

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

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10298

Countries

Congo

Project Name

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

Agencies

UNEP

Date received by PM

12/11/2020

Review completed by PM

5/7/2021

Program Manager

Pascal Martinez

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

PIF
CEO Endorsement

Part I ? Project Information

Focal area elements

1. Does the project remain aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements as presented in PIF (as indicated in table A)?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 25, 2021:

In table A: BD, LD, and CCM objectives should not be selected. Only the Congo IP objective should be selected. Please revise accordingly.

April 29, 2021:

Thank you for the adjustment. Under "Focal Area Outcomes" please write "Promoting effective coordination for sustainable forest management"

May 5, 2021:

Thank you for the adjustment. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

BD, LD and CCM objectives have been removed and replaced with SFM IP objectives in the CEO Endorsement document

05 May 2021

"Promoting effective coordination for sustainable forest management?" is now written Under "Focal Area Outcomes"

Project description summary

2. Is the project structure/design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs as in Table B and described in the project document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 25, 2021:

1. The Financing Type is not informed for Component 3 and 4. Please complete as needed.
2. The PFD consider "Investment" as financing type for component 2. Please consider such type of investment in the project to ensure concrete actions are taken on the ground.
3. Please complete the Table B with relevant indicators and targets in the outcomes column (including GEF core indicators), so that we can better understand the expected results of the each proposed outputs/activities.
4. The output 2.1.4 is repeated. Please amend.
5. The outputs of the components are not clearly identified and presented in the project component description in the Portal (only the outcomes are presented). Please complete.
6. The name of component 3 is different in table B and in the project component description ("and certified cacao" added) while they should be the same. Please complete the name in table B accordingly.
7. Please complete the Table B including relevant indicators and targets in the outcomes column, so that we can better understand the expected results of the proposed outputs/activities.

April 29, 2021:

1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Thank you for the amendments. Cleared.

6. In the project description in the Portal, the component 3 is titled "Component 3. Diversifying communities? income sources e.g. through promotion of ecotourism" which is different from Table B and Annex A "Project Result Framework". Please ensure the information is consistent throughout the proposal.

7. Thank you for the complement and well noted. Cleared.

May 5, 2021:

The component 3 in Table B also mentions certified cacao as example but this is not critical. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

1. The Financing Type has now been indicated for both components 3 & 4 in the CEO Endorsement document

2. Component 2 referred to as ?TA? has been replaced with ?Investment? in the CEO Endorsement document

3. The indicators have been completed for Table B (see CEO Endorsement document). However, including the targets in the table will render it more complex to handle. The targets are indicated in Annex A: Project Logframe.

4. The repeated output 2.1.4 has been deleted.

5. The Outputs have been added in the component description in the CEO Endorsement document and presented in the portal.

6. The addition of certified cacao was suggested in one of the reviews. The entry in Table B has been updated to be same as within the document.

7. The indicators have been added. The targets can be added to the table. However, irrespective of which of the targets (Mid-term or End of project target), it will make the table too long and difficult to read. The targets are contained in the Project Logframe: Annex A as per the usual practice.

05 May 2021

6. Related to component 3: Not clear on the differences in these entries: The only difference we note is related to the ecotourism footnote in table B of the of the CEO endorsement request, which is not possible to replicate in the portal.

3. If this is a non-grant instrument, has a reflow calendar been presented in Annex D?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Co-financing

4. Are the confirmed expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented, with supporting evidence and a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized, and a description of any major changes from PIF, consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 25, 2021:

1. In the Expression of Interest, multiple partnerships and co-financing sources were identified (7 CSO, 4 research institutes, 7 private companies, etc.). Nevertheless, there is currently only co-financing from the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, and UNEP (\$50,000 in kind). As a result, the total co-financing is relatively low. We also note that important local stakeholders such as WCS (Lake Tele), WWF (Ntokou-Pikounda National Park) and WRI (GIS of Lac Tele) are not co-financing partners anymore. We understand that a dialogue took place and it may be probably a time issue, but this situation needs to be clarified and completed.

2. Several UNEP led- initiatives and programs were identified at EoI stage (IKI, REDD+, GRASP): 1) It is not clear why this co-financing is absent at CEO endorsement and 2) how UNEP is building on these initiatives for better synergy and partnership?

3. While the Portal indicates the co-financing from UNEP is \$50,000, it is \$100,000 in the uploaded letter. Please clarify and ensure the information provided is consistent.

4. In the document section, 2 co-financing letters are uploaded with crossed-out signatures. Please remove them and ensure the uploaded letters are all with a visible signature.

5. The co-financing letter from the Ministry of Tourism and Environment is in French. Please provide a translation in English of this letter.

6. The co-financing letter from the Ministry of Tourism and Environment doesn't confirm the co-financing is provided as grant and investment mobilized as stated in Table C. Please clarify.

April 29, 2021:

1. Thank you for completing the co-financing. All the new co-financing letters don't specifying the type of co-financing. Please provide co-financing letters specifying the

type of co-financing and ensure the information in the letters is consistent with the one in Table C.

1bis. In Table C, the type of co-financing is not informed for REPALÉAC Rep of Congo. Please complete.

2, 3 and 4. Thank you for the clarification and amendments. Cleared.

5. Thank you for providing the translation of the co-financing letters. Please ensure the translation indicate the type of co-financing.

6. The co-financing from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism is now referred as "Grant" and "Recurrent expenditures" in Table C. Please clarify what kind of co-financing will be "Grant" and "Recurrent expenditures". Usually, "Recurrent expenditures" correspond to in-kind contributions.

May 5, 2021:

Thank you for the clarification and amendments. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

1. We thank the reviewer for understanding that it was a time issue. Cofinancing from the indicated partners and many more have been now mobilised and attached as annex to the CEO package and the cofinancing table updated. WRI has provided an administrative letter of support and requested some clarification before committing to sign a cofinancing letter. The effect of COVID 19 on discussion with partners has not allow to receive the WRI letter.

2. The IKI Project entitled: "Securing crucial biodiversity, carbon and water stores in the Congo Basin Peatlands by enabling evidence-based decision making and good governance" is still in development phase. To avoid risk of hurting the donor sensitivity, the project team advise that we should not have a signed letter as IKI cofounding at this stage.

There is a cofinancing letter from Peatlands Initiative. The GRASP activities have been completed and the next program is waiting for the donors approval.

As for the REDD+ discussion it is ongoing with the Ministry in charge of Environment

Appendix 16 is now included in UNEP Project Document and it shows linkage and synergy between UNEP Led Initiatives in Congo Basin.

3. The UNEP cofinancing letter is two projects the DRC Child and RoC Child projects. This is the reason why the amount of \$100,000 is split between the 2 projects.

4. The documents are now uploaded correctly.
5. The co-financing letter from the Ministry of Tourism and Environment has been translated in English as requested.
6. The co-financing letter clearly indicated that the "different installments of the national co-financing" is estimated at the \$22,706,000. The statement used is referred to cash as per financial language.

05 May 2021

1. The translation from French might have rendered it difficult to have the adequate term, however, the cofinancing letters include the type of cofinancing. The tight deadline is not in favor of going back to partners to issue new letters.

1bis: REPALEAC Cofinancing now indicated as "Grant?", apologies for the oversight.

5. Please refer to response provided in 1.

6. Please refer to response provided in 1. However, based on the experience of 2 UNEP/GEF ongoing project in RoC the Government counterpart is understood as Cash coming directly from the national treasury as contribution to the project.

GEF Resource Availability

5. Is the financing presented in Table D adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 25, 2021:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Project Preparation Grant

6. Is the status and utilization of the PPG reported in Annex C in the document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 25, 2021:

1. Thank you for providing the status of the PPG Annex C. Nevertheless, the utilization of the PPG remains unclear. Please specify the outcomes and their respective cost obtained under the item: "International and National Consultants".

2. Please note that the 'PPG Required' box under Part I/section F should be checked.

April 29, 2021:

1. Thank you for the clarification in the Review Sheet. Please complete the PPG table in Annex C with the information provided in the response to the comment.

2. Thank you. Cleared.

May 5, 2021:

Thank you for the complement. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

1. The PPG resources have enabled to obtain the following major outcomes:
 - II. a. International Consultants contracts who supported CEO Endorsement Package and stakeholder's consultation and partnership development
 - III. b. High Level meeting on engagement of private sector in project area (Report attached in the CEO package)
 - IV. c. In country missions by the International consultants
 - I. d. 7 Thematic studies on (attached as annex to the CEO package):
 - a. i. Community Forestry Governance and engagement of IPLC in SFM, peatlands and other ecosystems conservation
 - b. ii. Analyse of livelihoods and needs of IPLC in Project Area
 - c. iii. Integrated Economic Model for participative conservation and sustainable use of natural resources
 - d. iv. Ecotourism promotion in the project area and incentives for local communities' participation
 - e. v. Private sector involvement in conservation and promotion of good practices for sustainable use of peatlands and other ecosystems
 - f. vi. Communication Strategy and Action Plan in support of peatlands conservation
 - g. vii. Project Monitoring and Evaluation plan

2. PPG required? box under Part / section E.1 has been checked.

1 05 May 2021

1. The PPG table in Annex C of CEO Endorsement request is now completed with the information provided in the response to the comment as per the guidance.

Core indicators

7. Are there changes/adjustments made in the core indicator targets indicated in Table E? Do they remain realistic?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

January 25, 2021:

1. The estimated GHG emission mitigation is huge: 676,218,423. Apparently there is a mistake as the number provided in the "Supplement 3" Annex is much less and exactly 100 times less. Please correct and ensure the numbers are consistent through all the information provided including in the project description. In addition, please inform in the core indicator section the anticipated start year of accounting.

2. The uploaded document called "Supplement 3" contains extract from the EX-ACT tool. In this document, we learn that the result of 6,762,184 tCO₂eq provided in the project description is in fact a result per year (and not after 20 years), which appears very important. Please provide more details on the assumptions allowing to achieve such an impact and upload the original and entire EX-ACT tool in Excel format which is easier to read to understand the calculation and sources of benefits.

3. The Tracking Tools table is uploaded in the document section. Please note that this is not necessary anymore in GEF-7. This table can be removed.

April 29, 2021:

1. The number 676,218,423 was in the core indicator section of the Portal. Now this number is 52,422,220 (as a source of GHG emissions!). As requested in the previous review, please inform in the core indicator section the anticipated start year of accounting for the core indicator 6.1.

2. The Ex-ACT tool is not correctly use. According to the tool, the project will cause a massive deforestation and GHG emission. In addition, the forest area where the degradation is actually decreased is huge (1 million ha) and need to be justified or reduced.

3. Thank you. Cleared.

May 5, 2021:

1 and 2. We don't find the documents supporting the revised calculation and the new estimate appears very high considering the investments. Please provide the methodology used including the Ex-ACT tool and justify the new estimate.

May 6, 2021:

Not addressed. The core indicators section in the Portal and the GCF paragraph under the baseline scenario still report 143,135,180 tCO₂eq. Also the information is not consistent throughout the information provided as it is 52,422,220 tCO₂eq avoided emissions under the section 6) Global environmental benefits in the project description of the Portal. Please ensure the new estimate is reported in the relevant documents and the information is consistent throughout all the information provided in the submission package.

May 7, 2021:

Thank you for the amendment. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

1. Within the document, we have not found where the estimated GHG emission mitigation is 676,218,423. Instead, it has been indicated as 6,762,184 tCO₂eq throughout. However, the model has been revised and all associated documents requested have been added for further clarification.

2. The model has been revised and rerun, and the results have been expressed for 20 years. Assumptions have been clearly defined and the excel sheet is added as part of the documents submitted.

3. The tracking tools are now removed.

05 May 2021

1. This estimate (of 676,218,423 tCO₂eq) is indeed very massive. We cannot recall the basis for how this was estimated during the PIF stage. Different scenarios of carbon savings have been run on the Ex-ACT tool and none can bring to this amount of carbon savings. For example, if we were to make the unrealistic assumption that all of the 440,000 hectares of forest that are brought under enhanced management ? reducing

potential deforestation and degradation (see mid-term target of project objective to protect lowland gorillas) were going to be deforested without project intervention, it will bring to 247,979,620 tCO₂eq. So we cannot recall how the estimate (of 676,218,423 tCO₂eq) was derived. The assumptions used for running the model are in Supplement 3.

The 52,422,220 tCO₂eq previously announced as response to the previous review comments, was based on an erroneous calculation in which 220,000 hectares of forest benefiting from improvement as a result of project intervention was not added to the model. This has been added, and the correct amount of carbon that is saved is therefore 143,135,180 tCO₂eq (not 52,422,220).

The anticipated start year of accounting is 2022 as indicated in footnote 4 of the CEO Endorsement Request.

2. We agree with the review that the tool is not correctly used. The error occurred because in Module 2: Section 2.1 Deforestation, an assumption was made that that at least half of the 440,000 hectares of forest that is brought under enhanced management ? reducing potential deforestation and degradation (see mid-term target of project objective to protect lowland gorillas), (meaning 220,000 hectares) would be deforested in the next 20 years if nothing is done. However, the 220,000 ha that is supposed to be saved from degradation as a result of the project was not indicated. The space was left empty, and the model assumed zero. This has been corrected as you can see in the revised Supplement 3. When this is corrected, the annual carbon savings is 7,156,759 per year. Over the 20 year period, this will amount to 143,135,180 tCO₂eq. Both the CEO endorsement document and the project document have been updated accordingly. Regarding reference to 1 million hectares, the landscape of Lac T?l? covers an area estimated at 45,688 kilometres square (see a description of the project area in the project document). This is 4,568,800 hectares. The Lac T?l? Community Reserve alone covers 4400 km² (this is 440000 hectares) . So the estimated area outside the protected area (which by default will be protected from degradation) is 560,000 hectares. Most of this area outside of the community reserve is forested, even though used by local communities for a diversity of livelihood ends. It is also being used by industrialists in one form or the other. Therefore, an assumption of 1 million hectares as a result of the projects intervention seems therefore to be reasonable.

06 May 2021

1 and 2: the model has been re-run and revised and the new values of 20, 398, 082 reflected in the portal and documents. The ExACT tool and methodology have been uploaded.

07 May 2021

The corrected figures of 20,398,082tCO₂eq is now reflected consistently in all relevant sections and documents. The corrected figure is also reflected in the relevant section of the Portal.

Part II ? Project Justification

1. Is there a sufficient elaboration on how the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers, are going to be addressed?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 2, 2021:

1. The paragraph under "Peatland degradation" includes repeated phrases which are at the beginning of the project description. Please removed unnecessary repeated text.

2. The description of the threats is very general. For instance we learn about "rapid population declines" and "overall extraction of bush-meat very high"... How much? Please be more precise in terms of the known and current environmental degradation with quantification if any (including biodiversity loss and trade, deforestation of forest degradation). This is key as the peatland degradation is the justification of the project from the environmental perspective.

3. There is a mix between the threats on the environment and root causes. For instance, in the threats, we don't find the consequences on the environment of mining, logging, farming and fishing. Please clearly distinguish what are the threats on the environment and what are the root causes of these threats.

4. Under the map section, we learn that the 2 main challenges in the project area are "Overfishing, Commercial hunting, overfishing and Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT)" and "deforestation". Nevertheless, the identification of the problems seems a bit different in this section. Please organize the environmental problems, root causes and barriers in a consistent manner throughout all the information provided.

5. While we learn palm oil can be a threat for the peatlands, the project will focus on cocoa (component 3). Please explain the rational for cocoa specifying how this food production is identified as being currently a threat for the peatlands.

April 29, 2021:

1. There is still repeated text such as the one beginning with "In Congo, traditional governance of biological resources..." in root causes and barriers. Please ensure there is no repeated text any more in the proposal.

2, 3, 4 and 5. Thank you for the amendments and clarifications. Cleared.

May 5, 2021:

Thank you for the consideration. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

1. We have revised the introduction section, removed unnecessary repetitions

2. Unfortunately, for some factors such as bushmeat consumption, biodiversity loss, IWT etc. numbers are very difficult to come by in the project location. We draw on studies which report these developments, but do not provide hard data of the magnitude. These include: (i) Evan Jones-Bowen and Stephanie Pendry (2009) The threat to primates and other mammals from the bushmeat trade in Africa, and how this threat could be diminished. Cambridge University Press. Volume 33, Issue 3, pp. 233-246. (ii) Chausson, A.M., Rowcliffe, J.M., Escouflaire, L. et al. (2019). Understanding the Sociocultural Drivers of Urban Bushmeat Consumption for Behavior Change Interventions in Pointe Noire, Republic of Congo. *Hum Ecol* 47, 179-191. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10745-019-0061-z>. Some of the thematic studies for the current project also report bushmeat consumption. It is: 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. We have also searched for such data on the RoC pages of GBIF (<https://www.gbif.org/country/CG/about>); <https://cites.org/eng>; etc.

It is now included in output 2.1.3 that the baseline data collection will be done on known and current environmental degradation with quantification if any (including biodiversity loss and trade, deforestation of forest degradation) .

3. This section has been revised to accommodate this observation. The root causes now include: (i) Urban population growth and demand for environmental resources. (ii) Unsustainable levels of urban demand for wild meat from peatland areas threatens their ecological integrity. (iii) Insufficient community ownership of wildlife and other biological resources and low involvement in conservation. (iv) Lack of robust enabling framework (policies and legislation) for IWT control. (v) Limited transboundary cooperation on peatland management, the protection of biodiversity, and IWT control. NB: In our meeting with WCS, we were told that deforestation is not a problem at the Lac Tele region (at least not for now).

The threats include: (i) Trade in bushmeat and wildlife. (ii) Logging (forest exploitation). (iii) Unsustainable mining practices. (iv) Oil and gas exploitation. (v) The direct and indirect impact of climate change.

4. There is a difference between the Lac Tele Landscape as a whole (which includes the Community Reserve, the farming lands of the 20,000 people living on the landscape), and other landscapes that the people depend and interact with. In the root causes and barriers section, this entire landscape was being discussed.

On the other hand, in the section as referred to by the review, we described challenges of the Lac Tele Community Reserve in particular (not the entire landscape). The reason for this focus is because this is the main protected area in the project area.

5. Cocoa cultivation was a key cash crop income earning activity for this region before the discovery of petroleum. Since the discovery of petroleum, government attention has been on developing its extraction and sale. There is the livelihood arm of this project which intends to support local communities engage in sustainable economic activities that reduce their reliance on forest resources. The development of ecotourism is going to be one of these initiatives. Organic cocoa production will be another of such. This rational has now been added in component 3 description.

05 May 2021

1. Efforts have been made to avoid unnecessary repeated text as per the guidance.
- 2. Is there an elaboration on how the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects were derived?**

**Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
February 2, 2021:**

1. Thank you for the extended list of associated baseline projects and linkages with other GEF and non-GEF interventions. Nevertheless, important clarifications are missing in the baseline scenario, such as the stakeholders intervening in the project area (national institutions, local authorities, communities, private sector and CSOs) and what they are currently doing which is related to the project. Also, the legal and policy framework should be clarified in the baseline description. Please complete this section accordingly (useful information are presented in the "Supplement 1" uploaded document).
2. The relation of the associated baseline projects is not always clear. For instance with IKI, we learn that the project "will further benefit from the resources of this Initiative". How concretely? Please ensure that all the baseline projects are indeed linked to the project somehow and clarify this link, having in mind that the more the project can build and make use of the baseline projects, the more potential impact it can have.

April 29, 2021:

Thank you for the complements. Cleared.

**Agency Response
21 April 2021**

1. We have added the following to address these gaps:

A section titled: "On-going private sector activities in the project area" has been added to beef up the description of other initiatives being undertaken in the project area.

We have also added a section titled "National Initiatives"

The "Legal and policy context has been added". It was already in the project document, now brought into the CEO Endorsement request document.

2. Specifics have been given related to the kind of benefits that the current project could draw from the IKI. Examples of such benefits could come through resources from IKI's Small Grants scheme which support grants directly relevant to activities implemented by this project. Their focus areas include: (i) Mitigating greenhouse gas emissions; (ii) Adapting to the impacts of climate change. (iii) Conserving natural carbon sinks /

forestry; and (iv) Conserving biological diversity. Linkage of the project with IKI project is now provided in Appendix 16.

3. Is the proposed alternative scenario as described in PIF/PFD sound and adequate? Is there sufficient clarity on the expected outcomes and components of the project and a description on the project is aiming to achieve them?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

February 2, 2021:

1. In general, the description is limited to the expected outcomes and the outputs and concrete activities of the project are missing in the Portal description while this information is documented in the Prodoc. Please complete the project component description in the Portal including the planned outputs and activities (as in the Prodoc).

2. We learn from the barriers description that the logging industry "has the potential to bring benefits to local people and to the country, but these benefits ... will materialize only if adequate policies are properly enforced". In the outputs description (in particular in component 1 focused on national policy analysis, training, Natural Capital Assessment and management plans), it is unclear how the adoption of new legal framework will actually happen and the lack of adequate policies addressed (barrier 4). Please explain.

3. The project description says a major aspect of the project concerns law enforcement strengthening and anti-trafficking activities on the ground. Nevertheless, beyond the work on national policy and legal framework planned under component 1, how the project will make concrete progress on this aspect remains vague. Please clarify the activities that will address this important aspect.

4. The Component 2 of the PFD is focused on the conservation of forests and endangered species and critical ecosystem services. The PFD suggests some specific activities which can be founded and some Key Performance Indicators. As this child project is structured differently, please clarify which outputs and indicators correspond to the component 2 of the PFD.

5. We also suggest checking the level of activities between the national level and the landscape and local level. We understand the need for some activities at national level. We recommend however maintaining them at a minimum level: the resources should mainly support transformation at the landscape level, and collaboration with the peatlands in DRC and the regional project.

6. We understand the willingness to improve the standard of living of local communities, but we want to see more details about the strategy of empowerment of forest dependent communities. Please clarify the level of dialogue with existing associations representing Indigenous People and how they will be supported under the

project; and align the project indicators related to indigenous people to those agreed in the regional strategy of the REPALEAC.

7. The incentive for the private sector to adopt sustainable peatland management practices (and sign related commitments) is unclear. Please elaborate further why and how the companies intervening in the project area will engage in the project and how concretely the project will achieve the expected outcome of component 4.

8. Component 5 is focused on knowledge management. We don't see clearly what are the planned activities to engage with the regional project and also, very importantly, how the project will coordinate with the DRC project (especially considering that the first identified threat is "Limited transboundary cooperation on peatland management, the protection of biodiversity, and IWT control". Please elaborate further on the necessary concrete outputs/activities in the alternative scenario.

April 29, 2021:

1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7. Thank you for the complements and clarifications. Cleared.

5. The response to the comment is unclear: while it does refer to the transboundary collaboration, the comment on the need to prioritize investment at local level rather than at national level is not clearly addressed. Please clarify this aspect too and indicate where this is reflected in the project description in the Portal.

8. The added text in the Portal doesn't mention the coordination with the project in DRC in particular. Please elaborate on that aspect too.

May 5, 2021:

Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

1. The project component description is now completed in the Portal including the planned outputs and activities (as in the Prodoc)

2. The design of the project brings many things together to support the achievement of this: (i) A participatory co-management of resources based on the CBNRM model gives local communities and indigenous peoples a say on which area of forests are logged and a framework for negotiating benefits from logging activities (Activities 4 & 5). (ii) Development and validation of LUMPs sets aside areas for which resource exploitation is under the stewardship of local communities, and resources exploitation therefore cannot bypass them (Activity 13). (iii) Revise the operational modalities of companies operating concessions to include contributions to local social and economic welfare projects (Activity 52), as well as support the design and implementation of collaborative frameworks between local communities and the private sector (Activities 53, 54 and 55).

3. The strengthening of law enforcement will be achieved through support for capacity building (Activity 5). Strengthening and anti-trafficking activities are covered in a number of activities in Component 2 such as: (i) Activity 22: Support the creation of an integrated anti-poaching coordination committee established as well as its effective operation; (ii) Activity 23: Establish a system to monitor and evaluate project impacts on hunting, poaching, IWT, and the use of fire; and develop an evaluation report on impact of practices and introduction to the stakeholders.

4. The following are the Outputs and indicators for Component 2. The activities associated to these include Activities 20-31 of the Workplan and Timetable. The ?Number of peer-reviewed publications published ?? Is newly added.

Outputs	Indicators
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	Percent (%) of land users that undertake sustainable land management on peatlands in the project area
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	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).
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.	Number of transboundary community based structures to manage peatlands with women in decision making positions

5. The level of activities has been rechecked and confirmed that they are left at a minimal level. Links and alignment between the current project and the regional project are clearly identified. For example in a dedicated section titled ?Links between two major landscapes in the Congo Basin IP? in the CEO Endorsement document, and in many sections of both documents as necessary. In the process, the transboundary nature of the Lac Tele and Lac Tumba Landscapes is discussed and the necessity and implications of transboundary collaboration in the achievement of a number of shared goals highlighted.

6. The level of engagement with stakeholders (especially REPALEAC) is outlined under Section 2.5. Stakeholder mapping and analysis of the project document. It details the level of engagement that took place with different stakeholders, including a one-week

long workshop organized by the World Bank in Brazzaville? Congo from the 5th ? 8th February, 2020 bringing together REPALEAC and other local and indigenous groups of the region (with participation of UNEP and PPG International Consultants). Being an umbrella organization representing over 200 Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' organizations of eight countries from both the sub-regional and the national levels. Follow up discussions have been conducted with RoC REPALEAC coordination and some of its members. REPALEAC will contribute to the project in the following 2 ways: (i) ? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo to ensure that project deliverables vis-?-vis indigenous communities are aligned with relevant policies and legal frameworks. ? Participate in the Project Steering Committee to advise the project on strategies to ensure quality delivery of project outputs to local and indigenous communities (see SECTION 5: STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION of the project document). The co-financing letter from REPALEAC is a concrete example of the commitment of the project and REPALEAC to work together.

7. This incentive draws from discussions with the private sector in the high level meetings that contributed to the development of this document (High Level Meeting Report attached as annex to the CEO ER). Many indicated that they have been undertaking some sort of corporate social responsibility, and will require a more clearly defined framework to do more and be more systematic (see Table 3. On-going private sector activities in the project area and expectations from the current project.)

8. A small section has been added Under Section 3.4. *Intervention logic* in the project document to specifically outline the knowledge management dimensions of the project.

There are activities for addressing knowledge management. These include:

Activity 58: Develop a strategy for mainstreaming principles of adaptive peatland management and IWT into national and regional programs through knowledge management (KM); including:

Develop mechanisms for managing information flows from identified sources (government, multilateral, NGOs, indigenous organizations, academic, corporate and other) accessing data online, through a communication and training strategy.

- Conducting a collaborative review of regional development programs related to peatland management and IWT to identify their strengths, lessons learned and concerns in relation to peatland management and IWT and to identify opportunities for integration of SLM lessons learned, best practices and guidelines
- Work with regional program managers to develop peatland management and IWT criteria for eligibility of fundable activities
- Conduct targeted peatland management and IWT training workshops for regional program staff, technical services, and NGOs; including training on the development of quality project proposals for peatland management and IWT projects

Activity 59: Undertake regular communication activities at all levels in order to disseminate/share project?s progress and approaches:

- develop and disseminate peatland management and IWT rural radio communications programs targeting farmers and herders throughout the south
- develop and disseminate peatland management and IWT policy briefs per year targeting regional and provincial decision makers

- publish and disseminate peatland management and IWT newsletter (based on bi-annual peatland management and IWT reviews) targeting regional programs, NGOs, and communal, regional and provincial authorities and technical services

Appendix 16 has been included to show the link between 3 UNEP led initiatives including DRC and RoC Child projects.

05 May 2021

5. A vast majority of the activities being undertaken by this project are focused on the landscape. This is with the exception of Component 1 which will be developing and implementing LUPs. Here, national level engagement is indispensable. For example, in analysing the national policy and legal framework for community engagement in peatlands and biodiversity management: initiating and implementing participatory decision-making on the management of forestry and peatland resources etc. Natural Capital Assessment targeting peatlands will go beyond the Lac Tele landscape and include surrounding landscapes of the area.

8. In Component 2, Output 2.1.4 will entail and transboundary collaboration on peatlands management, illegal wildlife trade, etc. These however will be in the form of local communities and administrative structures engaging and collaborating beyond borders with primarily communities of the Lac Tumba Landscape, but also communities of the broader Congo Basin program.

With the exception of these, all activities are landscape-based focused on the project location.

4. Is there further elaboration on how the project is aligned with focal area/impact program strategies?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 2, 2021:

Please refer to the PFD. The objectives of the BD, CCM and LD focal areas presented in the project description don't correspond to those of the PFD. Please ensure the objectives are not different and amend accordingly.

April 29, 2021:

Thank you for the adjustment. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

The alignment of the project with PFD objectives are now reworked. See section 4) Alignment with GEF focal area and/or impact program strategies, of the CEO Endorsement Request.

5. Is the incremental reasoning, contribution from the baseline, and co-financing clearly elaborated?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 2, 2021:

The presentation structured by the project components is welcome. Nevertheless, the incremental reasoning is not presented as related to the baseline but only it is based on the problems to be solved. The description should present how the proposed activities will build on and articulate with the baseline (including the existing initiatives and projects such as CAFI and others) to address the barriers and contribute to solve the problems identified at the beginning of the project description. In other words, what the project will support in addition to what is already there but is not enough (filling the gaps). Please complete accordingly.

April 29, 2021:

Thank you for the new text. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

Project document section 3.7 and CEO Endorsement Request Section 5 have been rewritten to present the baseline and how the project will build on that baseline to deliver incremental benefits.

6. Is there further and better elaboration on the project's expected contribution to global environmental benefits or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 2, 2021:

Yes, considering the comments above under the core indicator section are addressed. cleared.

Agency Response

7. Is there further and better elaboration to show that the project is innovative and sustainable including the potential for scaling up?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 2, 2021:

The potential for scaling up outside the country is not mentioned. Nevertheless, such a potential should be explored as this project is part of a regional program (especially, but not only, with DRC).

April 29, 2021:

Thank you for the complement. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

A paragraph has been added to address the potential for scaling up outside the country. See the end of Section 3.9 Replication in the project document, and the end of Section 7 of the CEO Endorsement document.

Project Map and Coordinates

Is there an accurate and confirmed geo-referenced information where the project intervention will take place?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 2, 2021:

1. Thank you for the map provided. The localization of the protected areas is unclear. For instance the Ntokou-Pikounda National Park appears much smaller than the Lake Tele Community Reserve, while they are said to cover the same area of 4,400 km² in the description. Please show clearly in the map where the 4 protected areas are.
2. In addition, the logging concessions are important in the landscape (the largest area of FSC forests in the Congo Basin region). Nevertheless and while they are important for the project, they are not presented in the map. Please complete the map with the main logging concessions (we learn from the description that there are six major forest concessions operating in the Lac Tele Landscape).

April 29, 2021:

Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

1. The reason for this is that not all of the Ntokou-Pikounda National Park is found in the administrative area of the Lac Tele Landscape. In fact only a small section of it is found in this landscape according to the map data received.

2. We do not have this data of logging concessions and have not been able to get this data from local collaborators. This mapping will be done in the first year 1 of the project when a dedicated project team will be on the ground.

Child Project

If this is a child project, is there an adequate reflection of how it contributes to the overall program impact?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 2, 2021:

Beyond stating that the current project is strongly tied with the Lac Tumba in the DRC, the description doesn't explain how the project components will link with and contribute to this other landscape in DRC in particular, and more generally to the rest of the Program. Please elaborate further on this important aspect.

April 29, 2021:

Thank you for the complement. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

In the description of the project area, there is a sub-section titled: Links between two major landscapes in the Congo Basin IP which attempts this explanation. This explanation is supported with two maps to show both the share peatland between the two landscaped and the ecologies between the two countries.

The project components will be linked with and contribute to DRC landscape segment by building on past and ongoing regional collaborative efforts that include not only treaties, bilateral and multilateral agreements. A good example of these include:

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. These additions have been reflected under the section: Links between two major landscapes in the Congo Basin IP

The 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.

References to the above have been added under the section entitled: Links between two major landscapes in the Congo Basin IP of both the Prodoc and the CEO Endorsement document.

Appendix 16 is also developed to establish linkage with UNEP led initiatives in the basin

Stakeholders

**Does the project include detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase?
Is there an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent documentation for the implementation phase, with information on Stakeholders who will be engaged, the means of engagement, and dissemination of information?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 2, 2021:

1. The category "Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities" should be checked at the beginning or the section if these stakeholders have been consulted. Please amend accordingly.
2. This Congo IP child project for Republic of Congo has a budget of \$6.1 million from the GEF. The budget shows more than \$3 million for consultants, \$803K for training, and \$805 for established organizations. To promote sustainability and strong local ownership, the commitment of partners already active on the ground is essential. It looks like a deep misunderstanding about the comparative advantage of partners on the ground and adds unnecessary risks to the project (less ownership, less sustainability, less empowerment of partners). We urge UNEP to relaunch a dialogue with strategic and key partners and be more strategic in partnerships to build on existing initiatives and programs.
3. While local organizations are already well established and very important locally (WCS for Lake Tele and WRI for GIS of Lac Tele, WWF for Ntokou-Pikounda National Park), they do not have a role (or very little as WCS) in the project implementation. It is a missed opportunity to anchor the GEF project and the Congo IP in Republic of Congo in a long-term context with sustainable partners. Please explain and revise as needed.
4. Several strategic partners and topics (CAFI, REDD+, GIZ, BMZ, US Forest service, FFEM, AFD, EU?) have disappeared from partnerships and co-financing since the concept stage. Please clarify if a dialogue took place with these partners and what were the results. If no dialogue took place, please explain why. This clarification is very important, as also pointed out by Council members.
5. The assistance on NTPF is strategic on the ground: is there an identified partner to work on NTPF? It is a very important theme in the project (and the Congo IP) and the comparative advantage of the future partner should be demonstrated.
6. The description does mention key consultation meetings with indigenous communities, institutional and international partners and private sector. Nevertheless, the stakeholders who actually attended these meetings are not specified. The text says "Stakeholder consultations have been the key part of the work undertaken during preparation of this project (see the Table below)" but the "table below" is actually presenting the mandate and potential role of stakeholders. Please clarify further the consultation process including the stakeholders actually consulted and, summarizing, the outcomes of the consultations that inform the project design.

7. In the "Stakeholders and their roles in the project" table, there is no mention of the private stakeholders which will be involved in in project and particularly in component 4. Please clarify the expected engagement of these stakeholders.

8. Please clarify where is the mentioned "attached report" from the meeting on June 4 with the private sector.

9. The text refers to a Stakeholder Engagement Plan in Table 3 while the Table 3 in the Portal is about the Aichi targets. Please ensure the references are correct throughout all the information provided in the Portal.

April 29, 2021:

1. Cleared.

2. Thank you for the significative improvement. We note in the new budget that there isn't anymore consultants (be local or international). Nevertheless the project will need personnel and experts... Please clarify how these need will be covered.

3 and 4. Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

5. Thank you for the clarification. Please ensure this information is including in the project description.

6. We don't find the so called "List of stakeholders consulted" and "the report of High Level meeting with Private Sector". Please clarify and ensure the information is provided.

7. We don't find the "the report of High Level meeting with Private Sector". Please clarify and ensure the information is provided.

8. Please clarify which report is attached and where.

9. Now the text says "see the Stakeholder Engagement Plan in Table 11" while it is table 7. Please correct.

May 5, 2021:

Thank you for the clarification and complement. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

1.They have been consulted. The Prodoc indicate in section: 2.5. Stakeholder mapping and analysis, that they have been consulted. " The category has been checked.

2. The budget has been revised to consider the guidance.

3. Partners such as WRI, WWF, and WCS were all properly consulted during the preparation phase of this project and their role has been amended to consider the welcome comment and suggestion

Their activities on the ground and the alignment of their activities to the current project is extensively captured in these documents. For example, the role of WCS is described in the description of on-the-ground activities in the project location (the description of Lac Tele in sub-heading 'Lac Tele' of the project area, pages 15-16). Their data is extensively used in the illustration of trends in this document. In Section 2.5. Stakeholder mapping and analysis WCS is shown to play an important role in the implementation of this project by implementing 3 Outputs. It reads:

- ? Participation in the project development by supporting with baseline data . supporting project delivery on transboundary cooperation, legal framework to support IPLC engagement
- ? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo
- ? Participation in the Project Steering Committee;
- ? Participation in the implementation of Outputs 1.1.4; 1.1.5; and 3.1.2

WWF will be playing the following role (also see 2.5. Stakeholder mapping and analysis):

- ? Participation in the project development by supporting with baseline data . supporting project work on legal framework and community and private sector engagement
- ? Project co-funding;

? Coordination and collaboration with other conservation efforts in Congo

4. Dialogue took place with the above mentioned partners and financing letters requests have been sent by the Minister of Tourism and Environment, GEF Operational Focal Point. Some of these partners responded to explain why they are not in position to provide the letters and other have not given feedback. The COVID 19 which led to closure of many offices has not render this task of engaging partners easier. However, effort has been done to meet most of them and share the project documents for review and comments. Please find attached Appendix 17: List of Institutions contacted, and dialogue conducted.

5. For now, REPALEAC under the framework of livelihood option is the strategic partner identified for the NTFP. However the partnership with WCS and WWF will be used to support the delivery on this project aspect.

6. Please find attached in the package List of stakeholders consulted and the report of High Level meeting with Private Sector

7. Private sector have been consulted and committed to actively participate in the project. Please see the report of High Level meeting with Private sector

8. The report is now attached.

9. References to Stakeholder Engagement plan have been corrected, and is in Table 12.

05 May 2021

2. The project personnel are included in the budget. Please see Budget Lines 1101, 1102, 1103 and BL 1301, 1302, 1303. The project team has been kept to minimum as the project has very good partners (WWF, WCS, REPALEAC, University of Marian Gouabi, etc) who will be supporting the execution on the ground. The project team will have more coordinating and project management role. It is also planned at the national level to have a project Director nominated by the Ministry and at local level the district level administration from the Ministry in charge of environment will ensure an important role to ensure sustainability.

5. Now this information is reflected in Component 3 description of the CEO Endorsement Request and Project Document.

6,7 and 8: The List of Stakeholders consulted is uploaded, and the report of High-Level meeting with Private Sector has been uploaded as Appendix 18 of the project document

9. The correction is effective and the Table is exactly Table 7.2 in CEO ER and Table 12 in Project Document

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Has the gender analysis been completed? Did the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities? If so, does the project/program include gender-responsive activities, gender-sensitive indicators and expected results?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
February 2, 2021:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Private Sector Engagement

If there is a private sector engagement, is there an elaboration of its role as a financier and/or as a stakeholder?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 2, 2021:

1. According to table 10, the expected engagement of the few identified companies seems to be mainly limited to capacity building. Nevertheless, the component 4 also includes the development and test of pilot models of private sector involvement and also commitments signed by "all companies operating concessions in the Lac Tele Landscape" (according to the results framework). Were such outputs discussed with these companies and why these outputs are not included in the private sector engagement description?
2. We don't understand the rationale of table 11 "Stakeholders engagement plan" which is the same as table 8 (with a different title) under the stakeholder engagement section. Please clarify and consider removing this table.

April 29, 2021:

1. Again, we don't find the "report of the High Level meeting with Private Sector". Anyway, please add in the Portal under the Private Sector section the relevant information provided in the response to the comment.
2. This comment is not addressed. There is still a "Table 11. Stakeholder Engagement Plan" under the Private Sector section. Please amend.

May 5, 2021:

1. As commented in the last review, please add in the Portal under the Private Sector section the relevant information provided in the response to the comment. Especially considering the Report of the High Level meeting with Private Sector is very brief and in French.
2. Thank you for the amendment. Cleared.

May 6, 2021:

Thank you for the complement. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

1. Yes these Outputs were discussed with the companies (See report of the High Level meeting with Private Sector).
The stakeholder engagement plan shows how (the means) the stakeholders will be engaged. To address the gap identified, the roles of the private sector in the project have been revised to reflect information provided in Component 4. It now includes:
? Leverage investments in greener livelihood alternatives
? Adopt green certification standards

? Support the revision and implementation of operational modalities of logging and mineral extraction that contribute to biodiversity protection and sustainable peatland management

? Provide additional funds for community-based initiatives

? Participation in the project M&E and adaptive management

? Participation in the Project Steering Committee

See Table 7 of the CEO Endorsement document, and Table 2 of the project document.

2. The table has been revised to contain all the stakeholders. Table 11 has been deleted leaving only Table 2 of the project document.

05 May 2021

1. The report of High-Level meeting with Private Sector has been uploaded as Appendix 18 of the project document

2. Table 11 under private sector section of the portal has been removed

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Has the project elaborated on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved? Were there proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 2, 2021:

1. On climate risk, we find some scattered relevant information throughout all the information provided. Nevertheless, the project needs to include a more clear and detailed climate risk analysis including potential impacts on ecosystems and human activities based on robust scientific data and mitigation measures. For further guidance, please refer to STAP guidance

<https://stapgef.org/sites/default/files/publications/Climate%20Risk%20Screening%20web%20posting.pdf>.

2. The COVID-19 analysis is very limited. In the landscapes targeted by the GEF investments, more analysis is needed on 1/potential impacts (such as availability of technical expertise and capacity and changes in timelines, enabling environment including government focus, and financing including co-financing, procurement prices...) and 2/the opportunities the project will provide in the context of the pandemic to help in reducing the risk of emerging infectious diseases in the future, while increasing the resilience of the ecologic and socio-economy systems. Please refer to the guidance note sent by the GEF to the agencies on this issue and elaborate further on these aspects in a specific "COVID19 Risk and Response" section under the Risks section in the project description of the Portal.

April 29, 2021:

1. The analysis provided at CEO ER stage is limited. Beyond the consideration of possible impacts of climate change in the project intervention area, the analysis should also include: 1- mitigation options and how they have been considered and included (and if not, why) in the project design and; 2- to the extent possible, a description of the capacity of the different project stakeholders and institutions involved in collecting relevant information, dealing with the projected impacts and provide adequate monitoring and learning services.

1bis. Please clarify the sentence: "will have implications on the and...".

2. Partially. The description is vague. As requested in the previous review, please clearly elaborate on the 2 following aspects: 1/potential impacts (such as availability of technical expertise and capacity and changes in timelines, enabling environment including government focus, and financing including co-financing, procurement prices...); and 2/the opportunities the project will provide in the context of the pandemic to help in reducing the risk of emerging infectious diseases in the future, while increasing the resilience of the ecologic and socio-economy systems.

May 5, 2021:

1. Thank you for the complement. Cleared.

2. Thank you for the complement. Nevertheless, the second part of the analysis on the "opportunities" as requested in the last review is not provided. Please complete.

May 6, 2021:

Thank you for the complement. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

1. A major section has been added to address the gap in climate risk analysis (see Section 5 of the CEO Endorsement document and Section 3.5 of the project document)

2. A major section has been added to address the gap in Covid-19 risk (see Section 5 of the CEO Endorsement document and Section 3.5 of the project document)

05 May 2021

1. A sub-section has been added to address this gap: Project approach to the climate change challenge See section 5. Risks of the CEO ER

1bis. This was a typo. Supposed to read: "These two provinces harbor both the landscape of Lac Tele and the adjoining ecologies whose changes or transformation will have implications on the land cover and health of the peatlands."

2. Two sub-paragraphs have been added to this section in CEO ER and Project Document to address this deficiency: Potential impacts of the the Covid-19 situation; and Project activities to address the Covid-19 situation

06 May 2021

2. Some paragraphs are added in section 5- related to Risk to include opportunities provided by COVID 19.

Coordination

Is the institutional arrangement for project implementation fully described? Is there an elaboration on possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 3, 2021:

1. Please ensure that council decision on agenda item 16 (Summary of the Chair, 59th GEF Council Meeting) is taken into account in the oversight responsibilities with respect to execution partner UNDP.
2. Please provide a budget table using the format as indicated in GEF guidelines (GEF/C.59/Inf.03 of July 20, 2020, Annex 7 Appendix A).
3. Considering the activities planned in the Lake Tele/Lake Tumba, please clarify in the institutional arrangement how this project is coordinated with the other child project of the Program in DRC and in the regional project.
4. There is a contract of \$440,000 with UNDP as executing partner on a sustainable tourism initiative that needs to be evaluated. The comparative advantage of this partnership should be demonstrated.
5. The amount of \$160,000 for a contract with WCS seems quite low as they are the only partner on the ground on several themes.

April 29, 2021:

1. Thank you for the consideration. Cleared.
2. The last column of the budget on the Executing Entity is empty. Please complete.

2bis. In addition, we see in the budget table that the cost of M&E is \$70,000 while it is \$339,995 in the project document. Please clarify.
- 3, 4 and 5. Thank you for the clarifications and complements. Cleared.

May 5, 2021:

2. Thank you for completing the uploaded budget table. We see that UNEP will be executing functions. As per GEF policy, GEF Agency may receive funds for execution only in exceptional cases that need to be justified. Please justify as needed. In addition, we note that UNEP will undertake M&E activities. Please clarify what are these activities and ensure they are well justified.

2bis. No, the comment is not addressed: in the uploaded budget table the cost of M&E is still \$70,000. Please amend.

2ter. In addition, please ensure the budget is also attached in the Prodoc (under Appendix 1) and in project description in the Portal (under the Annex E).

May 6, 2021:

Thank you for the amendments. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

1. Taken note of the decision on agenda item 16 (Summary of the Chair, 59th GEF Council Meeting), which recommend on oversight of Executing Entities such as UNDP, we will ensure that accountability for the GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards lies with the Implementing Agency (UNEP). In any case 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 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 Independent review. See Stakeholder section and component description.

2. The budget table is provided

3. References on how this project is coordinated with the other child project of the Program in DRC and in the regional project has been made extensively in the section entitled: Links between two major landscapes in the Congo Basin IP of both the Prodoc and the CEO Endorsement document.

Also appendix 16 is now attached to provide in tabular form these linkages.

4. UNDP has supported the Government RoC to develop and adopt a Sustainable Tourism Strategy including in the project area. We are of the opinion that UNDP has comparative advantage to lead with activities and UNEP will ensure key other partners are involved in the process.

5. The amount has now been revised following guidance from the review in previous sections.

05 May 2021

2. The executing entity entries have been completed in the indicative budget.

2bis. The M&E Cost is \$300,000. This is harmonized both in the Budget and M&E in the project documents, \$70,000 will be the cost of Evaluation and Audit costs.

06 May 2021:

Within the framework of UNEP in its role as the IA, the UNEP independent evaluation office takes responsibility of UNEP's GEF project evaluations, through independent consultants. It is not an internal execution role.

2bis the \$300,000 M&E budget is now reflected in the indicative budget, those figures were already reflected in component 5 and their omission was to avoid the possibility of double counting. This has now been addressed in the revised budget template.

2ter, the budget document is now also part of the Project Document and as Annex E in the portal.

Consistency with National Priorities

Has the project described the alignment of the project with identified national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under the relevant conventions?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 3, 2021:

The description includes a list of strategies and plans mentioning only their names, and then 3 paragraphs focused on NBSAP, SDG and PNGE. Please complete the description with a short paragraph under each relevant national strategies and plans.

April 29, 2021:

Please summarize in the portal the information related to relevant conventions (NBSAP, NDC, REDD+...). What about the UNFCCC and LDN which is checked in the Annex G GEF Project Taxonomy Worksheet?

May 5, 2021:

We don't see the improvements in the Portal. This parts needs further elaboration on the alignment of the project with national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions (notably UNFCCC considering the NDC). Please clarify where the amendments have been made. Again, is there alignment with UNFCCC and LDN which is checked in the Annex G GEF Project Taxonomy Worksheet?

May 6, 2021:

Please add a consideration under UNFCCC about the alignment with the NDC as the country identified the avoided deforestation and SFM in its strategy to mitigate climate change.

May 7, 2021:

Thank you for the complement. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

1. This is addressed under Section 3.6. Consistency with national priorities or plans of the project document. There is a comprehensive description of alignment of the project with identified national strategies and plans. It is extensive and takes up close to 6 pages of material in the project document.

05 May 2021

The following summary is included in the portal:

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

06 May 2021

The text above (from 05 May 2021 response) has been highlighted in green in the portal under the section on consistency with national priorities and in CEO endorsement request on linkage to national priorities. Text is now added to the CEO ER in section 6 Global Environment Benefits, which indicates the project contribution to UNCCD and LDN.

07 May 2021

A paragraph is now added in section 7. Consistency with National Priorities, on the contribution of the project to IDNC.

Knowledge Management

Is the proposed ?Knowledge Management Approach? for the project adequately elaborated with a timeline and a set of deliverables?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 3, 2021:

We take note of the timeline and deliverables in appendix 5 and 6, thank you. Nevertheless, the plans to learn from relevant projects, initiatives, evaluations and best practices are unclear. Please complete accordingly.

April 29, 2021:

Thank you for the additional information. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

1. A sub-section has been added at the end of 2.7 of the project document summarizing lessons learned from the baseline projects described in this and the previous sections. Section 8 of the CEO endorsement requested is amended to include the plans to learn from relevant projects, initiatives, evaluations and best practices

Monitoring and Evaluation

Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 3, 2021:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response

Benefits

Are the socioeconomic benefits at the national and local levels sufficiently described resulting from the project? Is there an elaboration on how these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of GEBs or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
February 3, 2021:

Yes, cleared.

Agency Response
Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
February 3, 2021:

Please refer to the CEO Endorsement Request template and include the Annex F: GEF 7 Core Indicator Worksheet (with indicators at PFD and CEO Endorsement Request stage) and the Annex G: GEF Project Taxonomy Worksheet.

April 30, 2021:

Thank you for providing the Annex F and G. Nevertheless, the GEF 7 Core Indicator Worksheet is not consistent with the core indicators of the project as reported in the Portal (please see core indicator 1, 4 and 4.2). Please amend. In addition, in the Annex G: GEF Project Taxonomy Worksheet, the integrated programs GGP, Food security in sub-Saharan Africa and FOLUR are checked. It should not be the case. Please amend accordingly.

May 5, 2021:

We don't find the Annexes F and G. Please clarify where these documents are in the package.

May 6, 2021:

Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency Response
21 April 2021

1. Addressed on the related Annexes

05 May 2021

1. Portal core indicators updated to be consistent with the core indicator worksheet.

2. Portal taxonomy worksheet also updated to remove integrated programs GGP, Food security in sub-Saharan Africa and FOLUR

06 May 2021

Annexes F and G are part of the CEO Endorsement request document.

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 3, 2021:

Considering the activities planned in the Lake Tele/Lake Tumba, please clarify in the results framework how this project is connected with the other child project of the Program in DRC and in the regional project.

April 30, 2021:

Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

The results framework shows many aspects of alignment of the current project with other projects in the regional programme (especially with that of the transboundary landscape of the DRC).

With regards to the other countries in the regional project generally connections have been made through knowledge sharing. Example, indicator for Outcome 2.1 ?Percent (%) of key actors in the Lac Tele Landscape contributing with knowledge products to the project Portal?. ; and indicator for Outcome 5.1. ?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).?

With regards to the transboundary landscape of the DRC in particular specific indicators have been designed to ensure that this connection is assured during the project implementation. Example ?Number of transboundary community based structures to manage peatlands with women in decision making positions? in Outcome 2.1.

Several activities define the specific actions that will be connecting this project with other child projects in the Congo IP. Examples include among others: Activity 5: Deliver training on peatland management, IWT, and CBNRM, transboundary cooperation in NRM, cross-border IWT, etc. and assess training effectiveness; Activity 27: Present the findings in at least one inter-ministerial meeting that brings together key ministries and agencies involved in the Congo peatlands
Activity 28: Develop recommendations for actions (based on the action research) to improve management and monitoring outcomes of peatlands in the Lac Tele landscape with implications at the national and Congo Basin region; Activity 31: Make use of the project?s regional workshops and cross-country exchanges to share and disseminate results of the document developed; Activity 57: Share the concise summary document that distils successes, challenges, lessons learned and recommendations to support the

development of transboundary initiatives for peatland restoration and conservation, as well as on IWT with relevant stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels; Etc.

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

N/A

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 3, 2021:

1. The response made to Norway/Denmark comments about CAFE should be adjusted:
1) We find that CAFE is considered as a baseline financing, but the co-financing role has not been supported by a letter of co-financing; 2) CAFE is included in the steering committee in the project document, table p.63; but CAFE is not included in the diagram, p119). Please revise. In addition, the text "CAFE funded programs are counted as baseline investments or co-financing as do not adequate demarcation between the two concepts. It may just a matter of semantic" is unclear. Please clarify.
2. The response made to Norway/Denmark comments refers to High Carbon Stock (HCS) and High Conservation Value (HCV) forests. Nevertheless, none of these kind of forests are mentioned in the project description. Please clarify where this comment is addressed in the project description.
3. On the gap analysis to avoid duplication with with CAFE (again one of the comments from Norway/Denmark), the response refers to an Annex F. Please clarify where is the Annex F as the Prodoc only includes Annex with numbers.
4. Some responses to Norway/Denmark comments are missing (4 a, c and f). Please ensure all the comments are addressed and complete as needed.
5. Responding to USA comment, the text "For importantly, the RoC Child Project has a dedicated component to raise" is unclear. Please clarify.

April 30, 2021:

1. Please add the response provided in the response to council table. In addition, please respond to the other points on the inclusion of CAFE in the diagram and on the sentence "CAFE funded programs are counted as baseline investments or co-financing as do not adequate demarcation between the two concepts. It may just a matter of semantic" which is unclear.

2, 3, 4 and 5. Thank you for the adjustments. Cleared.

May 5, 2021:

1. The complements in relation to Norway's comments is unclear. As requested in the previous review, please add the additional sentences provided in the Annex B in the Portal and highlight the changes made since the last review of April 30.

May 6, 2021:

1. We don't see the clarification of the text "CAFI funded programs are counted as baseline investments or co-financing as do not adequate demarcation between the two concepts. It may just a matter of semantic". Please clarify

May 7, 2021:

Thank you for the clarification. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

1. While CAFI baseline role cannot be denied in this project, we agree the removal of CAFI as cofinancing sources since timeline has not allow to follow up for getting CAFI cofinancing letter.
2. HCS and HCV have been described in Section 3.6 item 1 Spatial Planning in Project document
3. Apology for the misleading the reviewer. The document referred to is Appendix 17. Reference are now corrected.
4. The referred responses are now provided in the Response to Comment Table
5. Thanks for the reviewer for highlighting this typo error. The response should read "More importantly, the RoC Child Project has a dedicated component to raise awareness??"

The typo has been corrected in the response Matrix.

05 May 2021

1. While CAFI baseline role cannot be denied in this project, we agree the removal of CAFI as cofinancing sources since timeline has not allow to follow up for getting CAFI cofinancing letter. 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.

2. CAFI is now included in the diagram.

3. The response is indicating here that the CAFI programs can both be considered as Baseline investments or Cofinancing.

06 May 2021

1. Additional sentences have been added to the portal and highlighted.

07 May 2021

The CAFI funded programs are considered as Baselines and as indicated in the stakeholders? section CAFI, has been consulted and been considered as strategic partner of the project. It is because of this reason that it is included in the Project Steering Committee. While CAFI projects are included in the Baselines sections and this GEF project is considered as an increment to CAFI projects as indicated in Alternative Scenario, in TABLE 7.2. STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR ROLES IN THE PROJECT. No cofinancing letter from CAFI is included in the package

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

February 3, 2021:

We understand that 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 instance, the empowerment of forest dependent communities, and 10) the risk analysis.

April 30, 2021:

Thank you for the additional input. Cleared.

Agency Response

21 April 2021

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

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response
Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
January 25, 2021:

Please refer to the comment already made above on PPG.

April 29, 2021:

Please see the above response on PPG. Cleared.

Agency Response
21 April 2021

Addressed

Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
January 25, 2021:

Please see the comment already made above.

April 29, 2021:

Cleared.

Agency Response
21 April 2021

Addressed

Does the termsheet in Annex F provide finalized financial terms and conditions? Does the termsheet and financial structure address concerns raised at PIF stage and that were pending to be resolved ahead of CEO endorsement? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
N/A

Agency Response

Do the Reflow Table Annex G and the Trustee Excel Sheet for reflows provide accurate reflow expectations of the project submitted? Assumptions for Reflows can be submitted to explain expected reflows. (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Did the agency Annex H provided with information to assess the Agency Capacity to generate and manage reflows? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

Is CEO endorsement recommended? (applies only to projects and child projects)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
February 3, 2021:

Not yet, please address the comments made above. It would be helpful if the agency could highlight in yellow the modifications in a separate uploaded document to clearly indicate where changes were made in the proposal to facilitate the review process.

In addition, please provide explicit names to the uploaded documents changing the names of "Supplement 1" and "Supplement 3"; complete the missing Appendix 1 and 2 in the UNEP Prodoc; and ensure the page numbers in the UNEP Prodoc are well aligned with the table of content (to facilitate the research of information).

April 29, 2021:

Not yet. Please address the remaining comments.

In addition:

1. At the beginning of the project description, the "Expected Implementation Start" is 1st June 2021. Considering the remaining steps before the CEO endorsement (notably the 4-weeks Council circulation), this date needs to be adjusted. Please chose a later date

compatible with the remaining steps and adjust accordingly the "Expected Completion Date" which should be consistent with the project duration.

2. At the beginning of the project description, the project duration is said to be 60 months. This is not consistent with the project description and budget table. Please amend.

3. Among the documents uploaded in the Portal there are one CEO endorsement request in Maldives and two CEO endorsement requests for this project in ROC while some Appendixes are missing. Please check the documents uploaded in the Portal and ensure all the documentation provided is relevant and complete.

May 5, 2021:

Not yet. Please address the remaining comments.

May 6, 2021:

Not yet. Please address the remaining comments.

May 12, 2021:

Not yet. Please address the following comments:

1. On PMC: there is no proportionality in the co-financing contribution to PMC. If the GEF contribution is kept at 5%, for a co-financing of \$41,289,177 the expected contribution to PMC must be around \$2,064,458 instead of \$1,016,823 (which is 2.46%). As the costs associated with the project management have to be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to the PMC, the GEF contribution and the co-financing contribution must be proportional, which means that the GEF contribution to PMC might be decreased and the co-financing contribution to PMC might be increased to reach a similar level. Please amend either by increasing the co-financing portion and/or by reducing the GEF portion.

2. Child project's table D is not matched with PFD's table allocation for Congo, please correct the child project's table D accordingly:

- In PDF:

UNEP	GET	Congo	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	2,282,544	205,429	2,487,973.00
UNEP	GET	Congo	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	894,535	80,508	975,043.00
UNEP	GET	Congo	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	896,958	80,726	977,684.00
UNEP	GET	Congo	Multi Focal Area	IP SFM Congo Set-Aside	2,037,018	183,332	2,220,350.00

- In CEO Endorsement:

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

3. On core indicators: Baseline METT-scores under sub-indicator 1.2. are missing for all but one National Park/Reserve. These are mandatory as part of the CEO ER submission. Please complete accordingly.

4. On co-financing:

- Co-financing from WCS should be classified as ?CSO?

- Co-financing from WWF should be classified as ?CSO?

- Co-financing from UNDP should be classified as ?donor Agency?.

5. On Environmental and Social Safeguards: we note that the project overall ESS risk is identified as moderate, and UNEP attached Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF). The ProDoc mentioned that "Indigenous peoples in the Congo Basin region face many challenges, social marginalization based on culture and language being the most prominent. It states that they struggle for recognition of their status and rights and they often 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? (ProDoc, page 125). The UNEP safeguard team also mentioned that "IPP and land management plan and stakeholder engagement plan should be considered upfront in the beginning of the project implementation". However, it is not clear how the project will secure FPIC from indigenous peoples in the area to guide project activities relate to indigenous communities and local populations. Also, in the Section 2 of SRIF, Safeguards Risk Summary mentioned about SS4 Community Health, Safety and Security risk as moderate, but there is no screening information on this risk. Please provide a plan to secure FPIC from indigenous peoples in the project area, and further information on SS4 Community Health, Safety and Security risk and plans to mitigate and manage this risk.

May 20, 2021:

Thank you for addressing the remaining comments. The project is now recommended for CEO Endorsement.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	2/3/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/30/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/5/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/6/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/12/2021	

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations