieve goals

of sustainable peatland management, elimination of IWT, enhanced management of protected areas and related goals of this project (see Supplement 1). These will be achieved through a range of approaches: (i) consultative and participatory processes will be used to bring on board local communities to become an integral part of the protection and conservation of local biodiversity, peatlands, and protected areas in the Lac T?l? Landscape. (ii) A key focus of the project is on building the capacity of local communities and forest-dependent peoples to participate in, manage, and benefit from actions to limit environmental degradation across the biome, in particular the sustainable management of natural resources. (iii) Research will be carried out to buttress community-based conservation actions and methods on sound scientific principles supported by local data and scientific findings. (iv) Collaboration in a trans-boundary context will ensure that lessons learned from similar projects and experiences in the region, as well as in other developing countries can be incorporated into the decision-making and operations of the current project to ensure optimal outcomes. South-South collaboration will also support the sharing of information and lessons learned from the current project with other stakeholders in the wider Congo Basin Region and other parts of the continental sub-region.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

action-oriented training on practices for environmental restoration and nature-friendly production processes. This group of stakeholders will gain knowledge on the assessment and sustainable management of peatlands, the identification of entry points for restoration and remediation of undesirable states, and multi-stakeholder processes for achieving positive collaborative outcomes. It also aims to increase awareness and understanding of the values and functions of peatland ecosystems, by preparing and disseminating information and awareness-raising materials.

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

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

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

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

The use of participatory action research in natural resources management has become more popular and more widely accepted over the years. It has become a widely accepted techniques for watershed planning and management including: rapid catchment assessment, soil and water conservation, degraded forest assessment, nurseries and planting, identification of trees? uses, rural energy assessment, green enterprise development, wildlife reservation, and village resource management plans. Action research is based on an experimental learning process. It consists of a four?stage cycle: planning, action, observation and reflection. This cycle is applied to develop, test and reflect on solutions to a problem that has been identified. Out of the fourth stage, a new cycle is started from the planning stage by considering the results of the reflection in the previous cycle. This second cycle, and other subsequent cycles, lead towards a better solution. Participatory Action Research (PAR) incorporates participatory processes in the action research. This brings forth multiple

perspectives from stakeholders, resulting in more effective and sustainable solutions. PAR employs the core values of participatory processes (mutual understanding, full participation, inclusive solutions and shared responsibility) to help overcome conflict and other difficulties that conventional top-down natural resource management planning struggles with. Top-down approaches create disconnects between professional practices and what is needed for meaningful community participation. Where conventional natural resource management has failed, PAR can contribute to the development of locally appropriate community forestry and natural resource management models. PAR is also needed to find ways in which local people can participate meaningfully in key internationally recognized environmental and natural resources related initiatives such as REDD+, as required in the REDD+ safeguards set out by the UNFCCC COP.

Adaptive management implies a large variety of different measures that support and assist forest ecosystems' stress resistance, resilience, and dynamic response, representing a set of target responses to climate change impacts[46]. The nature of forests makes them a prime resource for the application of adaptive management – a prospect that has been examined and explored by many scholars see[47] and [48]. Forests and protected areas can contribute to adaptation at the landscape level through the creation and expansion of functional habitat networks, flood risk management, protection of water quality and quantity, and protection against soil erosion[49]. The location and composition of forests and woodlands can facilitate or hinder the migration of species. For example, forests and woodlands that are connected with each other and with other natural habitats can facilitate the movement of species through the landscape and provide a better opportunity for species and ecosystems to adapt to new conditions.

In this Output to be implemented in collaboration with Université Marien Ngouabi, the following actions will be required to ensure that forests respond to the effects of climate change and to help society and the environment adapt to these changes[50]: (i) Fragmentation of existing natural habitats should be avoided, and the impacts of new plantations on the ecology of adjacent sites should be considered. (ii) Introduction and development of genetically modified organisms is an emerging issue to be taken into account in the management of dryland forests. (iii) The ecological connectivity of the landscape for forests and woodland species can be improved by extending, maintaining and restoring existing natural habitats using the forest landscape restoration approach, while taking into consideration the environmental, social and economic needs. (iv) The movement of populations of non-indigenous species that are invasive and problematic in forests and woodlands and their surroundings should be controlled, (v) baseline situation on known and current environmental degradation with quantification if any (including biodiversity loss and trade, deforestation of forest degradation) to be conducted in Year 1 of the project.

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

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

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

South-South cooperation is a means of development cooperation in which developing countries assist each other by sharing technical or economic knowledge and skills to facilitate development. It differs from bilateral exchange of knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how by developing countries, which are often buttressed by bilateral cooperation agreements, in that it is much broader as it entails political, economic and technical collaboration among developing countries. While the southern African region in general is cited as being relatively weak with respect to South-South cooperation, this situation within the natural resources management sector in the Congo Basin Region can be described as quite positive. A strong example of such viable cooperation in the region is the cross-border collaboration in forest management through the Central Africa Forests Commission (COMIFAC). This is the only authority in term of political, technical orientation, coordination, harmonization and decision making regarding the conservation and sustainable management of the Central Africa forests ecosystem and savannah. Its convergence plan brings together ten strategic axes for which the current project is very well aligned[51].

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

This project will cooperate closely with the region's governments through activities and initiatives with a transboundary character to expand on existing efforts towards regional collective action. Examples of existing initiatives and programs include the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) <http://www.apvflegtcongo.com/index.php>; the Central African World Heritage Forest Initiative multi-donor (CAWHFI); and the Conservation and Rational Use of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa Program. To guarantee the legal exploitation of forests, the Congolese government and the European Union signed on May 17, 2010 a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on the Application of Forest Forests, Governance and Trade (FLEGT)[52].

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

Component 3. Diversifying communities' income sources e.g. through promotion of ecotourism[53]

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

It is within the same spirit that this child project will work with relevant national and local institutions and partners in order to identify alternative income-generating opportunities to increase resilience of communities, replacing vulnerable dependence on natural resources. The project will focus on the

provision of institutional and technical support to communities to develop a foundation for community-based tourism enterprises, the COVID 19 pandemic and climate change impacts. The project will also promote sustainable income-generating activities and economic diversification such as certified cacao production. This project will build on a baseline of many initiatives at supporting sustainable income-generating activities in the region. The income-generating activities will be identified during the assessment of opportunities and limitations in supporting current livelihoods, taking into account the capacity-building needs and the time it takes to set up the requisite infrastructure, capacities, markets, etc. It is important to build on lessons learned from previous initiatives in the region, including those undertaken by WCS, the World Bank, and other development partners. The marketing strategies adopted by any destination should consider the desires and expectations of all stakeholders, such as the resident population, entrepreneurs and investors, tourists, tour operators, intermediaries and other interest groups. The outcome of the component is successful, resilient, income-generating activities acting as a driver for local communities? ownership and participation to conservation. The component objectives will be delivered through the following outcome and outputs:

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

This Output will develop livelihood improvement initiatives for local populations in the project area linked to sustainable management of peatlands. The types of initiatives to be developed will draw on data and analysis identified in Output 1.1.4 and 1.1.5, as well as through the action-based research carried out in Output 3.1.3.

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

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

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

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

This project will build on lessons on promotion of ecotourism and the basis for community-based ecotourism in other parts of the world[54] as well as in sub-Saharan Africa (especially East and

Southern Africa). An ecotourism development plan will be established for the project area to address all aspects of planning, developing, marketing and managing resources and facilities for this form of tourism. Specific opportunities and challenges related to access to natural areas and cultural heritage, guiding and interpretative services, accommodation, catering, sales of produce and handicrafts, and transport will be spelt out in the plan. The project will also fund the establishment of a tourism information centre at Impfondo that will be operated and run by a board of key stakeholders (drawn mainly, but not exclusively from project communities). Capacity building will be provided to relevant local community representatives on running and managing ecotourism using participatory models within multi-stakeholder environments (see Supplement 1). Training and tools will also be provided to guides to furnish relevant skills required for operating in biodiversity-rich and ecologically-sensitive environments. A business plan for sustainability of the investment will be established through collaborative processes and implemented. This project will fund processes leading to the inclusion of Impfondo ecotourism practice as a certified ecological travel experience, and ensure that it features in recognized platforms[55]. This will ensure that the Impfondo ecotourism investments captures some of the tourism flow with sustainability in mind.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been working closely with the government of the RoC and related governmental bodies to develop ecotourism in the country. The UNDP helped develop the country's national ecotourism strategy, and has invested effort in ensuring that this strategy can be recognized and brought into national legal and policy frameworks. UNDP will be an important partner in the implementation of this Output with inputs from WCS. However, UNEP will wait to see the outcome of the independent, Risk-Based, Third-Party Review of compliance by UNDP with the GEF Policy on Minimum Fiduciary Standards which is planned to be completed by October 1, 2021, as requested by recommendation 16 of the 59th GEF council; before any execution arrangement by UNDP. The final decision on the agreement to have UNDP execute planned project activities will rely on the outcome of the Intendant review

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

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

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

Building on the SAFE Platforms model, this Output will support the implementation of livelihood generation options for project communities. Communities in the project site will be provided with the tools, resources and capacities to develop conservation-compatible livelihood opportunities in non-service livelihood sectors (to complement service sector livelihood opportunities in Output 3.1.1.).

These will include development in sectors such as sustainable agriculture (particularly the development of the organic cocoa value chain, as well as value chains for other potentially viable commercial and subsistence crops - such as spices and fruits incorporated into agroforestry systems). This support will be provided in terms of seeds for enhanced locally compatible breeds of crops and trees for farming initiatives to enhance agricultural production; and funding for opening up farms to market access by opening up key road infrastructure within the project area[56]. Given the established dependence of local communities on non-timber forest products, possibilities of developing these value chains will also be examined and promoted where the harvesting of these products is sustainable and the ecological impact of harvesting practices can be monitored and reported. Communities will also be equipped with the business-planning tools necessary for them to identify, develop and manage the mix of business enterprises most suitable for their needs in these proposed value chains.

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

Local communities of the Lac Tele Landscape use and depend on a wide variety of NTFPs[57]. The main challenge faced with using NTFPs to support livelihoods is the lack of value addition. These products are exported to markets outside the local, rural environments in which they are harvested in the very raw form ? very limited or often no processing. There is also no support for addressing issues of sustainable harvesting of these products. This project will address these two problems by (i) Supporting local communities to organize into NTFPs common initiative groups, and provide capacity building on the sustainable extraction and management of NTFPs. (ii) This project will also support local communities to add value to NTFPs by undertaking pre-processing or full processing. This will involve purchasing and installing at least four pre-processing, or full processing plants for at least two NTFPs identified through participatory processes as economically viable, and environmentally benign. While the type of plant and level of processing will be decided through community engagements, it is expected that these plants should support local communities in some of the key value addition processes of at least one NTFP. (iii) Finally, the project will support the local common initiative groups in obtaining organic certification for their products, properly packaging and labelling, identifying and accessing markets outside of the local communities. Examples of such certification schemes include whose services may be sought include: AFNOR Certification (<https://certification.afnor.org/agriculture/agriculture-biologique>); DEMETER (<https://www.demeter.net/>); Rainforest Alliance (<https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/articles/rainforest-alliance-utz-merger>); and GLOBAL G.A.P (https://www.globalgap.org/uk_en/).

Adding value to organic cocoa: Future Market Insights report that the certified organic cocoa market represents a very small share of the total cocoa market, estimated around 0.5% of total production[58]. However, the demand for organic cocoa products are growing at a very strong pace, the supply side faces a strong challenge to meet the demand of organic cocoa. The organic cocoa market is expected to be largely driven by the health consciousness among consumers. Chocolate is the main application of organic cocoa which is the main growth driver of organic cocoa market. However, lack of proper supply of organic cocoa restrains the global organic cocoa market which also leads to increase in price of organic cocoa.

The environment of the RoC, and in particular the project location is suitable for cocoa production ? as the crop has been produced here for decades[59]. The discovery and exploitation of petroleum products substantially diminished the focus the country had on its cocoa production. Given the potential that this crop has to do well in this region, and especially given the increase in demand for certified organic products, this project will support a revival of cocoa production ? but this time with a strong organic focus. The project recognizes that improving the cocoa value chain will entail aligning Corporate Social Responsibility and value chain related investments. Climate related objectives and initiatives can

be aligned with the overall sustainability, production, sourcing, and growth strategy of the GEF investments in this initiative. Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives can comprehensively address the supply chain challenges related to short term volatility and long-term security of supply. Targeting both small and medium-scale producers, this project will fund the development of seedling producing initiatives through common initiative groups, capacity building in organic cocoa production, and support for value addition and access to organic certified markets as is the case with NTFPs described above.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As a preamble to the above activities however, this project will also support the review and evaluation of existing biodiversity, socio-economic and landscape level data from existing cocoa certification audits, economic studies, and other biodiversity monitoring sources. Drawing from the review and evaluation, a preliminary marketing strategy will be developed that will aim to increase demand for

organic cocoa from the Lac Tele Landscape. A project marketing consultant will query targeted roaster-retailers and traders, as well as at least three more potential participants (roaster-retailers and traders), to identify marketing campaign needs, develop a strategy to build consumer awareness and delineate activities to be carried out during the project implementation to further support consumer awareness campaigns. In the strategy, private sector support or financial leverage to the campaign will be defined.

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

In this Output, a small grants program will be created to support individual small business investments in the implementation of land use plans. The small grants will be used to support individual projects for livelihood transformation to enable a change in income generating activities at the household level. The project will also establish in parallel a micro-loan facility for local communities to support larger community developed projects that may be undertaken by local CBOs, NGOs, villages and districts. The micro-loans will support sustainable wildlife management projects, including community-based trophy and bushmeat hunting, and certification of the sustainable wildlife production for selling on local and national markets. Projects that benefit from the micro-loans will serve as demonstration projects that will be used as learning cases for local people interested in developing alternative income sources other than poaching and illegal wildlife trade. These programs will be administered by a local financial institution under the guidance of the PMU. The PMU will identify and contract the local financial institution through an open bidding process. The appropriate establishment documents as well as a decision on how much of these grants will be allocated per individual, and the interest rates on the micro-loans will be agreed upon during the project's inception workshop. Beneficiaries of the small grant and micro-loan programmes will include former poachers among indigenous people and women. Priority for awarding grants and micro-loans will be given to the projects proposing CBNRM, SFM, and use of degraded lands for small-scale oil palm plantations[60]. The Project Management Unit (PMU) will establish a transparent committee for the selection of eligible micro projects compatible with the implementation of the LUMPs developed in Output 1.1.4 of this project

Tourism is not an entirely new economic activity in the project region. While current data is scarce, there is data available on tourism traffic in Likouala relate to the period 2009-2012[61]. The occupancy rate calculated over the four years varies between 48% and 52.3%[62]. These obsolete data need to be updated to take into account the period 2013-2019, for a better analysis. This project will support the development of ecotourism framework that will leverage the potential of the demarcated protected areas, the rich biodiversity of the Lac Tele Landscape, and the unique flavour of the tropical peatland landscape of the project area to generate ecotourism flows and revenues for the project area (see Supplement 1). Imfondo will serve as the locational anchor for ecotourism activities that are outside of the forests or peatlands. Support will be provided for small business initiatives to develop tourism-related non-forest business initiatives such as handicrafts, cultural displays, a local training centre for ecotourism related value chains, and an office for tourism information and outreach. The ecotourism packages developed will form a basis for such development in other parts of Congo. This framework will address issues such as considering charging entrance fees, which could be two-tiered, i.e. lower for nationals than for international visitors. Cooperation with local communities around protected areas

and areas of ecotourism potential. Benefit sharing with key actors in the tourism sectors; and other relevant issues. Ecotourism strives to empower and benefit local residents and rural communities in part through small-scale, locally owned enterprises. Sometimes, these communities do not have access to the financial resources required for higher-level and/or larger tourism operations. Local and/or foreign investments may be needed to provide the lodging that well-to-do ecotourists desire even for an overnight stay [63].

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

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

This project will support the implementation of a training and communication program on sustainable livelihoods with special focus on sustainable CBNRM, including transparent community governance and equity, and mechanisms to ensure satisfactory revenue flows and a fair distribution benefits from the benefits of training among a broad spectrum of community members (including women, indigenous populations, and the youth). This training program will serve to improve local knowledge on the value of wildlife and other nature-based resources and how these resources could be harnessed sustainably to general legal and robust economic value that sustainably and viably supports livelihoods. Special focus of the training will be on ecotourism – its potentials, functioning, current structure in the Congo, legal requirements, and potential project support for pilot initiatives in the project area. Potential beneficiaries of the training will be broad based, and designed to provide alternative sources of livelihood to members of the community whose activities directly negatively affect environmental health, as well as potential investors in the ecotourism sector. For example, traditional local hunters will be trained to serve as guides, souvenir makers and entertainers for tourists given their unique tracking skills, knowledge of wildlife and amazing cultural traditions. Besides the ecotourism focus, the training will also provide tools on how to undertake CBNRM practices in livelihood support activities such as sustainable game and bushmeat hunting, forest fruit harvesting and processing, the harvesting and processing of wild tropical spices, bee keeping, caterpillars collecting, aquaculture and fish processing within the project area in accordance with relevant LUMPs. This Output will be implemented by Ministry of Tourism and the Environment in collaboration with UNDP Brazzaville, subject to satisfactory outcome of the independent review of UNDP compliance to fiducial standards as requested by decision 16 of the 59th GEF council.

Component 4. Engaging the private sector in conservation

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

premiums and improve terms of payment and financing, recognizing the increased sustainability of the products from supported landscapes.

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

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

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

The private sector is actively engaged in different activities associated with land use, land cover change, access to natural resources, associated issues of livelihoods in the project area. In 2016 the Ministry of Mines and Energy issued at least seven permits that allow companies to prospect or begin mining for gold inside the Republic of Congo's largest national park[64]. Odzala-Kokoua became a national park in 2001 by presidential decree, which does not allow mining. It has been feared that the Republic of Congo's pivot toward mineral extraction as an economic development strategy may mean that the government could change the park's borders to allow mining if it is in the public interest. The boundaries of Odzala-Kokoua National Park contain some of the best-preserved old-growth rainforest in the Republic of Congo. Its terrain varies from hills rising to 350 meters to dense low-lying jungles to more than a hundred clearings in the forest ? popular hangouts for wildlife.

While petroleum exploitation has been an ongoing activity in the project area, there are new concessions being offered and developed to further expand on the existing production capacity. One of the latest has been the Petroleum Exploration and Production Africa (PEPA) which, by decree No. 6757/MTE/CAB/DGE/DPPN of April 11, 2019, was authorized to open the drilling and to exploit the wells of the Ngoki Permit, in the basin of the Cuvette[65].

Timber is playing an outsized role in the Central African developing country's economy, particularly now that its petroleum export profits have taken a hit from a nosedive in global oil prices. Around 90 percent of Congo's forests are earmarked for logging concessions, and the majority of them are in production, according to a 2014 report published by Chatham House[66]. Some of the major players in forest exploitation and management in the project area are shown in *Table 6* and *Table 7* below:

Table 6. Forest concessions and Protected areas on the outskirts of the Lac T?l? Landscape[67]

| Forest concessions | Managers | Area | Departements |
|----------------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| UFA Mimbelli-Ibenga | CIB-OLAM | 669 589 | Likouala |
| UFA Ipendja | Thanry Congo | 451 245 | Likouala |
| UFA Loundoungou-Toukoulaka | CIB-OLAM | 571 100 | Likouala |
| UFA Pokola | CIB-OLAM | 452 200 | Sangha |
| UFA Ngomb? | IFO | 1 159 643 | Sangha |
| UFA Makoua | Christelle | 706 452 | Cuvette |
| Protected areas | | | |

| Forest concessions | Managers | Area | Departements |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------------|
| Parc national d'Odzala-Kokoua | WCS | 1 354 600 | Cuvette/ Sangha |

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

Table 7. Mining companies on the outskirts of the Lac T?l? Landscape[68]

| D?signation | Compagnie | Produits | D?partements | Localisation |
|---|------------|----------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| Permis minier semi-industrielle (Exploitation industrielle) | Niel Congo | Diamant | Likouala | Mokabi Ibenga |
| | | | | Motaba |
| | | | | Ipendja |
| | | | | Iblink |
| Permis minier semi-industrielle (Exploitation industrielle) | Famiye | Or | Sangha | Ekouye |
| | | | | Lobo |
| | | | | Liouesso |
| Permis p?trolier | P?troleum | P?trole | Cuvette | Districts de Lokolel? et Mossaka |

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

This project will leverage the distinct strengths of private sector actors in the achievement of natural resources management goals in the project area. Private sector actors offer significant technical expertise and finance and implementation capacities that can improve the outcomes from collaborative actions for all concerned[69]. The approach to private sector and other stakeholder engagement will focus on core issues that stakeholders value in common. It is through focusing on challenges that matter to the private sector, government agencies and local communities alike that the dialogue processes will be regarded as socially legitimate. Core resource governance interests of rural communities relate to security of rights, regulations addressing land use and shared resources, and policies affecting small-scale agriculture. By focusing on the points where these goals converge, this project will be fostering inter-institutional collaborations to influence land-related policy and practice related to large-scale public and private investments[70].

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

Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) have emerged to specify requirements on a wide range of sustainability metrics, including respect for human rights, workers' health and safety, a decent income, and environmental degradation[71]. The production of VSS-compliant commodities has continued to grow, reaching at least 34.5 per cent of coffee's global production and 29 per cent of cocoa's, based on 2016 data. This is driven in many cases by consumer demand, purchase decisions, sourcing

commitments from larger buyers and traders, and government regulations. Despite this growth and the promising sign of the expansion of VSS-compliant production in the agricultural sector, producers in many less-developed countries continue to face major challenges in accessing and benefiting from these sustainable markets. Challenges include: price volatility, income disparity across the value chain, market imbalance and the effects of climate change[72].

VSS schemes are developed in partnership with a range of non-governmental actors such as civil society groups and businesses. The selling point of VSS is that such schemes bring greater transparency to how sustainably supply chains are managed, and that they provide market incentives to altering production processes towards more sustainable ones. VSS schemes can also increase awareness of consumer around issues such as ethical production, producer well-being, and corporate accountability. There has been some case-specific evidence that VSS may generate environmental and economic benefits. Most VSS, such as the Marine Stewardship Council and the Rainforest Alliance among others, stipulate certain types of practices, such as limited use of agro-chemicals, policies on deforestation, soil conservation, waste, and water management, to control negative environmental externalities arising from value chains. The economic benefits of VSS that would contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the SDGs 1 (poverty reduction), 8 (sustainable economic growth and employment), 9 (sustainable industrialization), and 10 (reduction in inequality), are tied to the potential that implementation of VSS and its related capacity building projects may help increase farmers' productivity. This in turn would lead to higher income for farmers, more stable relationships with their buyers, and greater access to resources. In Kenya, for example, support for the implementation of Rainforest Alliance Certification and its training in Farmer Field Schools led to increased productivity and higher yields[73].

In this project, VSS principles will be introduced at different levels in the Lac T? Landscape. Some of the areas of application will include in the development of strategy documents across all landscapes and identified zones in Output 1.1.4. where LUMPs will be developed for selected districts in Lac T? landscape. It will also be applied in supporting implementation of land-use management plans for the target geography's protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on peatlands, ecotourism, gender consideration, fighting illegal wildlife trade and transboundary cooperation (Output 1.1.5). In production landscapes (related to forestry, agriculture, fisheries and even some forms of NTFPs, VSS will serve to infuse and ensure sustainable harvesting and production. To ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the principles, application and the opportunities offered by VSS, the training in Output 2.1.2. for local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples to develop and implement environmental projects will include capacity-building on VSS.

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

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

In this Output, capacity will be developed for a range of on-the-ground stakeholders, including for protected area staff, provincial and local government officials, community-based land user groups and conservation concerns, and other stakeholders. The training will cover the systematic and participatory conservation management planning, as well as management processes and activities for peatlands,

wildlife, and protected areas. This training will cover competencies including dealing with landscape-based (sector) developments (such as agriculture & water use, sustainable land management, the integrated management of peatland resources, eco-tourism), threats (such as deforestation, IWT, invasive species) and opportunities for enhancing the conservation of environmental resources (such as financing opportunities offered by payments for ecosystem services ? PES schemes). This Output will be implemented with technical support from Université Marien Ngouabi and other relevant institutions within the Scientific and Technical Committee.

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

Concessions owned or leased by forestry companies do possess significant amounts of native vegetation as well as critical biodiversity (including some keystone and endemic species) relevant for conservation and environmental sustainability of the Lac T?l? Landscape and the Congo Basin Region in general. The main focus of this Output is to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services conservation and restoration in the Forestry sector companies. To do so, the project will intervene on the indirect threats of poor knowledge about conservation value in owned or leased concessions, lack of integrated landscape planning, low compliance with environmental legislation in force, and poor knowledge of landowners about environmental-friendly techniques. This Output intends to support Forestry industries and their logging activities to go beyond acknowledging the importance of biodiversity conservation, current monitoring actions, and forest recovery. The expectation is that the sector boosts its performance in these components, systematise these achievements into evidence that instructs RoC government regarding its targeted achievements in the scope of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and disseminates solutions found within and outside the sector. It is the sector interest: i) that protocols for biodiversity monitoring, SLM, SFL and restoration are improved, and that data obtained from it are incorporated into national reports in the scope of CBD; ii) that their areas of highest conservation value are identified and properly managed based on the improved protocols; and that iii) priority areas for native vegetation restoration are identified and considered by the companies. Therefore, the project, in partnership with the forestry sector companies, will support the acquisition and use of data on biodiversity in their respective concessions, as well as increase conservation and restoration quality in these areas.

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

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

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

There is a growing movement toward using economic incentives to help accomplish environmental goals. The challenge is to craft such incentives to encourage the private sector to conserve resources while still achieving sustainable economic development[74]. Economic incentives as a method of encouraging private sector involvement are advantageous as they can accomplish major conservation actions at a lower cost than traditional approaches. While tax incentives for conservation may reduce government revenues slightly in the short run, in the long run, the overall economy benefits from

resulting resource conservation[75]. For example, conservation incentives can promote sustainable economic activities such as ecologically sound tourism and recreation that might otherwise be foreclosed. There are many economic incentives available as tools to spur or achieve conservation. Incentive mechanisms are increasingly being tried out in developing countries to address the conservation of biodiversity and provision of ecosystem services ? that is services that ecosystems provide. They include among others: i) Payments for Environmental Service (PES) schemes, in which natural resource users are paid to conserve natural resources or manage them more sustainably[76]. ii) The certification of ?biodiversity-friendly products?, the production of which conserves key species and habitats while improving the livelihoods of people; iii) Benefit-sharing schemes to give local communities a stake in conserving critical habitats and species.

The use of legal tools to achieve conservation aims is also well documented, with several important legal tools available for private actors to use in accomplishing conservation[77]. The simplest and most obvious is a gift of land, money, or securities (a donation) to a conservation organization or government agency. A second approach is the ?conservation easement,? a tool for permanently conserving land by restricting most forms of new development while allowing landowners to use it for limited purposes consistent with conservation. A third tool is the conservation agreement, in which a landowner keeps full ownership of the land, but enters into a legal contract with a government agency or a conservation organization in which the owner commits to manage the land so as to ensure conservation. Lastly, exchanges of public and private land can involve the private sector in conservation and allow efficient use of government resources. To increase the incentive for conservation, these legal tools are often combined with tax policies that encourage their use[78].

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

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

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

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

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

The project approach recognizes that there is often substantial common interest between local indigenous people wishing to retain their rights to land, conservationists who wish to preserve ecological habitats for biodiversity, and private sector companies seeking to build sound, long-term local relationships and "social license to operate"[79]. Research on local institutions[80] has shown that the impacts of public and private organisations partnering up with local communities empowers them and gives them "a sense of ownership", which in turn drives commitment, accountability and responsibility, actually encouraging local communities to conserve and to help in restricting access to outsiders. Another impact is that such an approach builds local capacity, improves communication, stabilises power relationships and increases transparency[81]. Most importantly, it is necessary to recognise and foster the already existing links between conservation and the knowledge systems and livelihoods of local communities, ensuring a far more holistic, sustainable, realistic and resilient conservation approach than that currently applied in the mainstream. The project will undertake a suite of activities for empowering local communities including women, outreach and education relating to conservation, the roles and functions of protected areas and corridors/complexes, relevant regulations regarding resource use (including poaching), and the goals and activities of the proposed project.

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

These multi-channel communication efforts will be built on annual multi-stakeholder consultative forums on the project progress and achieved results and to provide an opportunity to build partnerships and monitor the impact of the project[82]. In addition, the project will strengthen and make use of the Ministry of Tourism and Environment website to showcase project activities and progress, to report on relevant policy and regulatory changes and other events, and to make available key documentation and lessons learned. The project will also develop a sound monitoring and evaluation system which will give adequate attention to indicators related to gender and indigenous people issues[83]. The expected outcome will be "Generated knowledge and communication products are available for disseminated at different levels and adaptive management ensured". The outputs will include: i) Communication and knowledge products are generated by the project and disseminated at local, national and regional levels to create awareness for community based peatlands and natural resources conservation; ii) RoC key actors including those involved in peatlands and natural resources management are actively engaged; and iii) Project implementation is adequately monitored, and relevant evaluations are conducted.

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

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

This Output will contribute to improved communications and enhanced awareness in the Lac T?l? landscape on biodiversity, IWT, ecosystems conservation, and sustainable peatlands management. There are currently very limited initiatives to support biodiversity communications and information dissemination on relevant environmental and socio-economic development issues, challenges and opportunities in the project area[84]. This project will promote initiatives for the distribution of environmental and development related information to support the fight against IWT, sustainable peatlands management, and improved protected area management by harnessing the potential offered by traditional media including newspapers and radio, and self-organized general public campaign, such as community meetings through grassroots organizations, conservation billboards, signage, and countryside literary activities, etc. Target audiences include villagers, students, tourists and general public. There are three major shortcomings identified with conservation communication in the Lac T?l? Landscape: (i) existing communications platform and channels in the Lac T?l? Landscape are out of date - and related, there is a lack of capacity in using modern media, networks means and social media for effective environment education and information dissemination. (ii) Outreach and communication programs are more traditional in content, restricted to biodiversity only, and do not incorporate the economics and values of ecosystem services (contained in the Lac T?l? Landscape). (iii)

Communications in the Lac T? Landscape are not integrated and harmonized to support a common message because of the absence of an agreed strategy and delivery plan.

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

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

A web-based coordination platform will be created to facilitate inter-institutional information sharing, joint programming, and mutual understanding of project activities and as well as information and results sharing. The project host institution as part of its official website will host the web-based coordination platform. The web-based platform will initially operate for sharing information and promoting coordination between the key project stakeholders related to the project, but will gradually expand to serve as a coordination platform for biodiversity conservation, sustainable peatland management, CBNRM, and IWT around the country. The platform will have a collaborative system that will enable authorized users in geographically different locations to have access and share information. As part of the web-based coordination platform, a Facebook page and other social media will be established for the project that will serve both for disseminating project information, lessons learned, and best practices as well as for raising public and community awareness. The Facebook page will also gradually expand to include information about biodiversity conservation, sustainable peatland management, CBNRM, and IWT around the country. This Output will be led by the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment.

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

This project recognizes that stakeholder engagement and stakeholder management are possibly the most important ingredients for successful project delivery[85]. The strategy of this project is to maintain synergistic relationships between its various stakeholders, not only thematically but also through a mutual enrichment between the three project intervention sites. This has been the basis of the stakeholder contributions during the project preparation phase (see Supplement 2). The project plan for engaging key actors, including those involved in peatlands and natural resources management revolves around four integrated approaches. These include[86] (i) Identifying project stakeholders, reviewing expectations, and analysing the level of influence and interest in the project. This was done during the thematic studies and related consultation during the development of the project documents. (ii) Determining a communication strategy, which involves determining preferred method of reaching out and allowing information flow through all stakeholders and levels of the project. This strategy has also been developed as part of Component 5 of this document. (iii) Perform risk, change impact analysis to identify advocates as well as potential adversaries and create a plan for conflict resolution. This has been done as part of the project documents. (iv) Consult and communicate early and often to ensure that requirements are agreed and a delivery.

4) Alignment with GEF focal area and/or impact program strategies;

The project addresses key elements of the regional project ? including inclusive conservation, sustainable forest management, sustainable land management, and improved financial sustainability for effective ecosystem management.

Alignment with The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (Congo IP) is funded by the GEF to the tune of 57.2 million USD, with the objective to catalyse transformational change in conservation and sustainable management of the Congo Basin through landscape approaches that empower local communities and forest-dependent people, and through partnership with the private sector. This project will contribute to the Congo IP's goal of sustainable management of environmental resources in the Congo Basin, and to its transformational change agenda in terms of land-use, SFM, biodiversity conservation.

By supporting multi-stakeholders cross-border initiatives (put in place by previous project) on: monitoring and enforcing trade regulations, monitoring biodiversity, developing financial mechanisms are improved and strengthened (Output 2.1.4). In the same light, the development of ILUP (Outcome 1.1 of the current project) integrated into local LUP and tenure rights will also be contributing to Component 1 of the CBSL program.

In the current project, effective measures will be put in place to meet biodiversity conservation national priorities as defined under participatory process (Outcome 2.1) will contribute to support Component 2 of the CBLS program.

Component 3 of the CBLS program envisages reduced community and production sector impacts on important services of forests in landscapes. In the current project, this Component is supported by the provision of support to be delivered through the outputs of the outcome 2.1 and 4.1 of the project. Also through outcome 3.1 income generating activities in support of conservation will be supported. It is also supported by the improvement and strengthening of multi-stakeholders cross-border initiatives on monitoring and enforcing trade regulations, monitoring biodiversity, and the development financial mechanisms (Outcome 2.1 of the current project). Capacity building in achieving these goals and ensuring community-led strategies for sustainable natural resources management (Component 4 of the CBSL program) are addressed in Outcomes 2.1; 3.1 and 4.1. of the current project. The involvement of key stakeholders including local communities, private sectors and government entities at all level will help to generate general ownership by stakeholders and global environment benefits of peatlands conservation also aligns with the inclusive agenda of resource management and change resonating with the Congo IP. In particular, this directly responds to the Congo IP objective for Component 3 - sustainable use of forests by local communities and forest dependent people through strengthening of rights and tenure, and sustainable management of production sector activities. The project will contribute to achievement of a range of Aichi targets (see Table 3)

Table 3. Aichi Targets and related Components/Outputs for which the current project stands to contribute.

| Aichi Targets | Project Contribution |
|---------------|----------------------|
|---------------|----------------------|

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

Conformity with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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

Table 4: Project Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals

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

Conformity with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

This project is consistent with the commitments of the RoC to the framework of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2017-2021) [87].

This project is consistent with the commitments of the Government of the Republic of the RoC within the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)[88]. This framework outlines the strategic direction and results expected from cooperation between the RoC and the UN Country Team (UNCT) for the period 2017-2021. This cooperation is underpinned by the principles of ?leaving no one behind? and on ?sustainable development & resilience? while meeting the central objective of poverty reduction. The inclusive approach of this project to supporting the sustainable management and use of natural resources is therefore in line with and supports the vision of UNDAF. The Project Task Manager will liaise with the UN Environment Offices in the Congo IP countries to ensure that the project?s contribution to UNDAF 2017 ? 2021 is properly captured and reported.

The project is in line with the commitments and initiatives of the RoC in a gender balanced development ? buttressed by the Women?s Act of 2010, and its amendment of 2015. These pieces of legislation define the commitment to gender equality and women?s empowerment not only as human rights but also because they are a pathway to achieving the project?s goal of protecting and managing biodiversity and natural resources on a sustainable basis. Gender equality and women?s empowerment will be mainstreamed into project activities, ensuring that women have a real voice in project governance as well as implementation. Women will participate equally with men in any dialogue or decision-making initiated by the project and will influence decisions that will determine the success of the project and ultimately the future of their families. UNDAF?s Strategic Result 3, targets Sustainable

Agriculture, Natural Resources, Environment, and Climate Change Management. This strategic result specifically calls for a gender-balanced approach in the management of natural resources and gender-responsive extension and research works to support value chain development. These aspirations have been reflected in the development of this project. In the sidelines of the inception workshop, a Women's Forum will be organized to specifically examine the challenges of women in natural resources management, access to information and training, issues of land and other natural resources rights, and how the project could contribute to addressing these gender imbalances.

5) Incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing;

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

Peatlands (including peat swamp forests) possess a distinctive ecosystem and therefore possess unique biodiversity of flora and fauna that are specially adapted to this type of environment[89]. Peat swamp forest vegetation of the Lac Tele Landscape has been recognized as an important reservoir of plant diversity. Deforestation, IWT, and other forms of unsustainable land-use are contributing to the deterioration and endangerment of some niche-specific species. This has the potential of disrupting ecological systems and destabilizing ecosystems of the Lac Tele Landscape in particular, and of the Congo Basin in General. The rich biodiversity available in peatlands is also a source of food, medicine and livelihood for local communities. The depletion or loss of these biodiversity values will have negative impacts on local communities dependent on peatland resources and contribute to poverty. Without GEF funding, initiatives towards preventing and abating these losses in biodiversity-rich landscapes and endemic flora and fauna will not be possible.

Globally, peatlands are considered to be significant stores of carbon containing 20-35% of the carbon on the terrestrial biosphere/soils. While they only cover 3% of the land surface they store 30% of the carbon[90]. Tropical peatlands store ~150 - 250 t C ha⁻¹ above-ground and ~250 - >10,000 t C ha⁻¹ below-ground, compared to the average of about 270 t C/ha⁻¹ on average in the world's forest ecosystems. However, this storage function is now being reversed due to human intervention. Activities related to land conversion and fire incidences release this stored carbon to the atmosphere, and in significant amounts it can have detrimental implications on climate change. Drainage releases 50-200 tC/ha/yr and fire may release 500-1000 t C/ha/fire. GEF funding will support sustainable management to ensure that these peatlands of the Lac Tele Landscape and those of the Congo Basin by extension continue to serve the RoC and global community as the extensive carbon sink they have been.

Fires in flooded savannah habitats (used for land clearing and other forms of land management) continue to be an important challenge in the sustainable management of land and natural resources in the Lac Tele Landscape. There is potential that in future the occurrence of fires may extend to the peatland area. Unless management changes are made, peatland fires in the region will continue to have

a negative impact on health, tourism, transport and other economic sectors in the region. Without this GEF project, there will be no resources to support the transition to sustainable land use planning and implementation. This will involve ensuring that the current fire regime is sustainable and can be adapted to future climatic changes. Fire is necessary for local communities, and has been a part of the landscape for a long time. It needs to be well governed if it is to be a part of future sustainable livelihoods.

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

Proposed alternative scenario

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

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

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

Another barrier to the effective management of forests and peatlands in the RoC is the problem of limited alternative and income generating and livelihood choices. Initiatives of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) have laid the ground work for reducing the vulnerability and increasing the adaptive capacity for the most vulnerable segment of Congolese society (i.e. small farmers including women, young people and indigenous populations). The GCF-funded FP159: PREFOREST CONGO - Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments in the Republic of Congo, for example has

contributed to the reduction of the vulnerability and increasing the adaptive capacity of approximately 41,373 direct beneficiaries (35% women) and 870,649 indirect beneficiaries (35% women) in the RoC. To further cement these achievements and gains, the current project will ensure that the local forests and peatlands (natural environments) which support resilience and enhance long-term adaptive capacity will be protected. This increment, together with the strengthening of land access and security rights for local and indigenous populations will contribute to achieving transformational change and sustainable processes of resource use and management in the Lac Tele and surrounding landscapes of the RoC.

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

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

The lack of policies to handle conflicting vested interests in forest resources conservation, use and management is detrimental to the sustainable management of peatlands and forest. This also includes

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

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

6) Global environmental benefits (GEFTF) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF);

Biodiversity conservation: The Lac Tumba Landscape has an extensive swamp forest covering about 90% of Landscape. This is the largest wetland in Africa, with a huge hydrological value for communities and biodiversity. Besides being of strategic importance for electricity generation, it has high fish biodiversity and contain three species of great apes at high density ? unique in the world[91]. An island of terra firma lies at the heart of the reserve, forming key habitat for gorillas. The Lac Tumba Community Reserve contains one of the highest densities of western lowland gorillas in the region[92]. It is also home to forest elephants, chimpanzee, leopards, buffalos and more than 250 species of birds[93].

In 2017, the Cuvette Centrale peatlands in the central Congo Basin were mapped, revealing that they cover 145,500 sq km ? an area larger than England[94]. This study revealed that carbon has been building up in the Congo basin's peat for nearly 11,000 years. According to Dargie et al (2017), this makes the Cuvette Centrale?spanning both the Republic of Congo (ROC) and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)?the single largest peatland complex known in the tropics[95]. Hence beyond local benefits, more efficient management of the forest and peatland landscapes of the project area will also contribute to global benefits in terms of GHG emissions reductions (estimated to reach 52, 422, 220 tCO₂eq). This target will be achieved through a combination of support to best management practices in the wildlife, agricultural and fire prevention and control on peatland landscapes (see Appendix 10).

To preserve this important natural heritage of global importance, the Republic of Congo has deployed considerable efforts resulting in particular in the development of 17 terrestrial and 1 Marine protected areas covering a total area of 3,991,418 ha, or 13% of the national territory. This protected area network represents 70.6% in achieving of Aichi Target 11 for Congo (18% of national territory covered by protected areas). Internationally, particularly in the border areas, the Congo in cooperation with its neighbours ? Cameroon and Gabon ? makes remarkable efforts in strengthening the protection and conservation of biodiversity including several animals and plant species of global importance such as forest elephants, chimpanzees, western lowland gorillas, leopards, and bongo antelope.

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

- Strengthening the system of protected areas in the Lac T?i? Landscape. These will include the Lac T?i? Community Reserve (438960 ha), Odzala -Kokoua National Park (1354600 ha), Nouabal? ? Ndoki National Park (423870 ha) and the Ntokou-Pikounda National Park (427200 ha).
- Contribute to national and Congo Basin Region goals of wildlife preservation of some of the well-known iconic species in the area such as forest elephants (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*), the lowland tropical dense humid forests gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*), and chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*).
- Contribute to protection of globally significant peat swamp forests ? the central Congo peatlands occupy an area of about the central Congo peatlands cover 145,500 square kilometers[96].

? This set of comprehensive actions will not only increase the resilience of the Lac T?i? Landscape, but also, consolidate the entire system of protected areas in one sustainable and much more resilient complex according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Biosphere Reserve model.

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

Sustainable management of land and forest resources: The project will contribute to the protection of globally significant peatlands and associated carbon stocks and biodiversity. The project anticipates that at least four (4) municipal councils have management plans to guide restoration and conservation efforts. The key global environmental benefits will arise from the protection, rehabilitation and sustainable management of key peatland areas. Preventing the degradation of peatlands and encouraging rehabilitation, conserving globally important biodiversity and taking action to promote sustainable land and forest management as stated in the National Action Plan on Peatlands will reduce occurrences of fires on peatlands and land-use pressure, which are key threats to those species in the project areas. At least 200 persons trained in implementing management of forest landscape; biodiversity; and peatland management. The tropical peat swamp forests feature some of the highest freshwater biodiversity of any habitat in the world and are home to a range of threatened fauna. Likewise, there are various rare flora that are under threat. Rehabilitation and sustainable management of these globally important peatlands will enable them to support these species over the longer term. Preventing the degradation of peatlands and encouraging rehabilitation, conserving globally important biodiversity, and taking action to promote sustainable land and forest management will contribute towards the fulfilment of The Republic of Congo's obligations under the CBD (Aichi targets), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) (Land Degradation targets) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)'s (Emission Reduction targets). The project will ensure that at least 85% of land users are practicing sustainable land management on peatlands in the project area.

Reductions in GHG emissions: Enhanced management of peatlands through the project (through fire prevention, avoided mining, aquaculture and other developments on peat, and reduced forest and peatland degradation) will reduce net GHG emissions. The project will contribute to 52, 422, 220 tCO₂eq avoided emissions in terms of lifetime direct as well as consequential GHG emissions avoided through the implementation of various activities on forests and peatlands of the project area over a time horizon of 20 years. In order to be conservative, the project has only targeted direct emissions during the project period rather than direct/indirect emissions over a 20-year period. Without the project interventions, 52, 422, 220 tCO₂eq would be released into the atmosphere in the business-as-usual scenario from the areas described below (see details in Supplement 3).

7) Innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling up. ?

Innovativeness and sustainability

Innovation

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

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

The project combines SLM, SFM, sustainable peatlands management, and effective biodiversity management with socioeconomic incentives as an indivisible package that address the challenges of land degradation and the unsustainable practices associated with land use. These innovative approaches, if proved successful, can go a long way in resolving the habitat fragmentation threats and ensuring long term stability of the populations of important species. The Project is innovative within the physical and legal frameworks it has to face to date; there have been few attempts at establishing an integrated approach to land-use management in peatlands, incorporating conservation priorities, zoning, sustainable use of resources at the landscape level and clean/sustainable production agreements with the private sector. Over the past decades, there has been limited vertical integration and linking of planning processes from the national level down to the provincial, district and community levels. This is notwithstanding national efforts (at least at the policy level towards) a more disintegrated approach to decision-making on natural resources management.

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

Sustainability

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

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

This project responds to the three key pillars of sustainability[97]: economic, social, and environmental sustainability[98].

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

Social sustainability: The project expects to have positive social impacts, notably through improving local communities' livelihood and quality of life. However, as the project will support the preparation for classification and better management of priority conservation areas, it might impact local populations' livelihood through limiting access to legally designated protected areas. The social safeguards documents prepared during the design of this project and building on the work done during

the PPG is at the same time a process framework, a social assessment of the implications of the project to indigenous people and a referral bases for project implementation vis-?-vis the relationship between project implementation and indigenous peoples[99]. It presents guidance on the safeguards, principles and guidelines to be followed for sustainable management of those natural resources upon which local beneficiaries, particularly Indigenous Peoples livelihood depend. Moreover, it clearly defines the way in which traditional/customary rights will be preserved and establishes a framework for free prior and meaningful participatory consultation with all stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs) and other Civil Society Organizations (CSO).

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

Environmental sustainability: The overall goal of this project is to enhance sustainable peatland management and reduce GHG emissions from peatlands in the RoC, while enhancing the health of biological diversity by taking measures against IWT. The specific objective of the Project is to promote a model for integrated community-based conservation and protected area management applied to the peatland area and its forest ecosystem of the RoC Lac T?l? Landscape. The activities carried out by this project will therefore contribute to promoting sustainable peatland management, securing carbon stocks, and conserving biodiversity while improving the living standards of local communities. Beyond local benefits, more efficient management will also contribute to global benefits in terms of GHG emissions reductions (estimated to reach 52, 422, 220 tCO₂eq). This target will be achieved through a combination of support to best management practices in the wildlife, agricultural and fire prevention and control on peatland landscapes. This will be achieved by: (i) capacity building for sustainable peatland management; (ii) reducing peatland degradation and fires; and (iii) adopting best practices for integrated, sustainable management of peatlands at a landscape level through enhanced engagement of the private sector and local communities.

In all the communities, awareness raising and education on the win-win-win benefits accruing from biodiversity and ecosystem services and the economic benefits of the improved community-based natural resources management, including the elimination of IWT will sustain these resources. Education will also include biodiversity friendly agricultural practices to enhance ecosystem services, production and the resilience of agricultural systems in and around areas of the Lac T?l? Landscape, using participatory / learning by doing approaches and study visits, to reduce the leakage effects. Extensive community engagement will be used to raise awareness of the importance of these areas, not least, as they include the range of NTFPs that host communities depend so heavily on[100].

Upscaling

The potential for scaling up the project?s approach and impact will be encouraged through the dissemination of tested models for planning at the ecosystem level, lessons learned and experiences in implementing dynamic conservation in forests and peatland landscapes, The scaling up will also be supported by raising awareness on the value of the key ecosystems being addressed by this project (forests and peatlands). Capacity-building at different levels will ensure that local communities and stakeholders understand the challenges facing these ecosystems, and adopt incentives and tools for

conservation, biodiversity management, SLM and SFM practices in and around these ecosystems. A multiplying effect will be encouraged through strategic policy support, regulatory frameworks in place and capacity building at the local, provincial and national level to consolidate effects within the project period. The heterogeneous nature of project pilots (including the forested and semi-forested lands as peatlands of the Lac Tele Landscape) with different landscape mosaics of land uses and different productive sectors involved, provides many ways to achieve multiplier effects, replication and upscaling. Project implementation will be integrated in existing district institutions and will conduct workshops across areas with highest replication potential to demonstrate the experience and help other users and stakeholders to implement the same practices, thereby providing the systemic capacity needed for scaling up the initiative to other districts. The project will support the development of an exit strategy, which will cover all aspects handled by the project.

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

1. *Investments in low-cost community-inclusive models of natural resources management:* The Government of the RoC is in particular interested in the effectiveness of such investment to alleviate challenges of unsustainable natural resources exploitation, forest degradation, deterioration of biological resources and IWT, as well as to ensure environmental and socio-economic sustainability for rural communities in the face of global challenges such as climate change. The project will provide not only best practices and lessons learned on the natural resources management practices, models and methods from this project, but also try to improve communities livelihoods through introduction of alternative livelihood options and capacity building. If successful, this demonstration will be highly likely replicated and scaled by further investment in the future as a climate resilient development option.
2. *Facilitation efforts towards community-based partnerships with the private sector as well as national and international stakeholders under Outcome 4.1:* Viable partnerships created with key stakeholders in the natural resources use communities (local land and forest users, the private sector, local political and administrative stakeholders, the national government, indigenous peoples, trans-boundary initiatives, and international stakeholders) to attain sustainable natural resources conservation, preservation and management often makes a business sense for the private sector. The private sector can also achieve cost reductions, by reducing transaction costs as they operate in a more socially friendly environment. By demonstrating cost reduction in the attainment of goals of sustainable natural resources management and use, we can expect private sector financing of similar activities in the future to reduce environmental degradation both in the Lac Tele Landscape, in other sensitive areas of the RoC, and in the wider Congo Basin Landscape. Local stakeholders on the other hand benefit from closer collaboration with the private sector ? associations that can foster responsible corporate social behaviour to the benefit of local economies and social life, as well as responsible management of natural resources in the local landscape. To provide an enabling environment to provide incentives for such collaboration, this project will support the revision of the policy and regulatory frameworks to further promote such environmentally conscious investments in the future.
3. During the project preparation, thought has been given to the sustainability of the alternative income generating mechanisms that enables community members and non-governmental organizations to access financing support to divest from environmentally damaging and biodiversity unfriendly production activities. Possibilities for replication of successful aspects of this socio-economic model beyond the project areas were also examined. The project envisages that during the project lifetime, the funds for the alternative income generating mechanisms Outcome 4.1 will come directly from the GEF Project budget to design and test the mechanism, build local capacity for planning and managing micro-projects and assess its potential for delivering local level development impacts. As forest and wildlife derived revenues are generated through a range of new enterprises that become established in the

region (including ecotourism value chains and their spin-offs, organic cocoa production, and other economic activities supported under this and related projects), a share of these funds will be used to sustain the alternative income generating mechanisms following follow the same funding procedures as well as planning and monitoring approaches.

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

It is the assumption of the project that the investments made for knowledge generation and harmonization will create an appetite with stakeholders for greater consolidated data sets in the long run. Trainings in the data and knowledge management systems will establish a new threshold of skills, while disseminating this data will create new demand by end-users and stakeholders we beyond the geographic limits of the project area. Such knowledge and datasets will benefit national resources decision making at the national level (RoC), the regional eve (the Congo Basin region) and even beyond.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1b. Project Map and Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.

Lac T?l? ? the project area

The project area is the Lac T?l? Landscape in the northeast of the Republic of Congo (Figure 5). The landscape of Lac T?l? covers an area estimated at 45,688 kilometers square. This area is part of the Lac T?l? ? Lac Toumba landscape shared by the DRC and the RoC. It covers a surface area of 126 440 km², with the DRC holding 72 439 km² in the eastern section, and the RoC holding 54 001 km² in the western section. This landscape forms one of the largest seasonally flooded forests on the planet, the largest transboundary RAMSAR site worldwide[1], and has recently been found to contain the single largest tropical peatlands on the planet (Cuvette Centrale), which is estimated to hold the carbon equivalent of 20 years of GHG emissions from the USA. It is also one of the priority landscapes identified by the region's inter-agency environment body, COMIFAC. includes a vast tract of contiguous forest that extends to the west of the Lac T?l? landscape encompassing the entire north of the country [48,500 km²]. This area is constituted of a vast network of 4 protected areas (Lac T?l? Community Reserve, Nouabal?-Ndoki National Park, Odzala-Kokoua National Park, and Ntokou-Pikounda National Park) interspersed with production forests and large expanses of inaccessible swamp forest. Logging concessions here constitute the largest surface area of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified forests in the Congo Basin region. The area is suitable for tourism as it still hosts impressive tree species and vegetation, with possibilities of viewing great apes, elephants, other large and small mammals such as small monkeys and a diversity of bird species[2]. Together, the Lac T?l? landscape and the contiguous forest to the west of it hold almost a quarter of the remaining forest elephants and the single largest population of gorillas and chimpanzees in Africa (60% of all the world's gorillas are found here). One of the current challenges of tourism development in the area is the Covid-19 Epidemic, and global environmental challenges such as climate change and land degradation.

The Lac T?l? Community Reserve is situated in the north of the River Congo, between the Sangha and Oubangui rivers, and covers an area of 4,400km², making it the second largest protected area in RoC. Created in 2001, RoC's only community reserve forms part of a unique landscape spanning two countries, the Lac T?l? - Lac Tumba Congo Basin Forest Partnership Priority Landscape[3]. The establishment of the Lac T?l? Community Reserve in May 2001 points to efforts by government and other local and international stakeholders in preserving the rich biodiversity and diverse ecosystem service of the Lac T?l? Landscape. Lac T?l? Community Reserve has a seasonal flood the area's swamp-forest, grassland and floating prairies; and pump water into the area's lakes, ponds and tributaries. The swamp forest in 90% of Lac T?l? Landscape is extensive ? the largest wetland in Africa, with a huge hydrological value for communities and biodiversity. It is of strategic importance for electricity generation, high fish biodiversity and contain three species of great apes at high density ? unique in the world[4]. An ?island? of *terra firma* lies at the heart of the reserve, forming key habitat for gorillas.

Although Lac T?l? is considered a ?Community Reserve? ? the only one of its kind in the Republic of Congo ? activities are supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)[5]. The WCS also provides strategic oversight of the Reserve, in close cooperation with national and local stakeholders. Lac T?l? Community Reserve contains one of the highest densities of western lowland gorillas in the region[6]. It is also home to forest elephants, chimpanzee, leopards, buffalos and more than 250 species of birds[7]. The government of the RoC and international stakeholders have been working together to develop community-based management of the reserve. Lac T?l? contains a unique wetland ecosystem containing flooded forest and is part of a larger Ndoki-Likouala landscape management program supported by WCS which also includes the Nouabal?-Ndoki National Park and the surrounding buffer zones of logging concessions.

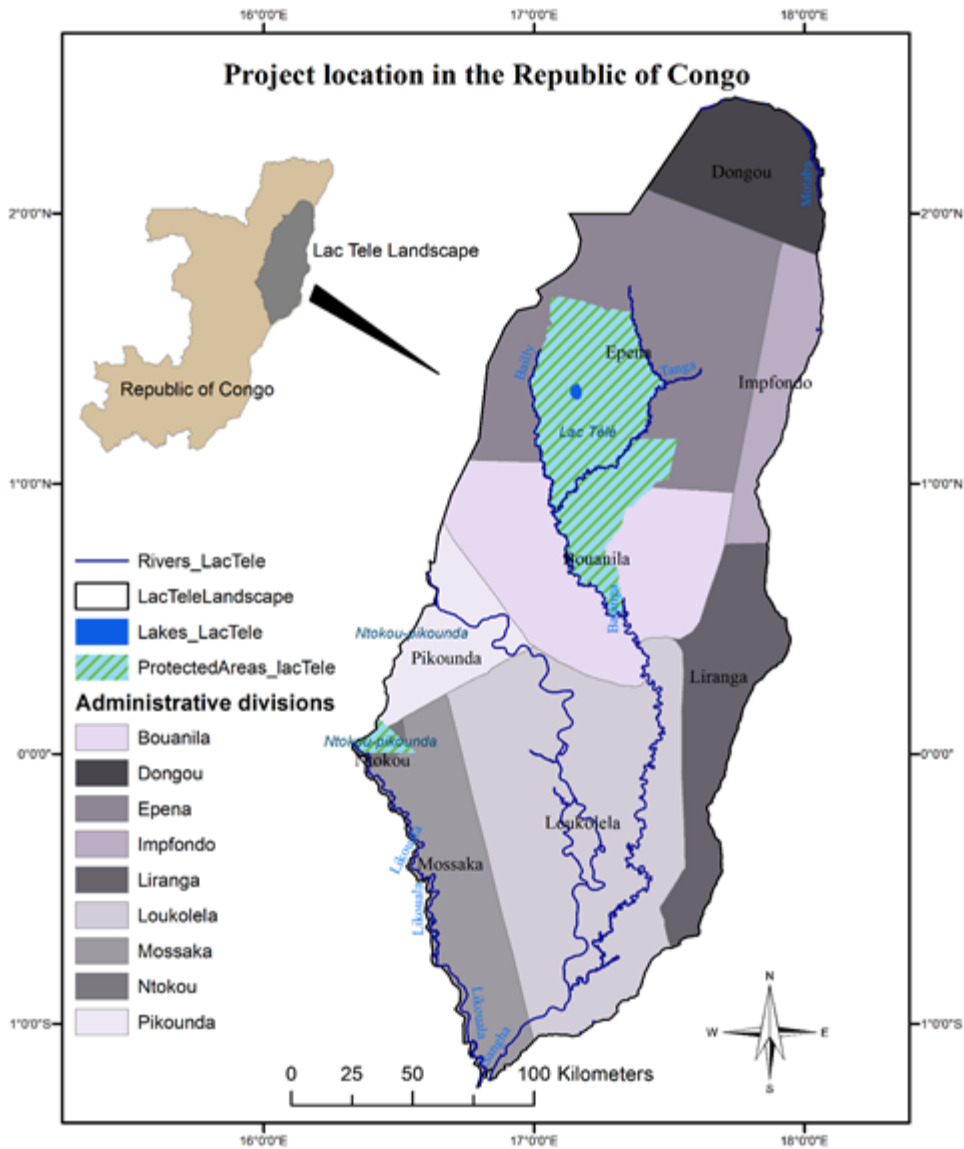


Figure 1: Project Location in the Republic of Congo

Roughly 90,000 people live within the Lac Tele Landscape. The majority of these communities are highly dependent on forest resources for income and sustenance and have retained much of their original social structure and cohesion. The core of the target geography is the Lac Tele Community Reserve, a protected area covering 4,600 km², of which 3,500km² is peatland. Building on the World Bank project, the current project will also include the Ntokou-Pikouanda National Park (4,400 km²) which covers 3,000 km² of peatland. Within the Lac Tele Reserve itself (meaning excluding the areas around it) the population is estimated to be about 20,000 inhabitants, grouped into 27 villages[8]. Although population density is relatively low compared to many other regions and protected areas in the Congo Basin, these communities depend heavily on the reserve's natural resources for fish, agriculture, construction materials, canoes, and medicines. See Table 5 for the amount of days per week spent by households in collecting vital livelihood supplies from the forest in the project area[9].

As the main stakeholders in this conservation area, the people of the region play an important role in managing the natural resources of the reserve.

Table 5. Days per week households spend collecting natural resources per village in Lac Tele? (Source: CARPE - WCS Open Data).

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

The main challenges in the targeted area are (i) the future threat of deforestation due to the expansion of agricultural commodities, (ii) the increased risk that man-made bushfires pose under climate change; (iii) commercial wildlife hunting, which is increasing in response to demand from urban areas[10]; accessibility to the rest of the country as the region is lacking roads and other transport infrastructure.

Project action in the Lac Tele Landscape can be viewed more as geared towards mitigating anticipatory change rather than addressing largescale observed degradation. In the development of this project document, discussions with partners operating in the Lac Tele Landscape revealed that there is no largescale deforestation or forest degradation taking place in the region. This is confirmed by data analysis based on best-practice guidance and whose methodology is implemented by Conservation International[11]. An analysis of the trend in land health for the Lac Tele regions reveals that from 2001 to 2018, an area of about 1,039 sq. km suffered degradation, representing about 2,34% of the Lac Tele Landscape (land) area. Most of the degradation occurred in the south of the project region, with small patches in the northeast. In terms of trends in the productivity of the land, areas of declining productivity are found mainly in the south of the project region. These represent about 772 sq. km (1.74%) of the surface area.

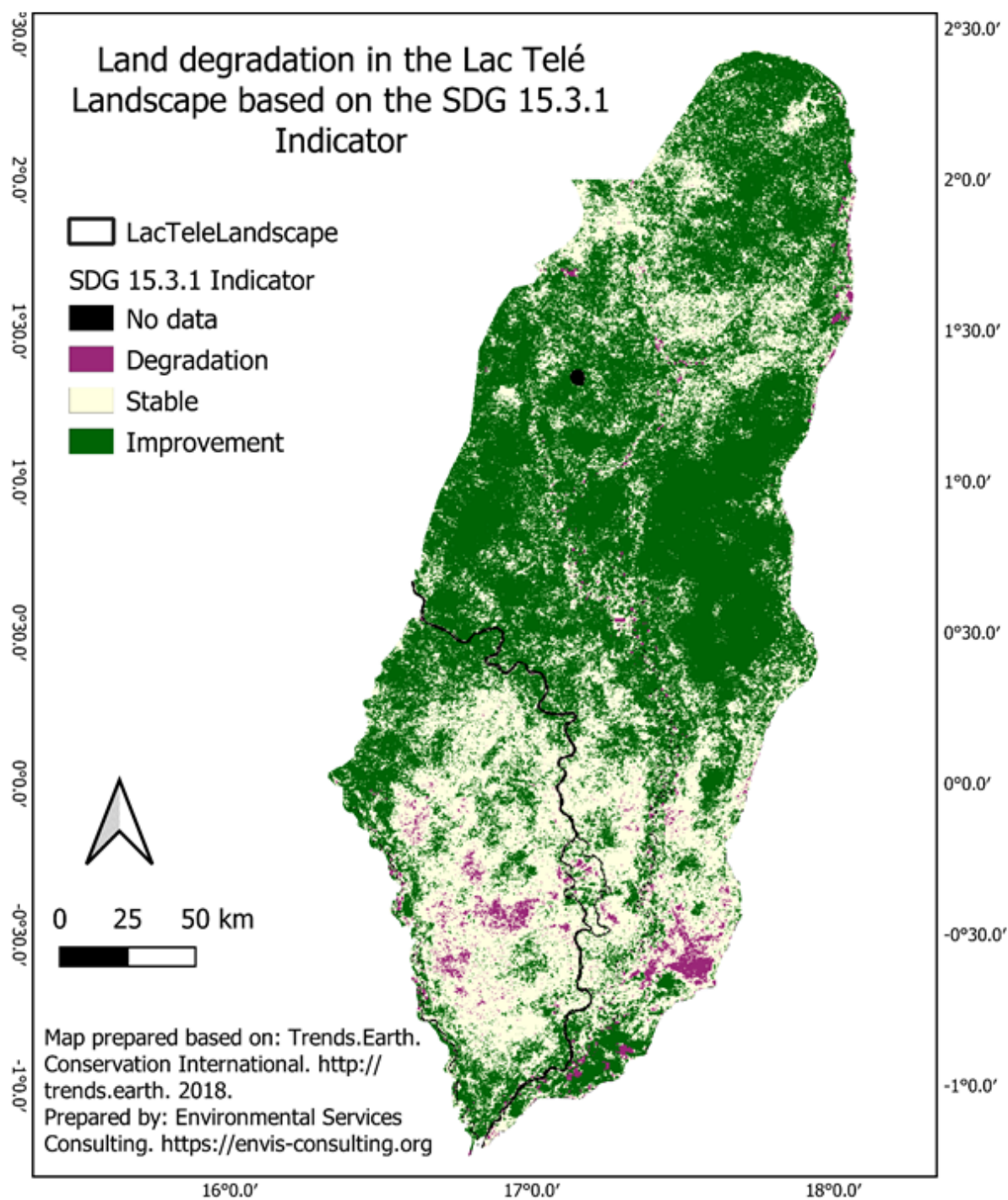


Figure 2. Most of the land degradation in the Lac Tele Landscape is occurring the southern section of the region. Source: Environmental Services Consulting, <https://www.envis-consulting.org>.

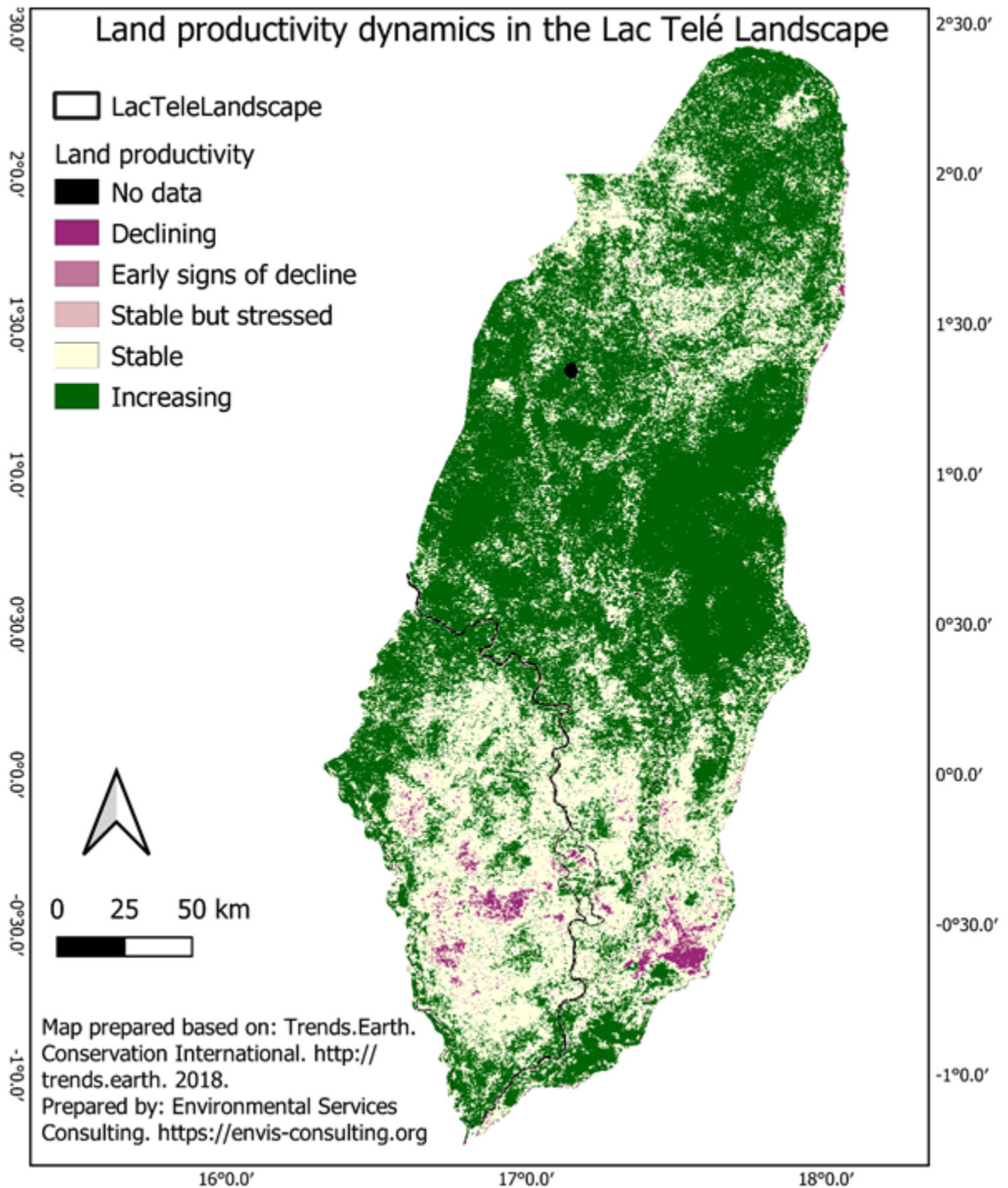


Figure 3. As with land degradation, most of the declining productivity in the Lac Tele Landscape is occurring the southern section of the region. Source: Environmental Services Consulting, <https://www.envis-consulting.org>.

With regard to the Lac Tele Community Reserve, the main challenge to its protection and sustainable management is the lack of an appropriate national legal framework for formal community-based governance of forests and natural resources (including the protected area). The lack of formal involvement of local communities in decision-making invariably leads to open-access management of resources such as fish and wild meat, a situation causing high and sometimes unsustainable levels of harvesting.

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

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

2. *Deforestation*: Deforestation is concentrated along the rivers and in the *terra firma* areas of the landscape. Although forest clearing is currently small scale, mostly for slash and burn agriculture and firewood collection, the overall impact is detrimental and can be expected to increase as road networks in the area expand, bringing more people into the region[12]. An increasing frequency of bushfires, particularly given future climate change, coupled with drier forests, could threaten the Reserve's enormous peat reserves.

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

[1] Ibid. Joseph L'on SAMBA (2020).

[2] Prosper BAMANISSA (2020). Etude sur la pr?sentation d'un mod?le ?conomique int?gr? de gestion et de conservation participative pour l'utilisation durable des ?cosyst?mes de tourbi?res et des ressources naturelles en R?publique du Congo. Une ?tude th?matique pour le projet intitul?e: ?Conservation communautaire int?gr?e des ?cosyst?mes de tourbi?res et promotion de l'?cotourisme dans le paysage du Lac T?l? de la R?publique du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL?. Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Minist?re du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, R?publique du Congo.

[3] Joseph L'on SAMBA (2020). Promotion de l'?cotourisme dans le paysage du lac tele comme moyen incitatif a la participation des communautes locales dans la conservation des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles. Une ?tude th?matique pour le projet intitul?e: ?Conservation communautaire int?gr?e des ?cosyst?mes de tourbi?res et promotion de l'?cotourisme dans le paysage du Lac T?l? de la R?publique du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL?. Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Minist?re du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, R?publique du Congo.

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

[5] UICN ? Programme Afrique Centrale et Occidentale (PACO) (2012). Parcs et r?serves du Congo Evaluation de l'efficacit? de la gestion des aires prot?g?es. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2012-089.pdf>.

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

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

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

[9] Joseph L'on SAMBA (2020). Promotion de l'?cotourisme dans le paysage du lac tele comme moyen incitatif a la participation des communautes locales dans la conservation des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles. Une ?tude th?matique pour le projet intitul?e: ?Conservation communautaire int?gr?e des ?cosyst?mes de tourbi?res et promotion de l'?cotourisme dans le paysage du Lac T?l? de la R?publique du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL?. Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Minist?re du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, R?publique du Congo.

[10] Ibid. Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Ch?rubins (2020).

[11] <http://trends.earth/docs/en/>

[12] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Ch?rubins (2020). Gouvernance de la foresterie communautaire et engagement des communautes locales et populations autochtones dans la gestion durable des forets, des tourbieres et des autres ecosystemes du paysage du Lac Tele. Une ?tude th?matique pour le projet intitul?e: ?Conservation communautaire int?gr?e des ?cosyst?mes de tourbi?res et promotion de l'?cotourisme dans le paysage du Lac T?l? de la R?publique du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL?. Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Minist?re du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, R?publique du Congo.

1c. Child Project?

If this is a child project under a program, describe how the components contribute to the overall program impact.

Anchor with the four Components of the Congo IP

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

Table 6: Project outputs aligned the CBSL Program Components

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

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>3. Reduced community and production sector impacts on important services of forests in landscapes</p> | <p>? Sustainable income-generating activities and economic diversification such as certified cacao production, are promoted with focus on peatlands, Protected areas and wildlife conservation), results documented and made available in the project site (Output 3.1.2)</p> <p>? Training and technical assistance provided to existing concessions on resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem (Output 4.1.1)</p> |
| <p>4. Capacity building, knowledge management, and regional cooperation</p> | <p>? Government and local/district and regional hubs trained on the governance and management of participatory decision-making structures, including their formalization as registered entities and on community and transboundary engagements and conservation of peatlands, fighting Illegal Wildlife Trafficking, etc. (Output 1.1.2)</p> <p>? Local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples trained to develop and implement environmental projects including the reforestation of gallery forests that are crucial for ecosystem services and fisheries production (Output 2.1.2)</p> <p>Local community organized structures trained on the promotion of ecotourism and gender equality with a focus on women empowerment and local community representation. (Output 3.1.3)</p> <p>? Study to assess legislative, administrative and operational modalities for the allocation of concessions completed, recommendations made and submitted to key decision makers for adoption (Output 4.1.2)</p> <p>? Communication and knowledge products are generated by the project uploaded in a dedicated Portal on the project host website and disseminated at local, national and regional levels through different channels, including the Congo IP to create awareness for community ? based peatlands and natural resources conservation (Output 5.1.1)</p> |

Links between two major landscapes in the Congo Basin IP

The current project is strongly tied with another child project within the Congo IP. This is the project titled: Community-based management of land and forests in the Grand Kivu and Lac T?l?-Tumba landscapes in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In this DRC project, one of the geographical components is in the Lac Tumba Landscape, while the other in Grand Kivu. The Lac Tumba in the DRC side is a continuation of the Lac Tele Landscape in the RoC side of the border, forming a near seamless ecoregion with substantial environmental significance for both countries. Together with Lac Tumba Landscape in the DRC side, the landscape is mostly humid forest ? it is the second largest area of humid forest in the world, consisting of approximately 70 percent of swampy, seasonally flooded forest. The remaining 30 percent consists of dry land and savannah. The landscape plays an essential role in the climate and hydrology of the Congo Basin, as well as in the management of water resources in Africa and the rest of the world[1]. Studies have discovered that this landscape is in the midst of the world?s largest tropical peatland estimated to store the equivalent of three years? worth of the world?s total fossil fuel emissions[2].

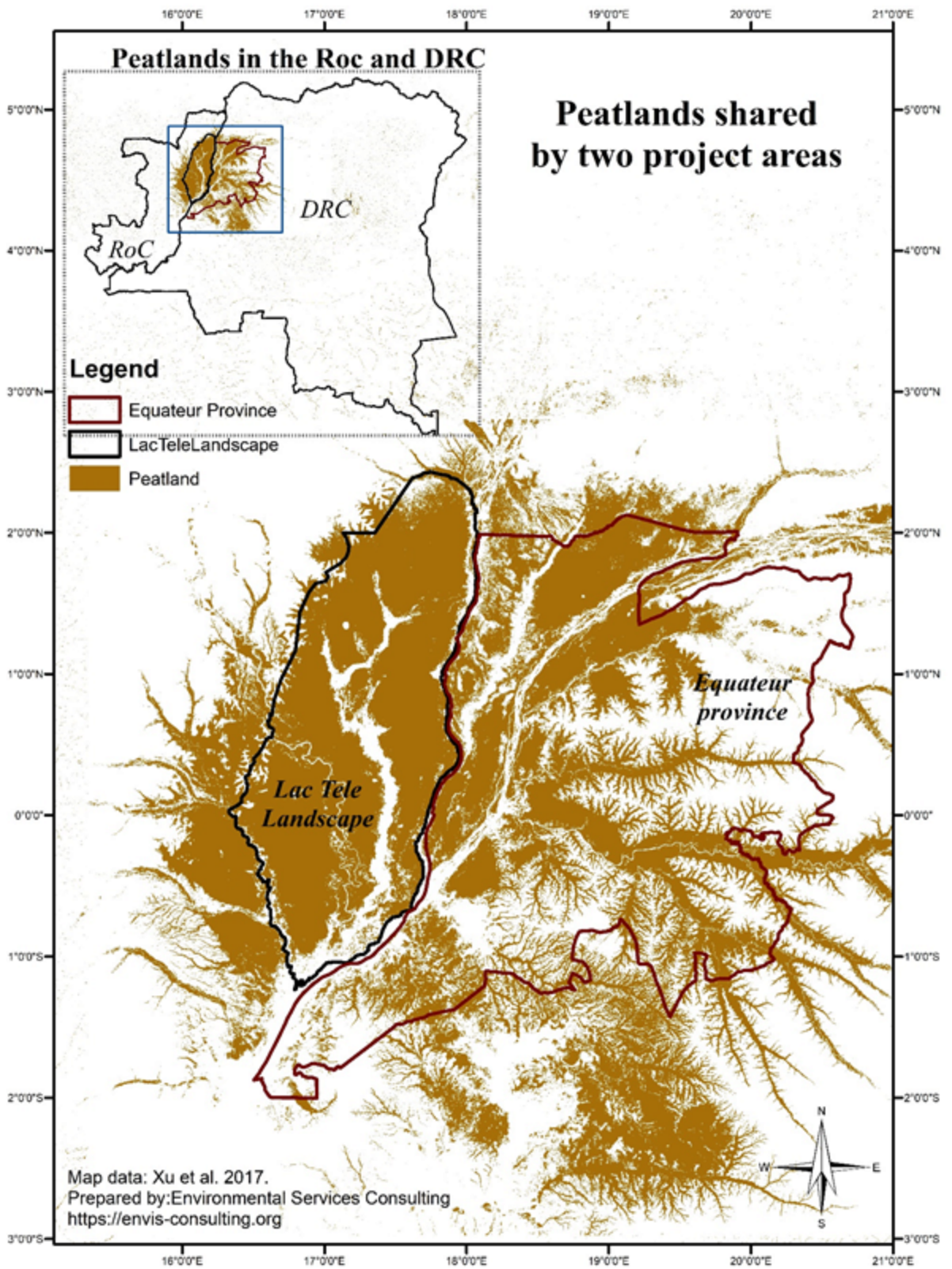


Figure 4. Shared peatlands showing project locations in both RoC and DRC.

The peatlands cover 145,500 km² – an area larger than England[3], and extend as a continuous formation from Lac Tele Landscape into the Lac Tumba Landscape in the DRC. The swamps could lock in 30bn tons of carbon, making the region one of the most carbon-rich ecosystems on Earth[4].

Please see Figure 5. on page 76 of the CEO endorsement request document. The Lac Tele and Lac Tumba Landscapes are one - located in different national territories (Republic of Congo and Democratic Republic respectively), but share relatively the same geographical, biological, and ecological characteristics. This includes their being home to significant portions of the Congo Basin peatland system[5].

Efforts of conservation of these landscapes for both countries can be evidenced through the existence of protected areas on both sides of the border – the Lac Tele Community Reserve in the RoC, and the Tumba-Lediima Reserve in the DRC. It can further evidenced through past and ongoing regional collaborative efforts that include not only treaties, bilateral and multilateral agreements, which will further tied the RoC landscape segment with the DRC landscape segment. In particular,

1. The bi national trans-border agreement signed in 2010 between DRC and RoC focusing on Lac Tele Lac Tumba Landscape: of note Articles 9-15;
2. The strategy document for the conservation and sustainable management of Lac Tele Lac Tumba landscape validated in 2016 by landscape stakeholders as well as the authorities of the two countries;
3. The Regional Action Plan adopted in August 2017 in accordance with the provisions of article 16 of the bi national trans-border agreement signed in 2010.
4. The Brazzaville Declaration on peatlands signed on March 2018 which call for putting in place national multisector and multidisciplinary frameworks to ensure the management of peatlands in the Central Cuvette of the Congo Basin.

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

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

Component 1 of the regional project will support Child project in design of ILUMP methodology and training, as well as on the work to promote and facilitate transboundary dialogue and the development of cross-border synergies on transboundary ILUMPs which will help address issues of connectivity between PAs. In addition, the Regional Child Project in collaboration with the RoC Child project will provide support to REPALEAC to contribute to the ILUMP processes under this component by

conducting an assessment of the land tenure arrangements occupied by IPLCs in the targeted RoC landscape. As indicated in the brief ILUMPs methodology statement (Appendix 21) of the regional project, one of the key steps will be to integrate local community and civil society input ? and notably from women and forest dependent peoples - into national and regional ILUMP processes, including the need for ongoing overlay of customary land mapping, and establishing roadmaps for explicit and meaningful IPLC participation in all national and transboundary planning processes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Stakeholders

Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:

Civil Society Organizations Yes

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Yes

Private Sector Entities

If none of the above, please explain why:

Please provide the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent assessment.

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

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

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

Stakeholder consultations have been the key part of the work undertaken during preparation of this project (see the Table below). Consultations have engaged local stakeholders at all levels, and reached out to potential partners developing the regional project for which the current project is a ?child?. A broad range of international development institutions and non-governmental organizations were also consulted. International development and non-government organizations are critical facilitators and funders of sustainable development and conservation projects with which this project finds synergies. They work for achievement of relevant sustainable development goals, including poverty alleviation, biodiversity protection, climate change adaptation, land degradation, sustainable forest management. The project has paid special attention during the preparation phase to ensure that the guiding principles regarding indigenous peoples are carefully adhered to, to ensure that this demographic

participates fully in the design, implementation and benefits accruing from the project. These principles have been drawn from the guiding document[1]. The project preparation team used the opportunity of a regional meeting in Brazzaville to engage with a broad section of the Network of Indigenous and Local Populations for the Management of Forest Ecosystems of Central Africa (REPALEAC) representatives from all Central African countries regarding the project[2]. In this meeting, presentations were made, and one-on-one discussions held with diverse stakeholders in the indigenous and local peoples communities throughout the region. Regarding indigenous people, the project will encourage their active participation in the decision-making process regarding their natural resources, during the zoning of peatlands and protected areas during the LUMPs development (see the Stakeholder Engagement Plan in Table 11). The project will also ensure the recognition of the indigenous people's rights, systems and knowledge, especially in terms of natural resources ownership and management via catalyzing implementation of the Article 31 of Law No. 10-2004 of 26 March 2004.

The private sector is an important group of stakeholders in the project region. In recognition of this fact, a high-level meeting was organized between the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment (the Executing Agency of this project) and private sector actors present in the Lac T?l? landscape area (the project location) in Brazzaville on June 4th 2020 (see the attached report from the meeting). The aim was to have a conversation with investment managers and business leaders of the private sector concerned about the UNEP-GEF project preparation, and to call for their involvement in the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Congo for the effective conservation of peatlands and natural resources in the project area. The meeting achieved the following: (i) Awareness was built on the project, its objectives, goals, expected results, and activities for private sector operating in the project area; (ii) Initiatives and visions of the Government of the Republic of Congo in the Lac T?l? area for community-based conservation of peatland ecosystems were articulated; (iii) Potential areas of collaboration with the private sector in the achievement of some of the project goals were articulated and discussed; (iv) Opinions and observations the private sector on the objectives of the project in relation to their involvement were gathered and (v) Various levels of commitments on effective participation of the private sector were received.

Table 7. Stakeholders and their roles in the project.

| Stakeholder | Interest, mandate, and resources available | Potential role in Project |
|---|--|--|
| Ministry of Tourism and the Environment | In charge of development and implementation of national policies in environment management and Tourism sub-sectors | ? Coordinate the project and stakeholders? involvement ? Ensure consistency with the national priority and strategy on Protected Areas creation Will be member of the project steering committee |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development (MEFDD)</p> | <p>? Responsible party and primary decision maker for land-use and forest and wildlife management and law enforcement in the country.</p> <p>? The National Agency for Protected Areas and Fauna Protection under MEFDD has the mandate, budgets and human resources for wildlife crime enforcement.</p> | <p>? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo</p> <p>? Participation in the Project Steering Committee;</p> <p>? Participation in the implementation of Outputs 4.1.1 and 4.1.3</p> |
| <p>Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development (MEFDD) - National Agency for Protected Areas and Fauna Protection</p> | <p>The National Agency for Protected Areas and Fauna Protection under MEFDD has the mandate, budgets and human resources for wildlife crime enforcement.</p> | <p>? Facilitate coordination with protected area related activities.</p> <p>? Will be member of the project steering committee</p> |
| <p>Ministry of Petroleum Products</p> | <p>In charge of national policies, strategies and Programme development and implementation in area Petroleum Products</p> | <p>? Will guide and advice on issues related to mining activities in the area.</p> <p>? Will be part of steering committee.</p> |
| <p>Ministry of Mining</p> | <p>Mining ministry has authority to manage and regulate mining operations in the Tri-national Dja-Odzala-Minkebe project zone. It has expertise on the mining development in the project zone</p> | <p>? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo</p> <p>? Participation in the Project Steering Committee</p> |
| <p>Ministry for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAEP)</p> | <p>The Ministry, which is responsible for agricultural development and promoting production technologies that reduce land degradation, will take part in policy review and development of land use plans as they related to agricultural activities, support awareness raising and advocacy for agricultural development that reduces deforestation and mainstreams biodiversity conservation, and will be a member of the PSC.</p> | <p>? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo</p> <p>? Participation in the Project Steering Committee</p> |

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|---|---|--|
| <p>Agence Nationale de l'Aviation Civile (ANAC)</p> | <p>The key agency in charge of meteorological data collection ? a key ingredient required in modeling studies for understanding the influence of climate change on peatlands of the Congo.</p> | <p>? Participation in the project development by supporting with baseline data</p> <p>? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo</p> <p>? Participation in the Project Steering Committee</p> |
| <p>World Bank</p> | <p>The World Bank provides finance through loans and grants for institutional development and technical support in environmental protection, biodiversity management and human resource development. It also contributes in the design of development policies and programs in the Tri-national Dja-Odzala-Minkebe countries.</p> | <p>? Participation in the project development by supporting with baseline data</p> <p>? Project funding and co-funding;</p> <p>? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo</p> |
| <p>United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)</p> | <p>UNDP support the empowerment and promotion of improved livelihoods for more resilient rural communities in Congo.</p> | <p>? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo</p> <p>? Participation in the implementation of the ecotourism activities of the project subject to satisfactory outcome of the independent review of UNDP compliance to fiducial standards as requested by decision 16 of the 59th GEF council</p> |
| <p>World Wildlife Fund (WWF)</p> | <p>WWF strategically focuses efforts on global priority species. Just as International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) does, WWF also provides lessons learned and technical guidance on wildlife conservation.</p> | <p>? Participation in the project development by supporting with baseline data</p> <p>? Project co-funding;</p> <p>. Supporting delivery on legal framework and other technical deliverables</p> <p>? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo</p> |

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| Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) | WCS and the Ministry of Forestry have formalized this partnership by signing 5 protocols. The protected area protocols include Nouabale Ndoki National Park, Lac Tele Community Reserve, and Conkouati-Douli National Park. WCS and MEF have also partnered with the private sector in logging concessions adjacent to Nouabale Ndoki and Odzala-Kokoua National Parks in an effort to reduce the impact of exploitation on wildlife | <p>? Participation in the project development by supporting with baseline data</p> <p>? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo</p> <p>? Participation in the Project Steering Committee;</p> <p>? Participation in the implementation of Outputs 1.1.4; 1.1.5; and 3.1.2</p> |
| European Union (EU) | Founded the Programme for Conservation and Rational Utilization of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa (ECOFAC), and supports initiatives such as the Conference on Central African Moist Forest Ecosystems (CEFDHAC) to facilitate cooperation and exchange of experiences and practices in tropical forest management. | <p>? Participation in the project development by supporting with baseline data</p> <p>? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo</p> |
| Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) | Works on land and regional planning; sustainable management of land and natural resources; and the strengthening of forest governance | <p>? Participation in the project development by supporting with baseline data</p> <p>? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo</p> <p>? Participation in the Project Steering Committee</p> |
| Agence Fran?aise de D?veloppement (AFD) | AFD is working on two projects at the moment, for funding of 7 million euros. One of the projects focuses on cocoa and the other on forest landscapes, particularly in forest concessions. | <p>? Participation in the project development by supporting with baseline data</p> <p>? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo</p> |

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| <p>Network of Indigenous and Local Populations for the Management of Forest Ecosystems of Central Africa (REPALEAC)</p> | <p>Represents over 200 Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' organizations of eight countries from both the sub-regional and the national levels. Aims to promote the critical role played by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in sustainable forest management.</p> | <p>? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo</p> <p>? Participation in the Project Steering Committee</p> <p>. Support delivery on activities related to livelihood, NTFP and legal aspects of engaging IPLC.</p> |
| <p>Universit? Marien Nguabi (UMN)</p> <p>Ecole Nationale Superieure d'Agronomie et de Foresterie</p> | <p>Has been undertaking research related to the discovery of the Congo Basin peatlands; assessment of their extent; assessment of threats and challenges associated with their conservation and human-nature interactions</p> | <p>? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo</p> <p>? Participation in the Project Steering Committee;</p> <p>? Will form and head a Scientific and Technical Committee[3].</p> <p>? Participation in the implementation of Outputs 1.1.3; 2.1.3 and 4.1.2</p> |
| <p>Indigenous population</p> <p>[Bantu; Baka groups; and others]</p> | <p>? Indigenous people are key users of wildlife and other nature resources in the project area, often involved in poaching.</p> <p>? Together with pygmies, they have traditional rights and knowledge of natural resources in the project area.</p> | <p>? Key participants and beneficiaries in the implementation of the project.</p> <p>? Participation in the project M&E and adaptive management</p> <p>? Participation in the Project Steering Committee</p> |
| <p>Local opinion leaders (people from project zone resident in the nation?s capital)</p> <p>[From Mossaka; Sangha - Liranga; Bomongo-Lubengo; Bolombo-Losombo; Bobangi; Imese-Boboke; Dongou; Impfondo; Tanga; Bouanela; etc.]</p> | <p>Local opinion leaders may have political power and influence on local communities in the project area.</p> | <p>? Key resource persons in the implementation of the project.</p> <p>? Participation in the project M&E and adaptive management</p> |

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| <p>Local communities, women and vulnerable groups</p> <p><i>[From Mossaka; Sangha - Liranga; Bomongo-Lubengo; Bolombo-Losombo; Bobangi; Imese-Bobo; Dongou; Impfondo; Tanga; Bouanella; etc.]</i></p> | <p>Project implementation works such as labor for conservation works; local institutional arrangements for project implementation; identification, demarcation, and management of indigenous conservation areas as relevant; participate in other land use planning for project implementation.</p> | <p>? Key participants and beneficiaries in the implementation of the project.</p> <p>? IPLC Plan will be prepared at the project inception with the participation of the IPLC representatives</p> <p>? Participation in the project M&E and adaptive management</p> |
| <p>Indigenous population</p> <p><i>[Communities of the Mono, Batwa, and Pygmies]</i></p> | <p>Indigenous people are key users of wildlife and other nature resources in the project area, often involved in poaching. Together with pygmies, they have traditional rights and knowledge of natural resources in the project area.</p> | <p>? Key participants and beneficiaries in the implementation of the project.</p> <p>? Participation in the project M&E and adaptive management</p> |
| <p>Private sector</p> <p><i>[Examples: Soci? Petroleum; Soci? SEFYD; CIB OLAM ? Congolaise Industrielle de Bois; ECO ? OIL ENERGIE S.A; Soci? THANRY Congo; etc.]</i></p> | <p>Have economic and political power, knowledge of local resources and some power of influence on local populations. A core target group for sustainable business model in the protection of the natural resources of the Lac T? Landscape will be the promotion of public-private partnerships that support investments in environmentally friendly socio-economic initiatives; awareness-raising; capacity development and knowledge exchange.</p> | <p>? Leverage investments in greener livelihood alternatives</p> <p>? Adopt green certification standards</p> <p>? Support the revision and implementation of operational modalities of logging and mineral extraction that contribute to biodiversity protection and sustainable peatland management</p> <p>? Provide additional funds for community-based initiatives</p> <p>? Participation in the project M&E and adaptive management</p> <p>? Participation in the Project Steering Committee</p> |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)</p> | <p>Involved in the national consensus building processes for both policy processes and the development of broad-based partnerships for implementation, as well as awareness raising and training activities. CBOs will be the local executing partners and will be actively involved in the consultation process to develop integrated land use management plans, as well as being actively engaged in the implementation of those plans</p> | <p>? Key participants and beneficiaries in the implementation of the project.</p> <p>? Participation in the project M&E and adaptive management</p> |
|---|--|---|

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

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

Project implementation will begin with an inception workshop (see Table 6 below) that will be designed to include wide participation from interested stakeholders. The workshop will be used to provide stakeholders with the latest information on the Project as well as identify and agree on collaboration. Depending on the number of invited stakeholders and budgetary constraints, annual stakeholder consultations will be scheduled as part of the PSC meetings (e.g. as side meetings). Over lifetime of the, any adjustments required to project design, implementation and management will be made in close consultation with the relevant stakeholders, facilitated by the PMU and PSC and to be endorsed by UNEP. Finally, given the distances and number of counties involved in the Lac Tele Landscape, a primary means to keep all existing and potential stakeholders informed on the Project will be through the establishment of a website on biodiversity conservation under Output 5.1.1.

a.

b.

Table 8. The table shows the technique of engagement that will be used, the stakeholders that will be engaged by these techniques, as well as the purpose for which such engagement will be undertaken (types and purpose of information to be disseminated)

| Engagement technique | Stakeholders and partners | Purpose of engagement |
|---|---|--|
| Information Centre and Information Boards | ? Neighbouring communities ? Vulnerable Groups ? NGO?s and conservation organisations ? Local communities | ? Establish Information Boards in each Project area community. |
| Correspondence by phone, email, text, and instant messaging | ? Government officials ? NGO?s and conservation Organisations ? Private sector ? National institutional partners | ? Distribute project information to government officials, organizations, agencies and companies ? Invite stakeholders to meetings |
| Print media and radio announcements | ? Neighbouring communities ? Vulnerable Groups ? NGO?s and conservation organisations ? Local communities | ? Disseminate project information to large audiences, and illiterate stakeholders ? Inform stakeholders about consultation meetings |
| One-on-one interviews | ? Neighbouring communities ? Vulnerable Groups ? NGO?s and conservation organisations | ? Solicit views and opinions ? Enable stakeholders to speak freely and confidentially about controversial and sensitive issues ? Build personal relations with stakeholders ? Recording of interviews |

| | | |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Formal meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Government officials ? NGO?s and conservation Organisations ? Private sector ? National institutional partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Present project information to a group of stakeholders ? Allow the group of stakeholders to provide their views and opinions ? Build impersonal relations with high level stakeholders ? Distribute technical documents ? Facilitate meetings using PowerPoint presentations Record discussions, comments/questions raised and responses |
| Public meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Neighbouring communities ? Vulnerable Groups ? NGO?s and conservation Organisations ? Private sector ? Local communities ? National institutional partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Present project information to a large audience of stakeholders, and in particular communities ? Allow the group of stakeholders to provide their views and opinions ? Build relationships with neighbouring communities ? Distribute non-technical project information ? Facilitate meetings using PowerPoint presentations, posters, models, videos and pamphlets or project information documents ? Record discussions, comments/questions raised and responses |
| Workshops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Neighbouring communities ? Vulnerable Groups ? NGO?s and conservation organisations ? Local communities ? National institutional partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Present project information to a group of stakeholders Allow the group of stakeholders to provide their views and opinions ? Use participatory exercises to facilitate group discussions, brainstorm issues, analyse information, and develop recommendations and strategies ? Recording of responses |
| Focus group meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Neighbouring communities ? Vulnerable Groups ? NGO?s and conservation organisations ? Local communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Allow a smaller group of between 8 and 15 people to provide their views and opinions of targeted baseline information ? Build relationships with neighbouring communities ? Use a focus group interview guideline to facilitate discussions ? Record responses |
| Surveys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Neighbouring communities ? Vulnerable Groups ? NGO?s and conservation organisations ? Local communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Gather opinions and views from individual stakeholders ? Gather baseline data ? Record data ? Develop a baseline database for monitoring impacts |

c.

[1] REPALEAC 2019. Strategy for the sustainable development of indigenous peoples and local communities of Central Congo (2018-2025). Réseau des Populations Autochtones et Locales pour la Gestion des Ecosystèmes Forestiers d'Afrique Centrale (REPALEAC). Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.

[2] The meeting took place in Brazzaville from 5th to 8 February, 2020.

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

In addition, provide a summary on how stakeholders will be consulted in project execution, the means and timing of engagement, how information will be disseminated, and an explanation of any resource requirements throughout the project/program cycle to ensure proper and meaningful stakeholder engagement

Select what role civil society will play in the project:

Consulted only;

Member of Advisory Body; Contractor; Yes

Co-financier;

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body; Yes

Executor or co-executor; Yes

Other (Please explain)

3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Provide the gender analysis or equivalent socio-economic assesment.

How the project incorporates gender considerations

Women in the Republic of Congo in general, and in the Lac Tele Landscape in particular have access to land through three main ways: i) matrilineal or patrilineal filiations (most often, the head of the lineage is a man and the filiation patrilineal, but the head of lineage can choose to allocate the land to a woman); ii) marriage (at the husband's request, the head of the lineage may allocate land to the wife); or iii) rent and purchase. Overall, women's land holdings are limited. According to the government's 2010 report to CEDAW, women produced approximately 90% of food products for household consumption. In 2002, the government reported that women accounted for 60% of the agricultural workforce, but own only 25% of agricultural land usually in small holdings. There is no reported legal

discrimination against women in regard to access to non-land assets, and women are able to sign contracts in the same way as men. However, as noted in the Family Code section, women's rights to property more generally are tied to the type of marriage they enter into, where under a 'separation of property' contract a widow has no right to claim ownership of her deceased husband's estate but can use the property.

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

It is in the above light that this project recognizes the fundamental role of women in the conservation of biodiversity in reference to the fact that they are the key actresses in gathering, processing, packaging and marketing of the forest products. For large hunting expeditions, women prepare hunting camps, provide all logistical support, treat bush meat, and sell it in the markets. During the project preparation phase, women were encouraged to provide inputs to discussions and reflect on their opinions and ideas of different aspects of the project design and its potential implementation. Besides providing useful inputs into the project design, women's participation as active stakeholders in the implementation of project activities is expected to generate meaningful value to the outputs delivered by this project.

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

Table 9. Proposed strategy for mitigating gender-based imbalances in project participation and benefits.

| Expected Outputs | Gender-responsive measures |
|---|---|
| An enabling environment including a national legal framework for community engagement & conservation, local bylaws and enforcement of both levels of legislation is put in place. | ? Involvement of women in the Working Groups to review the national legal framework for community engagement and conservation as well as contribute to the drafting of local bylaws |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Training conducted toward government and local/district and regional hubs on the governance and management of participatory decision-making structures, including their formalization as registered entities and on community and transboundary engagements and conservation of peatlands, fighting IWT, etc.</p> | <p>? Involvement of local women in trainings for governance and management of participatory decision-making structures (at least 50% of training beneficiaries are women) ? Gender disaggregated reporting on the training participants[1].</p> |
| <p>Natural Capital Assessment targeting peatlands, protected areas & surrounding landscape conducted to collect data for land-use management plans for selected districts with due gender consideration & formalized community involvement.</p> | <p>? Women are recruited to participate in the development of terms of references for the data collection, and to serve in different positions during the data collection and analysis process.</p> |
| <p>Land-use management plans developed for selected districts in Lac T?l? landscape with due consideration of gender, formalized community involvement, peatlands conservation and promotion of ecotourism.</p> | <p>? Proactive inclusion of women and women organizations in working groups and committees involved in the establishment of LUMPs, including in the design of framework documents to support these LUMPs[2].</p> |
| <p>Investments in supporting implementation of land-use management plans for the target geography?s protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on peatlands, ecotourism, gender consideration, fighting illegal wildlife trade and transboundary cooperation</p> | <p>? Proactive inclusion of women and women organizations in working groups and committees involved in the implementation of land use management plans ? Promotion of women participation in the project M&E process</p> |
| <p>Local community management structures and related bylaws allowing for sustainable management of hunting and fire, are established based on the successful experience of community-based fisheries regulations in the last 3 years</p> | <p>? Local women and women organizations participate in the drafting of, and serve in management structures of these activities</p> |
| <p>Training conducted for local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples to develop and implement environmental projects including the reforestation of gallery forests that are crucial for ecosystem services and fisheries production</p> | <p>? Gender roles to be clearly articulated while undertaking training needs assessment and incorporate in training modules ? A gender balance in the demographic that benefits from the training. ? Gender disaggregated reporting on the training participants</p> |
| <p>Action-based research and monitoring allowing for adaptive management by communities and the government (including research on threats to peatlands from a changing climate) are conducted</p> | <p>? Gendered differentiation on attributes of adaptive management are properly identified and analysed within the research</p> |
| <p>Community based south-south cooperation activities and transboundary collaboration on peatlands management, IWT, etc. are conducted</p> | <p>? The role of women and their relationship to natural resources are properly articulated in cooperation activities and transboundary collaboration</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Institutional and technical support (leveraging expertise to develop tourism products and a business model, training community guides, working with departmental tourism actors in Impfondo and establishing basic infrastructures) are provided to communities to develop a foundation for community-based tourism enterprises.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? The potential of women and women's common initiative groups is articulated in the derived business model. ? Women-owned enterprises benefit from the value chain development of ecotourism in the project area ? Requirement for gender-disaggregated information for appropriate indicators in the M&E Plan ? Specific monitoring of gender mainstreaming progress during project implementation |
| <p>Sustainable income-generating activities and economic diversification such as certified cacao production, are promoted with focus on peatlands, Protected areas and wildlife conservation[3]</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Promotion of gender balance in the initiative groups for pilot project implementation ? Development of pilot projects implemented by women organizations (at least 40% of the projects); ? Gender disaggregated reporting on the participants of the pilot project |
| <p>Training package is delivered to local community organized structures and include promotion of ecotourism and gender equality with a focus on women empowerment and local community representative</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Women benefit from the capacity building on the promotion of ecotourism (at least 40% representation) |
| <p>Promotion of and training on Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) targeting existing concessions conducted to protect the integrating of peatlands ecosystem[4].</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Women benefit from the capacity building on the Voluntary Sustainability Standards (at least 40% representation) |
| <p>Capacity-building and technical assistance on best-practices in resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Women benefit from capacity building on best-practices in resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem (at least 40% representation) |
| <p>Revising operational modalities of companies operating concessions</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Proactive involvement of women in the Working ? Groups to review and revise operational modalities of companies operating concessions |
| <p>Policy and technical incentives for private sector commitment to sustainable peatlands landscape management are Identified and implemented</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Proactive inclusion of the female private sector entrepreneurs to take part in private sector engagement in the project ? Gender disaggregated reporting on the training participants |
| <p>Communication and knowledge products are generated by the project and disseminated at local, national and regional levels to create awareness for community ? based peatlands and natural resources conservation[5]</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Reporting of gender oriented lessons learned from the project ? Inclusion of women in generating and discussion of the lessons learned from IWT management and CBNRM |
| <p>RoC key actors including those involved in peatlands and natural resources management are actively engaged</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Women are equal beneficiaries of this Output as the key householders and producers of NTFPs ? Gender disaggregated reporting on the beneficiaries from renewable energy sources in the local villages |

| | |
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| Project implementation is adequately monitored, and relevant evaluations are conducted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Requirement for gender-disaggregated information for appropriate indicators in the M&E Plan ? Specific monitoring of gender mainstreaming progress during project implementation ? Promotion of women participation in the project M&E process ? Gender disaggregated reporting of M&E participants |
|--|--|

[1] Th?ophile NTIAKOULOU LOULEBO (2020). Rapport de l?etude sur le developpement d?un plan de suivi - evaluation chiffre du projet par l?utilisation des methodes et approches internationalement reconnues. Une ?tude th?matique pour le projet intitul?e: ?Conservation communautaire int?gr?e des ?cosyst?mes de tourbi?res et promotion de l?cotourisme dans le paysage du Lac T?l? de la R?publique du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL?. Fonds pour l?Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Minist?re du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, R?publique du Congo.

[2] Th?ophile NTIAKOULOU LOULEBO (2020). Rapport de l?etude sur le developpement d?un plan de suivi - evaluation chiffre du projet par l?utilisation des methodes et approches internationalement reconnues. Une ?tude th?matique pour le projet intitul?e: ?Conservation communautaire int?gr?e des ?cosyst?mes de tourbi?res et promotion de l?cotourisme dans le paysage du Lac T?l? de la R?publique du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL?. Fonds pour l?Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Minist?re du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, R?publique du Congo.

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

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

[5] Boyoko Alexis Vincent de Paul (2020). Strategie et plan de communication pour la gestion durable et la conservation integree des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles par les communautes 2020-2024 - rapport provisoire. Une ?tude th?matique pour le projet intitul?e: ?Conservation communautaire int?gr?e des ?cosyst?mes de tourbi?res et promotion de l?cotourisme dans le paysage du Lac T?l? de la R?publique du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL?. Fonds pour l?Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Minist?re du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, R?publique du Congo.

Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment?

Yes

Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources; Yes

Improving women's participation and decision making Yes

Generating socio-economic benefits or services or women Yes

Does the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

4. Private sector engagement

Elaborate on the private sector's engagement in the project, if any.

The private sector is an important group of stakeholders in the project region. In recognition of this fact, a high-level meeting was organized between the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment (the Executing Agency of this project) and private sector actors present in the Lac T?l? landscape area (the project location) in Brazzaville on June 4th 2020. The aim was to have a conversation with investment managers and business leaders of the private sector concerned about the UNEP-GEF project preparation, and to call for their involvement in the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Congo for the effective conservation of peatlands and natural resources in the project area. The meeting achieved the following: (i) Awareness was built on the project, its objectives, goals, expected results, and activities for private sector operating in the project area; (ii) Initiatives and visions of the Government of the Republic of Congo in the Lac T?l? area for community-based conservation of peatland ecosystems were articulated; (iii) Potential areas of collaboration with the private sector in the achievement of some of the project goals were articulated and discussed; (iv) Opinions and observations the private sector on the objectives of the project in relation to their involvement were gathered (see the Table below); and (v) Various levels of commitments on effective participation of the private sector were received.

Table 10. On-going private sector activities in the project area and expectations from the current project.

| Company Name | Activities | Sustainable management policy | Public participation | Expectations of the UNEP-GEF project |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Soci?t? Petroleum | Oil exploration - Hydrocarbon (Holder of the Ngoki permit which covers 9,392 km2) | As defined in the contract with the State and the requirement of an environmental impact study is required at each stage of the activity: Exploration; construction, operation, dismantling. Petroleum also applies international standards | Defined in the contract with the State, but the company carries out social actions for the benefit of the populations (construction of schools) | The Petroleum Company has expressed the wish to collaborate with the project for the implementation of corporate social responsibility |
| Soci?t? SEFYD Located in Sangha | Logging and wood processing (on site) | The company has a management plan which is adopted and implemented in accordance with state requirements. The company is currently developing an environmental impact study | Various social actions for the benefit of the populations are carried out | SEFYD wishes support from the UNEP-GEF project for capacity building in terms of social responsibility and remains open to proposals from the project team to collaborate. |

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| <p>CIB OLAM ? Congolaise Industrielle de Bois Situation : Likouala et la Sangha</p> | <p>Wood exploitation with processing factories</p> | <p>The company works on the basis of concessions obtained from the State and works according to the specifications of its concessions.</p> <p>A development plan is adopted with the participation of local populations and authorities.</p> <p>As required by the procedure, any development plan is transmitted to the Council of Ministers for validation and then submitted to the National Assembly for adoption. After adoption of the development plan by force of law and compulsory execution</p> | <p>CIB OLAM had often been attacked for its actions by NGOs, but since the Greenpeace visit but in the field, reality has been restored.</p> <p>The company has set up since 2006 a community development fund managed in partnership with the populations.</p> <p>The fund receives 200 francs / m3 of marketable wood for the benefit of population development projects.</p> | <p>CIB OLAM would like to benefit from the project to strengthen its efforts to conserve biodiversity.</p> <p>CIB OLAM would also like to be supported in reforestation and regeneration activities.</p> <p>CIB OLAM would also like project support to ensure the functioning of the community development fund.</p> |
| <p>ECO ? OIL ENERGIE S.A Located in the departments of Sangha and Cuvette</p> | <p>Agro-industry and palm oil production.</p> | | <p>The company has an eco-plus program which aims to provide seeds to local populations who in return sell the crops to the company.</p> | <p>ECO-OIL ENERGIE S.A would like to benefit from capacity building support in the area of social responsibility.</p> |
| <p>Soci?t? THANRY Congo Located in Likouala</p> | <p>Logging</p> | | | <p>Collaboration for restoration and reforestation. Capacity building for the supervision and education of populations in the management of development funds set up by companies.</p> |

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

This project will continue to engage the private sector for development results, and involve the active participation of the private sector in contribution in the sustainable management of natural resources in the local communities in which they operate. The project sees the private sector as a partner with finance, ideas and capacity that can be harnessed in synergy with project efforts to contribute to positive changes in the local communities of the project area. While employing reasonable safeguards in the involvement of partners, and especially given the power imbalances between different stakeholders, the role of the private sector will be to support multi-stakeholder initiatives, test innovations and scale successful market-based approaches to realising development results. The table below shows the engagement of the private sector within the context of the engagement of other project partners:

Table 11. Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

| Engagement technique | Stakeholders and partners | Purpose of engagement |
|---|---|--|
| Information Centre and Information Boards | ? Neighbouring communities ? Vulnerable Groups ? NGO?s and conservation organisations ? Local communities | ? Establish Information Boards in each Project area community. |
| Correspondence by phone, email, text, and instant messaging | ? Government officials ? NGO?s and conservation Organisations ? Private sector ? National institutional partners | ? Distribute project information to government officials, organizations, agencies and companies ? Invite stakeholders to meetings |
| Print media and radio announcements | ? Neighbouring communities ? Vulnerable Groups ? NGO?s and conservation organisations ? Local communities | ? Disseminate project information to large audiences, and illiterate stakeholders ? Inform stakeholders about consultation meetings |
| One-on-one interviews | ? Neighbouring communities ? Vulnerable Groups ? NGO?s and conservation organisations | ? Solicit views and opinions ? Enable stakeholders to speak freely and confidentially about controversial and sensitive issues ? Build personal relations with stakeholders ? Recording of interviews |

| | | |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Formal meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Government officials ? NGO's and conservation Organisations ? Private sector ? National institutional partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Present project information to a group of stakeholders ? Allow the group of stakeholders to provide their views and opinions ? Build impersonal relations with high level stakeholders ? Distribute technical documents ? Facilitate meetings using PowerPoint presentations Record discussions, comments/questions raised and responses |
| Public meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Neighbouring communities ? Vulnerable Groups ? NGO's and conservation Organisations ? Private sector ? Local communities ? National institutional partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Present project information to a large audience of stakeholders, and in particular communities ? Allow the group of stakeholders to provide their views and opinions ? Build relationships with neighbouring communities ? Distribute non-technical project information Facilitate meetings using PowerPoint presentations, posters, models, videos and pamphlets or project information documents ? Record discussions, comments/questions raised and responses |
| Workshops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Neighbouring communities ? Vulnerable Groups ? NGO's and conservation organisations ? Local communities ? National institutional partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Present project information to a group of stakeholders Allow the group of stakeholders to provide their views and opinions ? Use participatory exercises to facilitate group discussions, brainstorm issues, analyse information, and develop recommendations and strategies ? Recording of responses |
| Focus group meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Neighbouring communities ? Vulnerable Groups ? NGO's and conservation organisations ? Local communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Allow a smaller group of between 8 and 15 people to provide their views and opinions of targeted baseline information ? Build relationships with neighbouring communities ? Use a focus group interview guideline to facilitate discussions ? Record responses |
| Surveys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Neighbouring communities ? Vulnerable Groups ? NGO's and conservation organisations ? Local communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Gather opinions and views from individual stakeholders ? Gather baseline data ? Record data ? Develop a baseline database for monitoring impacts |

5. Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Elaborate on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, the proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation.(table format acceptable):

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

One of the key risks within the current global health crisis is that of the consumption of wild meat products (bushmeat). The consumption of bushmeat has been associated with a number of health challenges[1] and [2]. The Covid-19 epidemic currently plaguing the world is supposed to have some of its roots in human consumption of wild game[3]. This calls for careful consideration of practices around wild food harvests, marketing and consumption ? a phenomenon that may not be well-known in the project area, and among some decision-makers. Lastly, it must be recognized that even with proper awareness on the implications of bushmeat consumption, progress can only be significantly achieved in decreasing this practice when and if alternatives to sources of animal protein are available, or when sustainably managed harvests of wildlife are commonplace. The GEF recognises the need for care to be given to avoid increase potential exposure of these groups to COVID-19[4], and the consumption of bushmeat can constitute one such avenue of exposure.

The climate risk is another important factor to be considered in the project area. According to the Rainforest Foundation, historical climate data shows that, on average, temperatures have increased and rainfall has decreased in the Republic of Congo in the second half of the twentieth century. Models predict that temperatures could rise by up to 1.1?C on average by 2050[5]. The key hazards that are associated with this projected climate changes in the project area according to the World Bank?s Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) are the following.

Local perceptions of climatic changes largely correlate with the scientific data, with communities reporting to have observed increased temperature, changes in the length of seasons, drying up of rivers and water pollution ? all of which can potentially be linked to climate change. The primary social impact of climate change on communities studied relates to deteriorating human health. The prolonged dry season and reduced rainfall have led to streams in the forest flowing for shorter periods in the year, and when stagnant, tend to breed bacteria and become polluted leading to diarrhoea, vomiting and occasionally death. Stagnant ponds are also ideal breeding ground for malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

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

Table 13. Risk Analysis and Mitigation Strategies.

| Risk | Risk rating | Risk Mitigation Strategies |
|--|-------------|--|
| The Government of RoC is not sufficiently interested in policies that favour of improvements in environmental quality | Low | The government is very aware of and supportive of the goals of this project. While there is potential for the development of some sections of the peatlands, the government continues to hold that all forms of development in this sensitive landscape should be carried out within the framework of environmental sustainability. |
| Alternative initiatives that reduce pressures on peatlands and the forests they harbour may not be economically viable enough ? leading local communities to question the rational for long-term benefits from environmental conservation | Medium | The participatory action-based research in Output 2.1.3 is designed to use scientific and participatory methods to identify best alternative options for activities that put pressure on peatlands, forest, and their related ecosystems. This data driven participatory approach should be able to identify best practices that are both economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sustainable for local use. This offers potential for these alternatives to be successful. Learning from previous projects carried out in the area will be a key part of this process. |
| The model for integrated community-based conservation and protected area management applied to the peatland area and its forest ecosystem does not provide sufficient income streams and alternatives to convince communities to continue conserving their protected areas | Medium | The project will identify and develop the broadest possible range of revenue generation options, to maximise benefits to participating communities. Specific outputs target developing a viable organizational and enabling framework for ecotourism development and the enhancement of the organic cacao value chains. To arrive at these value chains, there will be spin-offs in income generating activities such as the development of handicrafts, different forms of hospitality sector development, etc. The project will also strive to reduce the risk that adverse changes in any one revenue area (e.g. sudden drop in tourist arrivals, reduction in agricultural prices) would jeopardise the overall revenue model. Nevertheless, this remains the primary strategic risk facing the project. |
| Conflict between and within social groups prevents agreement on development strategies and resource management plans | Medium | Traditional social groups in RoC have a long history of inter- and intra-tribal conflict, particularly over resource use and resource distribution. The goal of the establishment of the integrated participatory conservation model for the sustainable use and management of peatland (in Component 2) is designed to provide an appropriate framework for community engagement in the natural resources management structure within the project. The project will ensure that the communities involved in the project are supported with strong conflict resolution and benefit-sharing capacities. The emphasis on gradual, consensus-driven development of resource management plans will also allow disagreements to be aired and resolved as plans are developed, thus minimising the risk of these disagreements erupting into open conflict. Nevertheless, this continues to be a significant risk that the project will have to monitor and address. |

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| <p>Conflict between transboundary stakeholders impedes the achievement of project goals</p> | <p>Low</p> | <p>The project location constitutes the largest transboundary RAMSAR site worldwide, with the landscape extending into the DR Congo. The project will work in close collaboration with countries of the Child Project ?Transformational Change in Sustainable Forest Management in Transboundary Landscapes of the Congo Basin?, to ensure that synergies on objectives, practice and overall strategies are harvested among member countries of the program. This will especially be the case with DR Congo that shares part of the project landscape with Rep. of Congo.</p> |
| <p>Capacities within decentralised government structures are insufficient to effectively deliver the project strategy</p> | <p>Medium</p> | <p>The project will explicitly address this risk by providing on-going, targeted capacity development support for local and district governments where required. In Component 1, this training will improve the governance and management of participatory decision-making structures, including their formalization as registered entities and on community and transboundary engagements and conservation of peatlands. In Component 2, it will target local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples, and improve skills on the development and implementation of environmental projects including the reforestation of gallery forests that are crucial for ecosystem services and fisheries production. In Component 3, it will build skills on the promotion of ecotourism and gender equality with a focus on women empowerment and local community representative among local community organized structures.</p> |
| <p>Climate change and variability negatively impact protected areas and peatlands or revenue generation models being put in place by the project</p> | <p>Low</p> | <p>While climatic change can have an impact on the length and severity of rainy and dry seasons, the project area is located at the equator where seasonal variabilities are low. Long-term climate change may affect forest systems, but the short-term impact of changing weather events on forest systems in the project areas is unlikely to be significant. Short-term weather impacts on revenue generation (e.g. reductions in tourism, disruptions to transportation networks) may increase in the medium-term, but are unlikely to be a discernible factor during the project?s lifetime.</p> |
| <p>The private sector is not interested in being involved in project activities</p> | <p>Medium</p> | <p>Proactive engagement of the private sector at all levels of the project development has the potential of promoting engagement. The project will facilitate collaboration between the private sector and local communities, facilitate joint examination of the benefits of investment in corporate social responsibility programmes, and support private sector initiatives in this community engagement model.</p> |
| <p>Existing programmes and projects may be duplicated</p> | <p>Medium</p> | <p>The development of this project engaged a broad spectrum of key national, multi-lateral, and local stakeholders operating in the peatlands, forests, and livelihoods sectors of the project area (see Supplement 1). Further engagement effort included sharing the project document for feedback. All of these engagement measures were aimed at eliminating duplication, and finding synergies with existing project. Collaboration will continue in the project implementation phase, with major partners contributing at different levels to the delivery of project Outputs, and being members of the PSC.</p> |

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| Continuous granting of mining permits and licenses | Medium | Mining activity (especially open cast mining) has the potential of substantially deforming a landscape and contributing negatively to the goals of the current project. Through proactive engagement, with the national government and the private sector, the role of environmental impact assessments will be promoted to support decision-making on the granting of licensing and mining permits |
| Expansion of commercial agriculture and logging activity | Medium | Efforts during the project preparation phase have brought together key private sector and governmental stakeholders to discuss the role of the project on issues of environmental and socio-economic sustainability, the aims of the project and the role of private sector investments in achieving these aims. These engagements will continue and intensify as the project development and implementation kicks in. It is hoped that these engagements will engender sustainable practices and policies to guide and support these practices from both governmental and private sector stakeholders. |
| Corona virus interrupts the smooth implementation of project activities | Medium | The impact of corona virus in sub-Saharan Africa has not been as bad as it has been in many parts of the world. This project will adhere to all governmental efforts at reducing the spread of the virus among populations. These measures in recent months have not been as stringent as they were in the beginning months of the pandemic, especially outside major cities such as Brazzaville. |
| Corruption may derail confidence in the project and reduce beneficiaries' ability to reap full benefits of the project | Medium | The project will adhere to strict guidelines on all aspects of its operation and implementation, including in the recruitment of project staff, procurement, and others. A strict culture of transparency will be initiated and cultivated at the earliest stages of the project implementation. During the inception workshop of the project, the effects of corruption and what to do about it within the implementation of the project will be the focus of a multi-stakeholder group, and the recommendations from this group work will be used to define a road path to guard against corruption in the implementation of the project. In current design, a Project International Technical Adviser will be recruited as part of the project staff and one of his/her responsibilities is to ensure clearance of project operations including signature of checks. |
| National capacity may be lacking to ensure that the project has qualified staff | Medium | For key technical positions, the project will advertise widely and provide sufficient time for adverts to circulate within the national territory to enhance the potentials for attracting qualified talent. Furthermore a Project International Technical Adviser and M&E Expert are planned to be recruited to ensure a qualified project staffing. |

? Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) risk assessment

The Republic of Congo has been struggling with the Corona Virus as many other countries. The Republic of Congo confirmed cases of COVID-19 on March 14, 2020. As of February 5, there were 8,354 confirmed cases, 7,008 recoveries and 122 confirmed deaths[6]. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the USA classifies the RoC as ?Level 4: Very High Level of COVID-19 in the Republic of the Congo.? Level 4 is the highest scale in their classification[7].

The government of the Republic of Congo has extended a State of Health Emergency several times since the outbreak of this pandemic. The current phase is extended until March 6 to limit the spread of COVID-19[8]. Besides the extension of states of health emergencies, other efforts are being made to deal with the situation. All international passengers are required to self-quarantine for two weeks in their residence or hotel for 14 days upon arrival. Passengers in transit will be quarantined at their expense at designated facilities until they resume their travels. Other measures being encouraged are community mitigation activities. These are actions that people and communities can take to slow the spread of a new virus with pandemic potential. COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a new coronavirus. Community mitigation actions are especially important before a vaccine or therapeutic drug becomes widely available. Because COVID-19 is highly transmissible and can be spread by people who do not know they have the disease, risk of transmission within a community can be difficult to determine. Until broad-scale testing is widely implemented or we have a more comprehensive and precise measure of disease burden, states and communities should assume some community transmission or spread is occurring. Individuals need to follow healthy hygiene practices, stay at home when sick, practice physical distancing to lower the risk of disease spread, and use a cloth face covering (with some exceptions) in community settings when physical distancing cannot be maintained. These universal precautions are appropriate regardless of the extent of mitigation needed.

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

This project will borrow from the US Centers for Disease Control in following a number of guiding principles in the incorporation of COVID-19 risk in the implementation of its activities.

? Community mitigation efforts aim to reduce the rate at which someone infected comes in contact with someone not infected, or reduce the probability of infection if there is contact. The more a person interacts with different people, and the longer and closer the interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread.

? Cross-cutting community mitigation strategies can be organized into the following categories: promoting behaviors that prevent spread; maintaining healthy environments; maintaining healthy operations; and preparing for when someone gets sick.

? Community mitigation strategies should be layered upon one another and used at the same time with several layers of safeguards to reduce the spread of disease and lower the risk of another spike in cases and deaths. No one strategy is sufficient.

? There are a range of implementation choices when setting or adjusting community mitigation plans. These choices offer different levels of protection from the risk of community transmission.

? Communities need to decide the level of risk that is acceptable and make informed choices about implementing mitigation plans accordingly.

? Individuals make choices about following the behavioral practices that are recommended. Compliance to community mitigation decisions will also impact the spread of COVID-19.

? Climatic vulnerability challenges for the project locations

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

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

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

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

[1] Weiss S, Nowak K, Fahr J, et al. (2012). Henipavirus-related Sequences in Fruit Bat Bushmeat, Republic of Congo. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*. 18(9):1535-1536. doi:10.3201/eid1809.111607.

[2] Ibid. Chausson, A.M., Rowcliffe, J.M., Escouflaire, L. et al. (2019).

[3] Mizumoto, Kenji et al. "Effect of a wet market on coronavirus disease (COVID-19) transmission dynamics in China, 2019-2020." *International journal of infectious diseases : IJID : official publication of the International Society for Infectious Diseases* vol. 97 (2020): 96-101. doi:10.1016/j.ijid.2020.05.091

[4] GEF 2020. "Project Design and Review Considerations in Response to the COVID-19 Crisis and the Mitigation of Future Pandemics." https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_COVID_Project_Design_Review_Considerations_20200925.pdf

[5] The Rainforest Foundation 2018. Research on Climate Change Adaptation by Indigenous People in the Republic Of Congo. Final Case Study Report November 2013.

[6] <https://cg.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/>

[7] <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/covid-4/coronavirus-congo>

[8] <https://cg.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/>

6. Institutional Arrangement and Coordination

Describe the institutional arrangement for project implementation. Elaborate on the planned coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.

The Project will comprise the following management, oversight and coordination structures: (i) a Project Steering Committee (PSC) with strategic decision-making responsibilities; (ii) A Project Management Unit (PMU) located in Ministry of Tourism and the Environment. The PMU will be responsible for directing, supervising and coordinating project implementation. (iii) A Field Implementing Unit (FIU) located in Lac Tele Landscape area responsible for on the ground/on site implementation of project activities (Figure 4). Their respective tasks are summarized below.

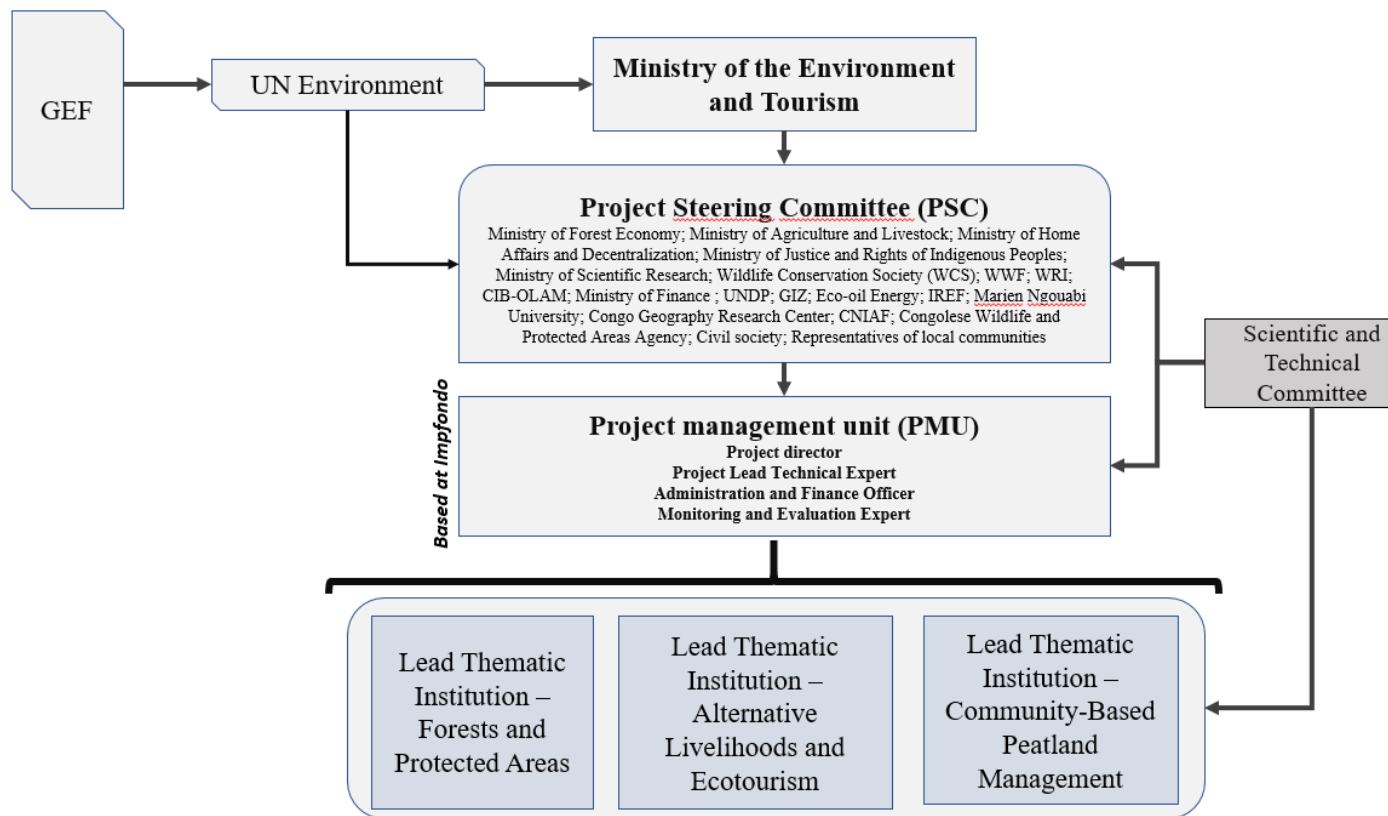


Figure 6. Project implementation arrangements.

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

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

The members of the PSC will include:

- o **Chair:** the designated Senior Staff from the Ministry of Tourism and Environment
- o **Co-Chair:** UNEP ECOSYSTEMS DIVISION Task manager or mandated UNEP Official
- o **Members:** GEF Operational Focal Point, and staff from relevant departments from ministries in charge of environment, forestry, protected areas, agriculture, livestock, mining, finance, land reform, scientific research and local administration, as well as special economic areas. Specific roles within the PSC are based on the mandates assigned to each ministry.

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

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

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

- ? Project Lead Technical Expert ? national
- ? Project Director / Stakeholder Engagement Officer- national (designated by the Minister of Environment)
- Project Monitoring and Evaluation Expert ? International/Regional
- ? Financial Officer (Financier) ? national
- ? Communication Specialist
- ? Support staff ? national

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

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

7. Consistency with National Priorities

Describe the consistency of the project with national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions from below:

NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc.

- National Action Plan for Adaptation (NAPA) under LDCF/UNFCCC
- National Action Program (NAP) under UNCCD
- ASGM NAP (Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining) under Mercury
- Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) under Minamata Convention
- National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan (NBSAP) under UNCBD
- National Communications (NC) under UNFCCC
- Technology Needs Assessment (TNA) under UNFCCC
- National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) under UNCBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD

- National Implementation Plan (NIP) under POPs
- Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)
- National Portfolio Formulation Exercise (NPFE) under GEFSEC
- Biennial Update Report (BUR) under UNFCCC
- Others

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

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

The current project will contribute to the implementation of many national strategies concerning biodiversity, and the sustainable use management of natural resources. These include: *The National Programme for Environmental Management (PNGE)*: The proposed GEF initiative will support the implementation of the PNGE through its activities dedicated to improve PA management and PA governance leading to better conservation impacts (Component 1). Its main goal is to strengthen the conservation of globally threatened species in Congo by improving biodiversity enforcement, resilience management. It is directly in line with the PNGE objectives, which are to ensure sustainable management of natural resources, and efficient protection of the environment. *The National Programme for Forest Development includes protection and conservation measures concerning forest resources (NPFDF)*: The project is aligned to the NPFDF as it will contribute to enhance forest conservation efforts by creating dialog the government and the private sector on sustainable forestry through Output 3.5. and by strengthening participation of local communities in management practices and conservation initiatives in the forest interzone (Component 3). The project will channel grants to forest-dependent communities to pilot sustainable livelihoods based on SLM and CBNRM to reduce deforestation, IWT and unsustainable bush meat exploitation and promote participatory forest management. *The Programme for Conservation and management of biodiversity in Congo (PCGBC)*: The central aspect of the project is to ensure an effective conservation of biodiversity in the Congolese segment of the Tri-national Dja-Odzala-Minkebe transboundary area by both strengthening capacities to reduce IWT and related poaching and trafficking, and supporting conservation efforts and sustainable use of natural resources by local communities, but also the private sector. The project thus directly follows the country's Programme for Conservation and

management of biodiversity which initiated biodiversity inventories in Congo and which the main goals were to (i) promote the participation of local populations in bio-diversity conservation, and (ii) encourage sustainable use of renewable natural resources and promote ecologically sound development around protected area. *The Sectoral Programme on Forest and Environment (PSFE)*: Many aspects of the proposed project are contributing to this sectoral programme of the MEFDDE, which is constituted of a number of components declined in four relevant programmes among which one concerns protected areas and wildlife management. Project activities such as bio-monitoring, biodiversity surveys, introduction of agro-forestry practices, consultation platforms for a more sustainable management of the forest resources in the interzone, are all aligned with the objectives of this programme. *REDD Strategy and programme*: The proposed GEF initiative is aligned with the REDD+ strategy and activities in Congo, which include the development of projects for biodiversity conservation at the regional level through landscape management. Many activities under the relevant Outputs are directly targeting enhanced forest management and inclusion of local communities in conservation efforts.

8. Knowledge Management

Elaborate the "Knowledge Management Approach" for the project, including a budget, key deliverables and a timeline, and explain how it will contribute to the project's overall impact.

Public awareness: Local NGO representatives and government officials consulted during project preparation raised the problem of lack of information regarding important initiatives in the area, such as the legal framework for land management, forest classification and management[1]. They also expressed the need for awareness-raising on sustainable natural resource management issues among local populations if a conservation / sustainable-development project is to succeed. A strategy of law enforcement alone would be counterproductive and increase conflicts in the area. The Project Coordinator shall ensure effective communication with the local populations about the importance and benefits of successful project implementation. It is also crucial to engage local communities in every stage of project implementation in order to optimize alignment of the project activities with their interests and way of life, thereby increasing local buy-in and ownership of the project and consequently its chances of success. The project will finance a qualified communications consultant to build capacities of the Government and local partners and assist them as necessary to prepare and disseminate information prior to consultations. The consultant will be responsible for preparing a communications strategy, ensuring communications with the local population, and where necessary, contribute in the management of conflicts between key stakeholders. The consultant will also support interaction with the political and institutional stakeholders at the local, national and regional trans-boundary level to help raise awareness at the political level on the benefits inherent to the project. The Communication Consultant will also prepare a communications strategy that disseminates relevant information to all stakeholders (local, national, international) about the project, in particular: applicable GEF/UNEP safeguards policies and instruments; implications of the proposed classification and management options for the priority conservation and community use areas for protected areas, forests and peatlands; and other forthcoming developments in the area. In particular, the Communication Strategy will need to inform stakeholders on the stance of the Project towards hunting in the Lac T? Landscape distinguishing between traditional user rights and poaching. The Strategy will also communicate the net costs and benefits of project implementation compared to the ?without-project? situation. The Communications Strategy will allow for two-way communication ?in particular by providing a mechanism for stakeholders to express their grievances which will be established at the very outset, as well as a clear procedure to respond to criticism, redress grievances, manage and resolve arising conflicts between stakeholders as soon as possible, and will establish a mediation committee for this purpose. The communication strategy will be validated at a public workshop.

It will be the role of the consultant to disseminate adequate, appropriate and reliable information prior to consultations and decision making to ensure free, prior, informed consultations with all affected stakeholders on all project activities that have potential impacts on local communities and indigenous people. These include the consultations for the classification of forest areas, preparation of management plans, and design of the Livelihood Support Mechanism. Specific emphasis will be put on communicating

to local communities the importance of sustainable management of their natural resources, of taking ownership of this process, and of potential costs and benefits to them in the short and long term. Efforts will also be made to convey to local communities that they are an active partner in this project and have the power to direct its design and implementation. Part of the role of the communication strategy will be to organize awareness-raising workshops both at the central level (ministries) and the local level and conducted in local language to ensure broad endorsement of the project by government staff and local communities.

Knowledge management: The GEF Knowledge Management (KM) strategy will guide the project's KM approach, which will be mainstreamed into the project's design, its M&E system and adaptive management, ensuring that risks are identified and addressed, and successes and failures are documented and shared. Activities to share learning among local producers, local communities, political decision-makers and civil society organizations will include development and dissemination of communications materials, organization of exchange visits, and participation in national, regional and international conferences on peatlands and biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest and land management. Cross-learning and experience-sharing will adopt the following approach: (i) Project Management Unit will ensure that project learnings are captured, compiled and systematized, as per related project Outputs, experience from other projects and initiatives including current GEF portfolio in Congo Basin (ii) Project PMU will ensure that project knowledge is shared with, and used by relevant stakeholders, thus promoting its scaling out to future projects, improved practices and policies. Knowledge management and learning exchanges are core elements of the Republic of Congo project's design and implementation and is including capacity building activities, training, technical assistance including possible south-south exchanges in all components. The project will develop cross-sectoral platforms to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange and communication and promote linkages to successful platforms in Republic of Congo and in the region. The project will also promote the sharing of experience and best practices between project stakeholders at the local, sub-national and national levels and with peers from other Congo IP projects. The proposed project is fully in line with the Congo IP program which aims to 'incorporate environmental management principles in forest management through integrated approaches at different levels (local, national, and transboundary)'. As described above, the project aims to develop an integrated approach for peatland management through a community-focused and locally-relevant governance model that can be scaled to other areas in the Congo Basin region, such as community development zones within forestry concessions. The project will focus on socio-ecological systems (rather than on a single discipline/field of study) making it both pragmatic and long-lasting while providing benefits to both people and the environment. Wildlife and peatland conservation will be a core component of the project, while an innovative local governance framework will be developed and the use of new technologies promoted.

Project thematic studies and assessments (e.g. Peatlands survey and mapping, Wildlife status in peatlands ecosystem; etc.) will be shared publicly on a dedicated website. A capitalization document will be produced at the end of the project and distributed to NGOs, United Nations agencies, local authorities, institutions. Participatory mapping will be carried out in the peatlands area and the open data will be downloadable from the website as Open Street Map. Furthermore, documentary films capitalizing on peatlands will be designed and broadcast on national and local channels. To strengthen local stakeholders' uptake of knowledge, exchange visits for sharing experiences will be organized for village leaders. Given the socio-economic and environmental elements that are relevant to the project, the project also offers a possibility for collaboration among different stakeholders, including government institutions, development partners, academia, civil society organisations, private sector and community members. Therefore, during the life of the project, materials and workshops will be developed to share and disseminate among stakeholders concerned but also beyond. There will be lessons from peatlands community based management approach that will necessitate knowledge dissemination. Therefore, the project envisages a robust knowledge management system.

In learning from other relevant projects, initiatives and evaluations, the project management unit will seek to engage with other project management units who implemented and executed other relevant projects. Workshops will be held with different partners implementing relevant projects to get their inputs, and results will also be reported in different forms, including radio/TV programs, flyers and national seminars. This will help to specifically avoid duplication of efforts from other projects and to integrate lessons from other past and on-going development interventions. **mainstreaming strategy:** The project will link to the

DRC project working in the Lac Tumba-Lac T?l? landscape, which is continuous/contiguous habitat and essential peatland, swamp forest and *terra firma* forest. This is a critical area for the last remaining large populations of western lowland gorilla, forest elephant, bonobo and countless other endangered species. It is also a critically important forest to the Batwa-Ba'aka people who are dependent on these forests for their survival. Although generally low human population density, the forest is being exploited heavily for logging and is now a new frontier for oil palm cultivation, which is leading to severe forest degradation. The program also will extend to include the Odzala, Nouabale-Ndoki NPs as well as forests around them (including Mondika and Goulougo Triangle). These are critically important forests and their inclusion means that positive and lasting impact in this region will make a significant contribution to climate and biodiversity conservation targets, as well as indigenous people's rights and livelihoods[2].

Further, being part of the Congo IP, the project will benefit from the Regional child project that will promote knowledge exchange between the participating countries, ensuring that emerging knowledge is captured and capacity building activities are well tailored to the needs of the countries? and their stakeholder groups at all levels (local, regional and national governments from environment and other sectors, indigenous and communities, farmers and producer associations, private sector, other decision makers, etc.). The Congo IP regional program will collaborate and co-finance knowledge and best practice exchanges between stakeholders of the project and the national and regional community. This can include conference, analytical papers, technical workshops and study tours to support capacity building of the project?s stakeholders.

[1] Boyoko Alexis Vincent de Paul (2020). Strategie et plan de communication pour la gestion durable et la conservation integree des tourbieres et des ressources naturelles par les communautes 2020-2024 - rapport provisoire. Une ?tude th?matique pour le projet intitul?e: ?Conservation communautaire int?gr?e des ?cosyst?mes de tourbi?res et promotion de l'?cotourisme dans le paysage du Lac T?l? de la R?publique du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL?. Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Minist?re du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, R?publique du Congo.

[2] Georges Claver BOUNDZANGA et Brice Ch?rubins (2020). Analyse des modes de vie et des besoins specifiques des communautes locales et populations autochtones vivant dans le paysage du Lac Tele. Une ?tude th?matique pour le projet intitul?e: ?Conservation communautaire int?gr?e des ?cosyst?mes de tourbi?res et promotion de l'?cotourisme dans le paysage du Lac T?l? de la R?publique du Congo - ICOBACPE /PELATEL?. Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM) et Le Minist?re du Tourisme et de l'Environnement. Brazzaville, R?publique du Congo.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

Describe the budgeted M and E plan

The Project will follow UNEP?s standard monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes and procedures. Substantive and financial project reporting requirements are summarized in Appendix 7 of the project document. Reporting requirements and templates are an integral part of the UNEP legal instrument to be signed by the executing agency and UNEP. The project M&E plan (see the Table below) is consistent with the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policy. The M&E plan will be reviewed and revised as necessary during the project inception workshop to ensure project stakeholders understand their roles and

responsibilities vis-?-vis project monitoring and evaluation. Indicators and their means of verification may also be fine-tuned at the inception workshop

| Type of M&E activity | Responsible Parties | Budget from GEF | Budget co-finance | Time Frame |
|---|--|-----------------|-------------------|---|
| Inception Meeting | Project Management Unit (PMU) UNEP | 20,000 | 30,000 | Within 2 months of project start-up |
| Inception Report | PMU | 0 | 3,000 | 1 month after project inception meeting |
| Measurement of project indicators (outcome, progress and performance indicators, GEF tracking tools) at national and global level | Project Lead Technical Expert PMU/ Project team | 74,000 | 25,000 | Outcome indicators: start, mid and end of project Progress/perform. Indicators: annually |
| Semi-annual Progress/ Operational Reports to UNEP | Project Lead Technical Expert with inputs from partners | 0 | 2,000 | Within 1 month of the end of reporting period i.e. on or before 31 January and 31 July |
| Project Steering Committee meetings | Project Lead Technical Expert PMU UNEP | 80,000 | 120,000 | Once a year minimum |
| Reports of PSC meetings | Project Lead Technical Expert with inputs from partners | 0 | 2,000 | Annually |
| PIR | Project Lead Technical Expert PMU UNEP | 0 | 2,000 | Annually, part of reporting routine |
| Monitoring visits to field sites | Project Lead Technical Expert PMU UNEP | 75,000 | 55,000 | As appropriate |
| Middle Term Review | UNEP TM/ UNEP Evaluation Office PMU | 40,000 | 50,000 | After 2 years of implementation |
| Terminal Evaluation | UNEP TM/ UNEP Evaluation Office PMU | 50,000 | 125,000 | Within 6 months of end of project implementation |
| Audit | PMU | | 50000 | Annually |
| Project Final Report | Project Lead Technical Expert with inputs from partners | 0 | 2,000 | Within 2 months of the project completion date |
| Co-financing report | Project Lead Technical Expert and input from other co-financiers | 0 | 2,000 | Within 1 month of the PIR reporting period, i.e. on or before 31 July |

| Type of M&E activity | Responsible Parties | Budget from GEF | Budget co-finance | Time Frame |
|---|---|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| Publication of Lessons Learnt and other project documents | Project Lead Technical Expert with inputs from partners | | 25,000 | Annually, part of Semi-annual reports & Project Final Report |
| Total M&E Plan Budget | | 339,995 | 494,000 | |

In-line with the GEF and UNEP Evaluation requirements, the project will be subject to an independent Terminal Evaluation (TE). Additionally, a performance assessment will be conducted at the project's mid-point. The Evaluation Office will decide whether a Mid-Term Review, commissioned and managed by the Project Manager, is sufficient or whether a Mid-Term Evaluation, managed by the Evaluation Office, is required.

The TE will provide an independent assessment of project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine the likelihood of impact and sustainability. The project performance will be assessed against standard evaluation criteria using a six-point rating scheme. It will have two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP staff and implementing partners. The direct costs of the evaluation will be charged against the project evaluation budget. The TE will typically be initiated after the project's operational completion. If a follow-on phase of the project is envisaged, the timing of the evaluation will be discussed with the Evaluation Office to feed into the submission of the follow-on proposal.

The draft TE report will be sent by the Evaluation Office to project stakeholders for comment. Formal comments on the report will be shared by the Evaluation Office in an open and transparent manner. The final determination of project ratings will be made by the Evaluation Office when the report is finalised.

The evaluation report will be publicly disclosed and will be followed by a recommendation compliance process. The evaluation recommendations will be entered into a Recommendations Implementation Plan template by the Evaluation Office. Formal submission of the completed Recommendations Implementation Plan by the project manager is required within one month of its delivery to the project team. The Evaluation Office will monitor compliance with this plan every six months for a total period of 12 months from the finalisation of the Recommendations Implementation Plan.

10. Benefits

Describe the socioeconomic benefits to be delivered by the project at the national and local levels, as appropriate. How do these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of global environment benefits (GEF Trust Fund) or adaptation benefits (LDCE/SCCF)?

The project is designed to strengthen and develop on-going efforts in the Republic of Congo, as well as in the greater Congo Basin region to conserve globally significant biodiversity within forest landscapes and sustainably manage a big tropical peatland found within the country, and extending into neighbouring countries. The project will, however, deliver tangible economic benefits to local communities within target areas. This will be achieved through developing and implementing land use management plans, improving the legal and policy framework, improving environmental management within project area to help maintain existing livelihoods and develop new options related to ecotourism, NFTP and organic cocoa value chains,

sustainable wildlife management and agriculture as well as reducing social and economic costs of environmental degradation, unsustainable exploitation of natural resources and wildlife crime. The cost of human-wildlife conflict will also be reduced by the demonstration of practices that will avoid these conflicts at village level including ecological solutions through bee hives for honey production, and by the protection of habitat in the project area as elephants will be kept away from VTs due to their remembering of bee mass attacks.

More specifically the project will work with key production sectors within the project area and in related transboundary landscapes to strengthen sustainable livelihoods practices. The introduction of CBNRM, SLM, and SFM is expected to trigger more efficient management of natural resources reducing cost of exploitation or increasing yield in the long-term, this includes for instance sustainable land management practices increasing soil productivity, and agroforestry practices introducing new sustainable agricultural production options for local communities. For instance sustainable integrated land management through agroforestry, multiple use sustain yield tree crops, orchard fruits, aquaculture, honey bee production along with wildlife oriented ecotourism and hotspots permanent monitoring, rural entrepreneurship activities for small business services will provide upwards of 2,500 environmentally friendly jobs for sustainable inclusive green growth. The project will thus contribute to increase local communities' income in the long term including income from sustainable agriculture through the creation of agricultural products collect, transport, processing and trading and develop their partnership with private agricultural companies, which could commercialize their processed production. The proposed intervention will also support the development of direct or indirect revenue generation from conservation activities for local communities; appropriate revenue generation mechanisms compatible with the protected areas status and ecological characters and responsive to local community needs will be analyzed. Mechanisms will include ecotourism, handicrafts, and derivatives of sustainable non-timber products to which value has been added. The project will also facilitate targeted communities, relevant common initiative groups, community-based organization, as well as authorities to establish community tourism enterprise to promote ecotourism, tourism based small businesses, services and products as alternative livelihood source. Eco-tourism initiatives have the potential to create around upward of 750 direct jobs if the area manages to attract at least 2,000 tourists a year through the support of this project and relevant long-term partners within the ministerial and non-governmental organization spaces.

A major aspect of the project concerns law enforcement strengthening and anti-trafficking activities on the ground. The related activities undertaken during the project will trigger a stronger and more efficient legal mechanism with better crime scene management and criminal investigations, as well as a stronger capacity of PA managers and patrols to prevent and address wildlife crime in the project area. Local communities will thus benefit from an improved security in the zone, with better surveillance of routes and hubs preventing armed groups from freely entering the area.

The project will support social cohesion in the regional transboundary area by fostering increased cooperation between stakeholders over essential issues concerning natural resources management and wildlife crime. Consultations platforms will enable stakeholders to negotiate and solve issues concerning logging concessions for instance. In this process indigenous people and small local communities will be given the opportunity to participate to the decision-making process to ensure their fair representation and appropriation of the development process of the zone. These communities will also receive support to develop community based forest management through the biological resources access.

According to the government's 2010 report to CEDAW, women produced approximately 90% of food products for household consumption. In 2016, the government reported that women accounted for 70% of the agricultural workforce but own only 25% of agricultural land usually in small holdings. This project is carefully integrating gender mainstreaming considerations to ensure that the project benefits are fairly distributed across genders with special emphasis on women for capacity-building activities on SLM and alternative livelihoods. Women will benefit from the introduction of alternative livelihoods creating agricultural jobs and alternative source of income. They will also participate as full members in decision-making, access to project resources, and in contributing to feedback on project implementation processes and directions.

11. Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

Provide information on the identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project/program based on your organization's ESS systems and procedures

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification*

| PIF | CEO Endorsement/Approva l | MTR | TE |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----|----|
| Medium/Moderate | | | |

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

Elaborate on the types and risk classifications/ratings of any identified environmental and social risks and impacts (considering the GEF ESS Minimum Standards) and any measures undertaken as well as planned management measures to address these risks during implementation.

Supporting Documents

Upload available ESS supporting documents.

| Title | Module | Submitted |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| SRIF-PRC RoC Peatland rev | CEO Endorsement ESS | |

ANNEX A: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK (either copy and paste here the framework from the Agency document, or provide reference to the page in the project document where the framework could be found).

| Project title: Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac T?l? Landscape of Republic of Congo ? ICOBACPE /PELATEL | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| | Indicator | <i>3. Baseline</i> | <i>4. Mid-term target</i> | <i>5. End of project target</i> | Sources of verification | Assumptions |
| Project Objective To promote a model for integrated community-based conservation and protected area management applied to the peatland area and its forest ecosystem of the RoC Lac T?l? Landscape. | Population of Western lowland gorillas living in the swamp forests of the sprawling Lac T?l? Community Reserve [1] | Protected areas are under severe management threats that contribute to land degradation, decline in biodiversity, and a degradation in the value of ecosystem services | At least 440,000 hectares[2] of forest brought under improved protection and enhanced conservation. | Population of Western lowland gorillas living in the swamp forests of the sprawling Lac T?l? Community Reserve increase to 125,000[3] as a result of project activities | Environmental monitoring studies and sampling surveys | ? No major infrastructure projects carried out without prior application of environmental impact assessments |
| | Interest of local businesses and investors in green productive value chains (organic cocoa; ecotourism; sustainable NTFPs extraction, etc.) | There are no initiatives for investments in green productive value chains in the Lac Tele Landscape | At least 5 businesses invested in the green productive value chains | At least 8 local businesses engaged in the green productive value chains | ? Business cases; ? Project reports and records | Local businesses will find investments in the green productive value chains attractive. |

| Project title: Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Tele Landscape of Republic of Congo ? ICOBACPE /PELATEL | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|--------------------------------|---|
| | Indicator | 3. Baseline | 4. Mid-term target | 5. End of project target | Sources of verification | Assumptions |
| | Number of indigenous people who are beneficiaries of alternative income generating activity projects funded by the project | There are very few alternative income generating activities outside smallholder subsistence production in the project area | At least 4 representatives of different indigenous community groups are represented in all key meetings and decision-making bodies of the project at the Lac Tele Landscape level | Representatives of the 7 largest indigenous community groups are represented in all key meetings and decision-making bodies of the project at the Lac Tele Landscape level | ? Project reports and records | The broad stakeholder consultative processes initiated during the PPG phase of the project are continued during the implementation phase |
| Component 1: Supporting development and implementation of LUPs for RoC Lac Tele landscape protected areas and surrounding landscape with a focus on ensuring and formalizing community involvement | | | | | | |
| Outcome 1.1 The government of the RoC adopts a national legal framework in support of local land tenure rights, community governance and management of forest and natural resources and supports local enforcement in the Lac | Number of sectors with revised regulatory frameworks on community governance and management of forest and natural resources adopted by the government of the RoC | Policies/incentives promoting sustainable forest resource and peatland management, as well as addressing illegal wildlife trade suffer from implementation deficits at the local level | At least 3 regulatory frameworks promoting forest resource and sustainable peatland management, as well as addressing illegal wildlife trade are applied in all districts of the Lac Tele Landscape | At least 6 regulatory frameworks promoting forest resource and peatland management, as well as addressing illegal wildlife trade are applied in all districts of the Lac Tele Landscape | Provincial government reports | ? The government of the RoC ensures the effective implementation of policies and strategies relating to the sustainable management of forests and peatlands ? No significant increase in environmental threats (land degradation, biodiversity loss) |

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

| | Indicator | 3. Baseline | 4. Mid-term target | 5. End of project target | Sources of verification | Assumptions |
|----------------|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| Tele Landscape | Percent of participating stakeholders at all levels contributing credible data to feed the database to monitor the peatlands resources. | Data availability on the state and changes in key environmental resources is very poor, making informed decision-making difficult | At least 40% of project participating stakeholders are contributing data to feed the database to monitor peatland resources | All project participating stakeholders (100%) are contributing data to feed the database to monitor peatland resources | ? Forests, peatlands, and biodiversity assessment report ? Activity report indicating database specifications | All participating stakeholders in the project at all levels are willing to contribute existing data in the development of the database |
| | Percent of District Councils of the Lac Tele Landscape implementing Landscape Management plans with clear attention to gender and representation of indigenous populations | Protected areas are under severe management threats as they lack comprehensive plans for management ? contributing land degradation, decline in biodiversity, and degradation in the value of ecosystem services. | At least 50% of District Councils of the Lac Tele Landscape implementing Landscape Management plans with clear attention to gender and representation of indigenous populations | All District Councils of the Lac Tele Landscape implementing Landscape Management plans with clear attention to gender and representation of indigenous populations | Provincial government reports | ? Decentralization policies and processes in relevant ministries to support the development and implementation of local level land use planning remain in place |
| | Investment leveraged financing to support implementation of land-use management plans. | Existing integrated land use plans to support planning and decision-making on productive forests and peatlands in the Lac Tele Landscape have not been legally approved and incorporated into existing policy processes | At least 600,000 \$US is invested to support implementation of land-use management plans (see budget line 1206). | At least 1,500,000 \$US is invested to support implementation of land-use management plans (see budget line 1206). | Local authorities yearly reports evaluations | The Government of the RoC is keen to support sustainable land use planning in the management of natural resources and landscapes of the country |

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

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| | Indicator | <i>3. Baseline</i> | <i>4. Mid-term target</i> | <i>5. End of project target</i> | Sources of verification | Assumptions |
|--|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
|--|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|

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

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

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

Component 2: Community management of natural resources

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| Outcome 2.1: Local communities in the Lac Tele Landscape adopt integrated participatory conservation models for the sustainable use and management of peatland ecosystems? | Percent (%) of land users that undertake sustainable land management on peatlands in the project area | None | ? At least 50% of land users are practicing sustainable land management on peatlands in the project area. | ? At least 85% of land users are practicing sustainable land management on peatlands in the project area. | ? Technical progress reports and project evaluations | The immediate benefits of the implementation of sustainable management practices are substantial enough to spur adoption by local communities |
| | Number of peer-reviewed publications published in relevant internationally recognized journals in threats to peatlands of the Congo Basin (with specific focus on the Lac Tele Landscape). | Information and data on threats to the peatlands of the Lac Tele Landscape are inexistent | ? At least 2 peer reviewed papers published on climatic and management threats | ? At least 4 peer reviewed papers published on climatic, natural resources use, management, IWT, and threats with transnational characteristics. | ? Peer-reviewed publications shared among key stakeholders | Data on threats to peatland ecosystems of the RoC available to guide policy. A better understanding of management challenges as |

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

| | Indicator | <i>3. Baseline</i> | <i>4. Mid-term target</i> | <i>5. End of project target</i> | Sources of verification | Assumptions |
|---|--|--|--|---|--------------------------------|--|
| | Number of transboundary community based structures to manage peatlands with women in decision making positions | ? Capacity for management of sustainable forest landscape; biodiversity; and peatland management is limited in the project area. ? There is a gender disparity (not in favour of women) in accessing information and opportunities for capacity-building in the country as a whole, and in the project area | Capacity for the sustainable management of peatlands provided to at least 150 members of local governmental and non-governmental environmental interest groups in the project area | At least 350 persons trained in implementing management of forest landscape; biodiversity; and peatland management (with a special attention to gender diversity and the representation of indigenous groups) | ? Training reports | well as challenges associated with monitoring and addressing issues of IWT support better decision-making. |
| 2.1.1. Local community management structures and related bylaws allowing for sustainable management of hunting and fire, are established based on the successful experience of community-based fisheries regulations in the last 3 years | | | | | | |
| 2.1.2. Local community governance groups and forest-dependent peoples trained to develop and implement environmental projects including the reforestation of gallery forests that are crucial for ecosystem services and fisheries production | | | | | | |
| 2.1.3. Action-based research and monitoring allowing for adaptive management by communities and the government (including research on threats to peatlands from a changing climate) are conducted, results documented and made available to key decision makers at local and national level | | | | | | |
| 2.1.4. Community based south-south cooperation activities and transboundary collaboration on peatlands management, illegal wildlife trade, etc. are conducted, 2.1.4. Community based south-south cooperation activities and transboundary collaboration on peatlands management, illegal wildlife trade, etc. are conducted results documented and made available in the project site. | | | | | | |
| Component 3. Diversifying communities? income sources e.g. through promotion of ecotourism and certified cacao | | | | | | |

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

| Project title: Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Tele Landscape of Republic of Congo ? ICOBACPE /PELATEL | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| | Indicator | <i>3. Baseline</i> | <i>4. Mid-term target</i> | <i>5. End of project target</i> | Sources of verification | Assumptions |
| | Percent (%) of companies operating concessions in the Tele Lac Landscape signing commitments to adhere more strictly to prevailing legal and institutional frameworks | Operational modalities of logging and mineral extraction companies fail to adequately address challenges of biodiversity loss and sustainable peatland management | Operational modalities of logging and mineral extraction companies are revised to address key sustainable development challenges | All companies operating concessions in the Lac Tele Landscape sign a commitments to adhere more strictly to prevailing legal and institutional frameworks, as well as to submit to better monitoring of adherence | ? Project reports ? Signed commitments uploaded in the project website | Lobbying from the private sector does not derail efforts towards reforms |
| 4.1.1. Training and technical assistance provided to existing concessions on resource exploitation that ensure integrity of peatland ecosystem [4] | | | | | | |
| 4.1.2. Study to assess legislative, administrative and operational modalities for the allocation of concessions completed, recommendations made and submitted to key decision makers for adoption | | | | | | |
| 4.1.3. A model of private sector involvement in sustainable peatland management and solutions to IWT in the project area developed and pilot tested, results documented and made available through the project site | | | | | | |
| Component 5. Communication, Knowledge Management and project monitoring and Evaluation | | | | | | |

| Project title: Integrated Community -Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Tele Landscape of Republic of Congo ? ICOBACPE /PELATEL | | | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | Indicator | <i>3. Baseline</i> | <i>4. Mid-term target</i> | <i>5. End of project target</i> | Sources of verification | Assumptions |
| Outcome 5: Stakeholders at the local, national and regional level adopt an agreed communication strategy to mainstream principles of peatland adaptive management and IWT. | Percent (%) of key actors in the Lac Tele Landscape contributing with knowledge products to the project Portal. | None | At least 40% of key actors in the Lac Tele Landscape contributing with knowledge products to the project Portal. | All key actors in the Lac Tele Landscape (100%) are contributing with knowledge products to the project Portal. | A website with the peatland knowledge management system is up and running | The Scientific Committee of the project engages all relevant stakeholders to arrive at a versatile and representative knowledge management system |
| | Percent (%) of participants in project trainings that state in the training evaluation form that the information provided by the project through the different channels reached them and is appropriate. | | At least 55% of participants indicate that the information provided by the project through the different channels reached them and is appropriate. | At least 95% of participants indicate that the information provided by the project through the different channels reached them and is appropriate. | | |
| 5.1.1. Communication and knowledge products are generated by the project uploaded in a dedicated Portal on the project host website and disseminated at local, national and regional levels through different channels, including the Congo IP to create awareness for community based peatlands and natural resources conservation | | | | | | |
| 5.1.2. RoC key actors including those involved in peatlands and natural resources management are actively engaged and exposed to experiences from peers in other locations | | | | | | |

[1] The western lowland gorilla (*G. gorilla gorilla*) is one of two subspecies of the western gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*) that lives in montane, primary and secondary forests and lowland swamps in central Africa: , Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

[2] This is the area of the Lac Tele Community Reserve. Ben Evans (2019). Wild Places - Lac Tele Community Reserve. Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Congo Program. Accessed on 12-02-2019. <https://congo.wcs.org/Wild-Places/Lac-Tele-Community-Reserve.aspx>

[3] This is the population that was recorded in 2007 of this species as reported by USAID. This project will therefore strive to bring the population back to at least that number.

https://carpe.umd.edu/sites/default/files/documentsarchive/CAFEC_Lac%20T%C2%821%C2%82-%20Lac%20Tumba%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf

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

ANNEX B: RESPONSES TO PROJECT REVIEWS (from GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF).

| Comment | Response (and References) |
|---------|---------------------------|
|---------|---------------------------|

**Canada
Comments**

The technical advisory panel made interesting observations which may be useful to highlight again:

1? There are two particular deficiencies: identifying and addressing the barriers to scaling and transformation, particularly with regard to vested interests; and articulating a clear theory of change (TOC) that links drivers of deforestation/forest degradation and their root causes to project structure, outcomes and overall objective, and which identifies critical assumptions. STAP recommends further clarification of barriers and how to address them, along with the development of a clear, detailed TOC with a clear logical sequence of the steps and assumptions required. In the PPG phase, the CBSL should provide detailed and realistic objectives that can be monitored and measured (and adjusted if necessary) over time.

Identifying and addressing the barriers to scaling and transformation, particularly with regard to vested interests:

Particular attention has been taken in the analysis of barriers to address issues of scaling and transformation, particularly with regard to vested interests. There is a specific barrier named 'Conflicting vested interests in forest resources conservation, use and management' that addresses the problem of diverging interests particularly vis-à-vis the private sector involved in investments on forest and peatland landscapes, with local communities.

Reference: See Barriers in Section 2.3.

A clear theory of change (TOC) that links drivers of deforestation/forest degradation and their root causes to project structure, outcomes and overall objective, and which identifies critical assumptions.

The theory of change has been designed to clearly capture the links between drivers of deforestation/forest degradation and their root causes. It also clarifies these links (both in the figure and its accompanying description) with key project activities and outcomes.

In consideration of STAP comments, UNEP integrated and responded to STAP concerns related to the ToC applicable to RoC Child project

Reference: See Section 3.3

Clarification of barriers and how to address them, along with the development of a clear, detailed TOC with a clear logical sequence of the steps and assumptions.

In response to this comment and In consideration of STAT comments, related to the ToC, UNEP integrated and responded to STAP concerns applicable to RoC Child project. The theory of change has been designed to clearly capture the links between drivers of deforestation/forest degradation and their root causes. It also clarifies these links (both in the figure and its accompanying description) with key project activities and outcomes.

Reference: See Section 2.3 and 3.3

Detailed and realistic objectives that can be monitored and measured (and adjusted if necessary) over time.

The project objective has been clearly defined, indicators for measuring progress and targets a middle point and end of project defined in the project results framework.

References: Project objective Section 3.2; and Results Framework Appendix 4.

Norway-Denmark Comments

1? Our constituency welcomes this project but is very concerned about possible overlap with the work of the Central Africa Forest Initiative, CAFI which Norway, among others, is an important donor to. We would strongly encourage finding mechanisms that will ensure the best possible coordination between these two programs and avoid any double reporting. Coordination meetings should take place at the country level since each country has different projects. More specifically:

a? In terms of the results and indicators, how to ensure that there is no double reporting compared to CAFI-funded programs?

b? Component 1 of the program ?Enabling integrated framework for countries in targeted transboundary landscapes to plan, monitor and adapt land management and leverage local, national and international investments for SLM/SFM? as well as the land use planning methodology developed under

This project recognizes the efforts and initiatives supported by CAFI to protect the country's forests and accelerate the fight against climate change. It includes ambitious commitments that underline the country's particular willingness in this regard: non-conversion of High Carbon Stock (HCS) and High Conservation Value (HCV) forests, setting a ceiling on the conversion of non-HCS/HVC forests (provisional ceiling set at 20,000 ha per year), protection and sustainable management of peatland areas so that they are neither drained nor dried out, and orientation of agricultural activities in savannah areas.

a? In terms of the results and indicators, how to ensure that there is no double reporting compared to CAFI-funded programs?

Indicators for the current project have been designed to complement, rather than replicate CAFI indicators.

References: See the Results Framework Appendix 4.

b? Component 1 of the program ?Enabling integrated framework for countries ? for SLM/SFM? as well as the land use planning methodology ? on-going work already funded by CAFI.

The Lac Tele Landscape falls within those described as CARPE Landscapes. For these landscapes, land use management plans were developed within the framework of the CARPE programme. The current project will therefore not be developing land use management plans. Instead, effort and resources will be directed towards ensuring that these plans are endorsed and anchored into relevant national policies and legislative processes to ensure their use in development planning. The CAFI was consulted on a one-on-one meeting during the development of this project, and the project document was shared for comment and inputs during the project development stage. The project document was also shared for comments and feedback with CAFI.

c? Equateur provincial program in DRC (FAO and WWF as implementing agency, approved in 2018): It would be important that in the program development phase the deliverables of the CAFI program could be mapped and a gap analysis be conducted to make sure that the GEF program in the same area does not duplicate those efforts.

The CAFI was consulted on a one-on-one meeting during the development of this project (for the Republic of Congo), and the project document was shared for comment and inputs during the project development stage. The project document was also shared for comments and feedback with CAFI. Gaps in the CAFI implementation were identified during a face-to-face meeting with the country representatives (see Appendix 17), and the preparation of this project has been designed to fill in these gaps, instead of replicate approaches and targets.

Furthermore, See project barriers analysis section 1.a.1 of CEO endorsement Request

**United States
Comments**

The below comments from the United States were provided prior to the Council meeting. An initial agency response was provided and can be found in the list of documents specific to the project in the GEF Portal.

1? Recognizing that the intent of these projects is to mitigate or reverse deforestation, the United States needs to officially confirm for internal purposes that the following projects will not involve any logging of primary forests. Can the GEF please affirm that no logging of primary forests will occur during the implementation of projects: 10125, 10184, 10188, 10192, 10198, 10206, 10208, 10220.

For RoC, we confirm that no logging will be conducted in the framework of the project. **More** importantly, the RoC Child Project has a dedicated component to raise awareness of the wood compagnies for sustainable wood logging in their concessions and to encourage them to adhere to international standards.

STAP comments were made at PFD level. However, it would be relevant to explain how well UNEP integrated and responded to some STAP concerns applicable to a country project, for instance

1) about the formulation of objectives in the context of transformation, 2) a description of short-term, long term, and intermediate results, 3) the revised ToC

4) the meaning of protected area (PA),

5) the recognition of forest dependent communities? rights and uses,

6) the distinction between local communities and forest dependent communities,

7) the barrier analysis,

8) the lessons from the past and on-going portfolio,

9) the role of innovation (in the field of Natural Capital Accounting

For item 1, 2 and 3, UNEP would like to make reference to the project Alternative scenario in section 3 of the CEO endorsement Request and ToC diagram in Section 3.3 of the Project document

4) Meaning of the Protected Area: We consider the CBD definition which in Article 2 of the Convention the PA is defined as **“a geographically defined area, which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives?”**

See footnote 1 in Project Document and CEO ER

5) the recognition of forest dependent communities? rights and uses: Congo IP objective for Component 3 - sustainable use of forests by local communities and forest dependent people through strengthening of rights and tenure, and sustainable management of production sector activities

6) the distinction between local communities and forest dependent communities: These 2 categories of stakeholders even though different are deal with similarly as in most case those groups are leaving together and any approach targeting one may create conflict if not handle with care. However, as the case may be the project will have specific approach to each group is possible

7) the barrier analysis; See project barriers analysis section 1.a.1 of CEO endorsement Request

8) the lessons from the past and on-going portfolio: see **Outstanding gaps and remaining challenges** In Baseline Analysis section of the CEO ER

9) the role of innovation (in the field of Natural Capital Accounting for instance, the empowerment of forest dependent communities, and - See the section 7 on Innovativeness, Sustainability and potential for scaling up

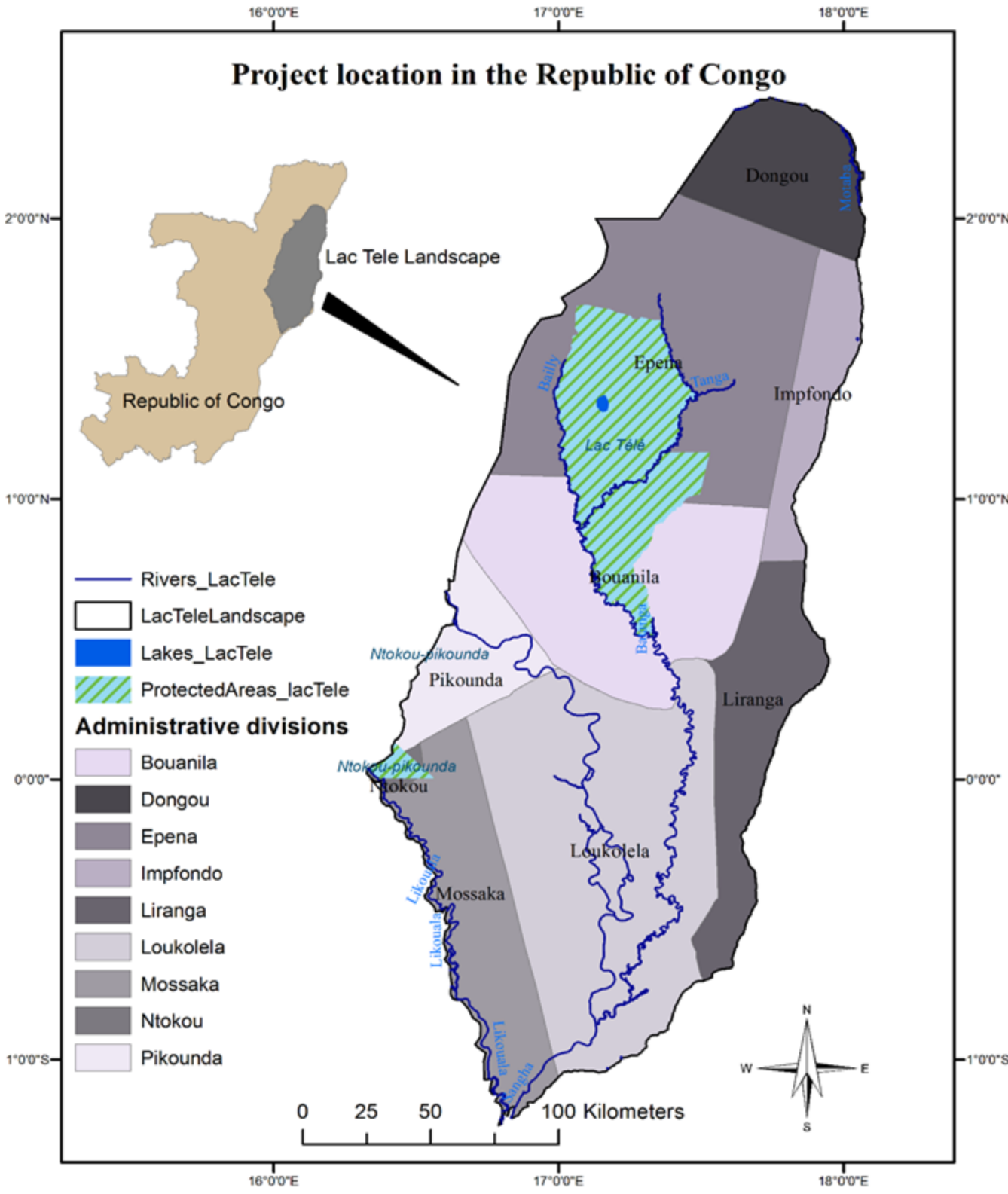
10) the risk analysis. See section 5 CEO ER

ANNEX C: Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant (PPG).
(Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status
in the table below:

| <i>Project Preparation Activities Implemented</i> | <i>GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)</i> | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| | <i>Budgeted Amount</i> | <i>Amount Spent To date</i> | <i>Amount Committed</i> |
| International and National Consultants | 103,500 | 103,500 | 0 |
| Travel on official business | 15,000 | 15,000 | 0 |
| Stakeholders consultations, Meetings and Workshop | 17,115 | 17,115 | 0 |
| Office furnitures/supplies | 2,000 | 2,000 | 0 |
| Total | 137,615 | 137,615 | 0 |

ANNEX D: Project Map(s) and Coordinates

Please attach the geographical location of the project area, if possible.



ANNEX E: Project Budget Table

Please attach a project budget table.

Please refer to attached Annex F1 for the GEF budget

ANNEX F: (For NGI only) Termsheet

Instructions. Please submit an finalized termsheet in this section. The NGI Program Call for Proposals provided a template in Annex A of the Call for Proposals that can be used by the Agency. Agencies can use their own termsheets but must add sections on Currency Risk, Co-financing Ratio and Financial Additionality as defined in the template provided in Annex A of the Call for proposals. Termsheets submitted at CEO endorsement stage should include final terms and conditions of the financing.

ANNEX G: (For NGI only) Reflows

Instructions. Please submit a reflows table as provided in Annex B of the NGI Program Call for Proposals and the Trustee excel sheet for reflows (as provided by the Secretariat or the Trustee) in the Document Section of the CEO endorsement. The Agency is required to quantify any expected financial return/gains/interests earned on non-grant instruments that will be transferred to the GEF Trust Fund as noted in the Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy. Partner Agencies will be required to comply with the reflows procedures established in their respective Financial Procedures Agreement with the GEF Trustee. Agencies are welcomed to provide assumptions that explain expected financial reflow schedules.

ANNEX H: (For NGI only) Agency Capacity to generate reflows

Instructions. The GEF Agency submitting the CEO endorsement request is required to respond to any questions raised as part of the PIF review process that required clarifications on the Agency Capacity to manage reflows. This Annex seeks to demonstrate Agencies' capacity and eligibility to administer NGI resources as established in the Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy, GEF/C.52/Inf.06/Rev.01, June 9, 2017 (Annex 5).