Congo Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Title:	**Congo Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program**		
Country(ies):	**Regional,** Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo DR, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe	**GEF Program ID:**	**11241**
Lead GEF Agency:	**UNEP**	**GEF Agency Program ID:**	**154739**
Other GEF Agenc(ies):	**CI** **IFAD** **IUCN**	**Submission Date :**	**4/12/2023**
Type of Trust Fund:	**GET**		
Anticipated Program Executing Entity(s):	**Angola: Ministry of Environment (MINAMB)**	**Anticipated Program Executing Partner Type(s):**	**Government**
	Cameroon: Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED)		**Government**
	Central African Republic: The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development		**Government**

Democratic Republic of the Congo: Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development	Government
Sao Tome and Principe: Directorate for Forest and Biodiversity, General Directorate for the Environment	Government
Rainforest Alliance (RA)	CSO
Central African Republic: Organisation Centrafricaine pour la Défense de la Nature (OCDN)	CSO
Equatorial Guinea: National Institute for Forestry Development and Management of the Protected Areas System (INDEFOR-AP)	Government
Birdlife International	CSO
WWF CAR	CSO
Democratic Republic of the Congo: Ministry of Agriculture	Government
Equatorial Guinea: National Institute for Environmental Conservation (INCOMA)	Government
Equatorial Guinea: National Institute for Agro-livestock Promotion (INPAGE)	Government
Equatorial Guinea: National Fund for Forestry Development (FONADEFO)	Government
Equatorial Guinea: National Office for Planning and Monitoring Projects (GE-Proyectos)	Government
Sao Tome and Principe: Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development, and Fisheries / Directorate for Forest and Biodiversity	Government
Sao Tome and Principe: Ministry of Infrastructure, Public Works, Natural Resources and Environment / General Directorate for the Environment	Government

	Sao Tome and Principe: Príncipe Regional Secretariat for Environment and Sustainable Development		Government
Sector (only for Programs on CC):	AFOLU	Program Duration (Months):	72
GEF Focal Area (s):	Multi Focal Area	Program Commitment Deadline:	12/29/2024
Taxonomy:	Focal Areas, Climate Change, Climate Change Mitigation, Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use, Climate Change Adaptation, Community-based adaptation, Ecosystem-based Adaptation, Complementarity, Least Developed Countries, Forest, Congo, Forest and Landscape Restoration, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Community-Based Natural Resource Management, Integrated and Cross-sectoral approach, Ecosystem Approach, Improved Soil and Water Management Techniques, Sustainable Pasture Management, Sustainable Forest, Sustainable Agriculture, Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands, Sustainable Livelihoods, Biodiversity, Mainstreaming, Forestry - Including HCVF and REDD+, Fisheries, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Community Based Natural Resource Mngt, Terrestrial Protected Areas, Productive Landscapes, Species, Threatened Species, Illegal Wildlife Trade, Wildlife for Sustainable Development, Plant Genetic Resources, Animal Genetic Resources, Invasive Alien Species, Crop Wild Relatives, Biomes, Tropical Rain Forests, Wetlands, Rivers, Grasslands, Lakes, Influencing models, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Demonstrate innovative approache, Stakeholders, Local Communities, Indigenous Peoples, Type of Engagement, Participation, Partnership, Consultation, Information Dissemination, Private Sector, Large corporations, Capital providers, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, SMEs, Communications, Education, Awareness Raising, Public Campaigns, Behavior change, Strategic Communications, Civil Society, Non-Governmental Organization, Academia, Trade Unions and Workers Unions, Community Based Organization, Beneficiaries, Gender Equality, Gender results areas, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Access and control over natural resources, Access to benefits and services, Participation and leadership, Capacity Development, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender-sensitive indicators, Women groups, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Integrated Programs, Deforestion-free Sourcing, Commodity Supply Chains, Smallholder Farmers, High Conservation Value Forests, Adaptive Management, High Carbon Stocks Forests, Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration, Landscape Restoration, Integrated Landscapes, Deforestation-free Sourcing, Sustainable Commodity Production, Sustainable Food Systems, Food Security in Sub-Sahara Africa, Land and Soil Health, Sustainable Production Systems, Diversified Farming, Gender Dimensions, Resilience to climate and shocks, Multi-stakeholder Platforms, Integrated Land and Water Management, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Knowledge Generation, Training, Course, Workshop, Seminar, Knowledge Exchange, Field Visit, Conference, Peer-to-Peer, Learning, Indicators to measure change, Adaptive management, Theory of change, Innovation		
GEF Program Financing: (a)	56,259,439.00	PPG Amount: (c)	1,449,526.00

Agency Fee(s): (b)	**5,063,349.00**	**PPG Agency Fee(s) : (d)**	**130,412.00**
Total GEF Project Financing: (a+b+c+d)	**62,902,726.00**	**Total Co-financing:**	**428,640,177.00**

Program Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the program, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the program objectives, and how will the program promote transformational change? iii) how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. The explanation and justification of the program should be in section B "program description". (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

The Congo Basin is a critical forest biome for sustaining the health of the planet and the flow of vital ecosystem services that underpin human well-being. Yet, its ecological integrity is under threat from deforestation and forest degradation with multiple causes and dynamics behind it. Since 2000, close to 9% of the tropical moist forest area of Central Africa has already disappeared, i.e. 18 million ha, and the trends in forest loss and degradation are on the increase.[1] Slash-and-burn agriculture and collection of firewood are widely practiced by small-scale farmers. Logging and uncontrolled fires cause significant disturbance in forest habitats. Forests are also being cleared for opening up roads, fueled by developments in commercial agriculture (commodities, e.g. in Cameroon or Gabon). Industrial mining, oil, and gas developments are pushing populations into previously undisturbed forest areas, accelerating deforestation and degradation. Endangered wildlife species are being poached and are threatened by habitat loss[2], and more recently also by disease[3]. Although deforestation in the Congo Basin has been historically low, it is currently on the rise, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Along with it, globally important biodiversity and carbon stocks in the Congo Basin are at risk of being lost.[4] As a major tropical rainforest biome, the carbon sequestration capacity of the Congo Basin is expected to decline, or might even be declining already as human activity pushes further into the forests.[5]

The main problem addressed by the GEF8 Congo Basin Integrated Program (or "Congo IP" in short) is forest loss and forest degradation affecting the tropical rainforests Biome in Central African countries. The Congo IP focuses on critical landscapes[6], where it will operationalize solutions that seek to stabilize forest cover (or avoid the loss of peatlands where applicable) and reduce the threats to wildlife populations in the Congo Basin forest ecosystem, generating thereby multiple benefits, including forest the landscapes' ability to sequester carbon. These above-mentioned critical landscapes targeted by the Program are dominated by important protected areas and include a good degree of forests that are still undisturbed (or relatively intact/undisturbed), in addition to other land uses, some of which will threaten forest integrity if not adequately regulated.

The proposed Program Objective is to improve the conservation and effective governance of critical landscapes in the Congo Basin Forest Biome.

The Congo IP benefits six countries (Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe (STP) and supports COMIFAC's 2015-2025 Convergence Plan for 2015-2025 for the Congo Basin forests. On the one hand, the Congo IP provides continuity to a GEF7 Program for the same region titled "The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP)"[7] to the extent that it addresses the same fundamental problem of forest loss and forest degradation, and also builds on the achievements and partnerships of the GEF7 IP. On the other, the GEF-8 Congo IP is clearly additional in relation to its predecessor Program, to the extent that it will broaden the reach of GEF interventions through the engagement of new countries. It will also enhance forest governance and conservation agendas at the national and regional levels, building on an emerging and favorable policy environment.[8] A key element in the GEF8 Congo IP is 'forest governance', which is considered necessary for stabilizing land use and avoiding forest loss.

The Congo IP will achieve its aforementioned objective by proving the concept of **'effective forest governance within multi-use landscapes'**. It will bring conservation effectiveness to scale across landscapes through policy coherence, regional collaboration, and enhanced access to benefits by forest dwellers committed to protecting the forest (women included). The Program will promote transformational change by developing new and innovative methodologies (ecosystem valuation, nature-based solutions) and promoting inclusive arrangements that will strengthen conservation effectiveness across landscapes. Proposed methodologies and arrangements will equally include new mechanisms that will facilitate access to conservation finance and climate finance by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), including among them women. By adopting by design a gender-transformative approach, the Program will work with multiple stakeholders at the local, national, and international levels for delivering on key targets related to global commitments under the Rio Conventions through supportive national and regional frameworks.

Five Components are foreseen under the Congo IP, to which the Child Projects will contribute in different ways. First, the Congo IP will promote forest governance by focusing on policy coherence (Component 1), developing and strengthening policies and regulatory frameworks that enhance conservation, and forest carbon sequestration – delivering thereby the key building blocks of effective forest governance in critical landscapes. Assessments and targeted studies that uncover the role of legal frameworks and sectoral policies (e.g. local forest concessions, mining, agricultural commodities) in either fueling or avoiding deforestation and forest degradation will be conducted. This will help bring clarity and awareness to the process of decision-making that influence land use and determine the outcome for the forests – especially of the most intact and critical forests of the Congo Basin. Secondly (Component 2), the Program will support strategic and scaled-up actions that reduce deforestation and forest degradation, and restore ecosystem services in multiple landscapes across participating countries. It will help countries jointly address competing land uses and pressure on a more informed and negotiated basis. Through specific methodologies, more transparent, inclusive, gender-transformative, and well-informed multi-stakeholder decision-making processes regarding forests will then be put in place, starting at the country level and considering the stakes of IPLCs and several other stakeholders. It will also involve policy-makers, planners, advocacy groups, and leaders (including those from the private sector), as well as investors and federative institutions at the regional level such as COMIFAC. Thirdly, the Program will equally promote IPLCs empowerment, gender-transformative green enterprises, and sustainable partnerships with the private sector in the Congo basin (Component 3). A fourth component is dedicated to the mobilization and effective channeling of finance for conservation and climate outcomes (Component 4) and a fifth one (Component 5) will ensure Improved national and regional inter-agency coordination on efforts to maintain forest resources, protect biodiversity, enhance forest management, and restore forest ecosystems through enhanced knowledge, communication, technology exchange, and financing.

The Congo IP adopts **a barrier-removal approach** based on sound analysis of context and stakes, and by effectively engaging multiple stakeholders through dialogue and participation, and, last but not least, **by focusing on the desired system's transformation** envisaged by the GEF for the current

cycle[9].

The GEF-8 Congo IP will deliver the following GEBs across the six participating countries catalyzed by regional-level enabling and coordinated interventions:

· Protected areas across the region with a total surface of 1,056,794 ha will enjoy strengthened management, including hereunder new ones to be created (in Sao Tome and Principe, 11 new PAs covering 12,384 ha will be part of broader protected landscapes across two islands).

· Degradation of forests and other types of ecosystems will also be avoided and reduced through improved practices across multi-used landscapes covering 2,112,608 ha.

· Through a suite of site-specific techniques, the land will be restored in 94,923 ha, reversing degradation trends in forests, grasslands, and wetlands, and further enhancing ecological connectivity across vast landscapes.

· Intact and recovering forests and other key ecosystems will sequester carbon under stable land uses, which is expected to reach within a 20-year time-frame 111.7 million metric tons of CO2e.

· At least 207,000 people, including hereunder 106,000 women (51%) are expected to directly benefit from the Congo Basin Impact Program.

All Child Projects under the Congo IP are expected to address pervasive gender inequality through their respective conservation and carbon sequestration activities, to ensure the inclusion of women, youth, and other vulnerable groups. Child Projects, including the Regional Coordination one, will strive to overcome operational challenges for ensuring that an equitable share of conservation benefits actually reaches the organizations and groups that protect the forest, including and in particular IPLCs, as well as women and other less dominant groups.

The GEF-8 Congo IP capitalizes on the clear value-addition of a programmatic and integrated approach that involves multiple stakeholders through dialogue, that primes the role of innovation and learning at scale, as well as the joint pursuit of financial leverage.

[1] Source: Eba'a Atyi R et al. (2022). The Forests of the Congo Basin. State of the Forests 2021. CIFOR.

[2] Of note, forest elephant numbers dropped by over 60% between 2002 and 2011.

[3] Wildlife is also threatened by disease. In some areas, Ebola has killed 70-95% of gorillas.

[4] In 2020, DRC lost 1.31 million hectares of natural forest, equivalent to 854 million tons of CO_2 emissions.

[5] With reference to a recent article in Nature: Hubau, W., Lewis, S.L., Phillips, O.L. et al. Asynchronous carbon sink saturation in African and Amazonian tropical forests. Nature 579, 80–87 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-020-2035-0.

[6] For example, the choice of sites in the current Program builds on the definition of broad landscapes that had been prioritized under the CARPE II and CARPE III Programs - with reference to the multi-partner Central Africa Program for the Environment (CARPE) spearheaded by USAID.

[7] The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP), GEF ID 10208.

[8] The favorable current policy environment refers herein to (a) The Libreville One Forest Summit in Gabon (March 2023), in which world leaders pledged for the advancement of innovative nature financing; (b) The consolidation in 2023 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, setting targets for new global agenda on biodiversity under the CBD; (c) The Glasgow UNFCCC COP in 2021, in which Parties to the Convention acknowledged the needs for scaling up climate finance for enhancing the protection, sustainable management and restoration of forests, including in the Congo Basin; (d) The creation in 2022 of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) with a growing membership of committed institutions and individuals.

[9] These are: (i) Expanding protection and nature-based solutions; (ii) Valuing natural capital and sustainable resource use; (iii) Delivering on global commitments/targets; and (iv) Supportive national frameworks.

Indicative Program Overview

Program Objective

To improve the conservation and effective governance of critical landscapes in the Congo Basin Tropical Rainforest Biome.

Program Components	Component Type	Program Outcomes	Trust Fund	GEF Program Financing($)	Co-financing($)
Component 1) Enabling environment for the conservation of Congo Basin forests and ecosystems at national and regional levels	Technical Assistance	Outcome 1) Policies and regulatory frameworks that enhance conservation, forest carbon sequestration and effective forest governance in critical landscapes	GET	7,313,727.00	65,723,223.00
Component 2) Scaling up conservation and forest carbon initiatives through integrated landscape management action	Investment	Outcome 2) Strategic actions implemented for reducing deforestation/forest degradation and restoring ecosystem services scaled up in multiple landscapes across participating countries	GET	16,877,832.00	138,592,053.00
Component 3) IPLCs empowerment, gender transformative green enterprises and sustainable partnerships with the private sector in Congo basin	Technical Assistance	Outcome 3) Sustainable forest-related value chains promoted by empowering local communities, forest dependent people, and partnering with the private sector	GET	11,251,888.00	95,728,035.00

Component 4) Mobilization and effective channeling of finance for conservation and climate outcomes	Investment	Outcome 4) Resources mobilized to sustain conservation and forest carbon sequestration efforts in the Congo Basin are mobilized and invested, including through partnerships with the private sector	GET	5,625,944.00	45,697,669.00
Component 5) Capacity building, knowledge management, communication and regional cooperation	Technical Assistance	Outcome 5) Improved national and regional inter-agency coordination on efforts to maintain forest resources, protect biodiversity, enhance forest management, and restore forest ecosystems through enhanced knowledge, technology exchange, and financing.	GET	8,579,565.00	64,160,347.00
M&E					
M&E	Technical Assistance	M&E systems for the GEF-8 Congo Basin IP and the GEF-7 Congo Basin IP Program are consolidated into one robust system and database to aggregate data, track program results, outcomes, and risks under both Integrated Programs	GET	3,938,160.00	100,000.00
			Sub Total ($)	**53,587,116.00**	**410,001,327.00**
Program Management Cost (PMC)					
			GET	2,672,323.00	18,638,850.00
			Sub Total($)	**2,672,323.00**	**18,638,850.00**
			Total Program Cost($)	**56,259,439.00**	**428,640,177.00**

Please provide justification

PROGRAM OUTLINE

A. PROGRAM RATIONALE

Briefly describe the current situation: the global environmental problems that the program will address, the key elements and underlying drivers of environmental change to be targeted, and the urgency to transform associated systems in line with the GEF-8 Programming Directions document. Describe the overall objective of the program, and the justification for it.
(Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Global Environmental and socioeconomic Significance of the Congo Basin critical tropical rainforest biome

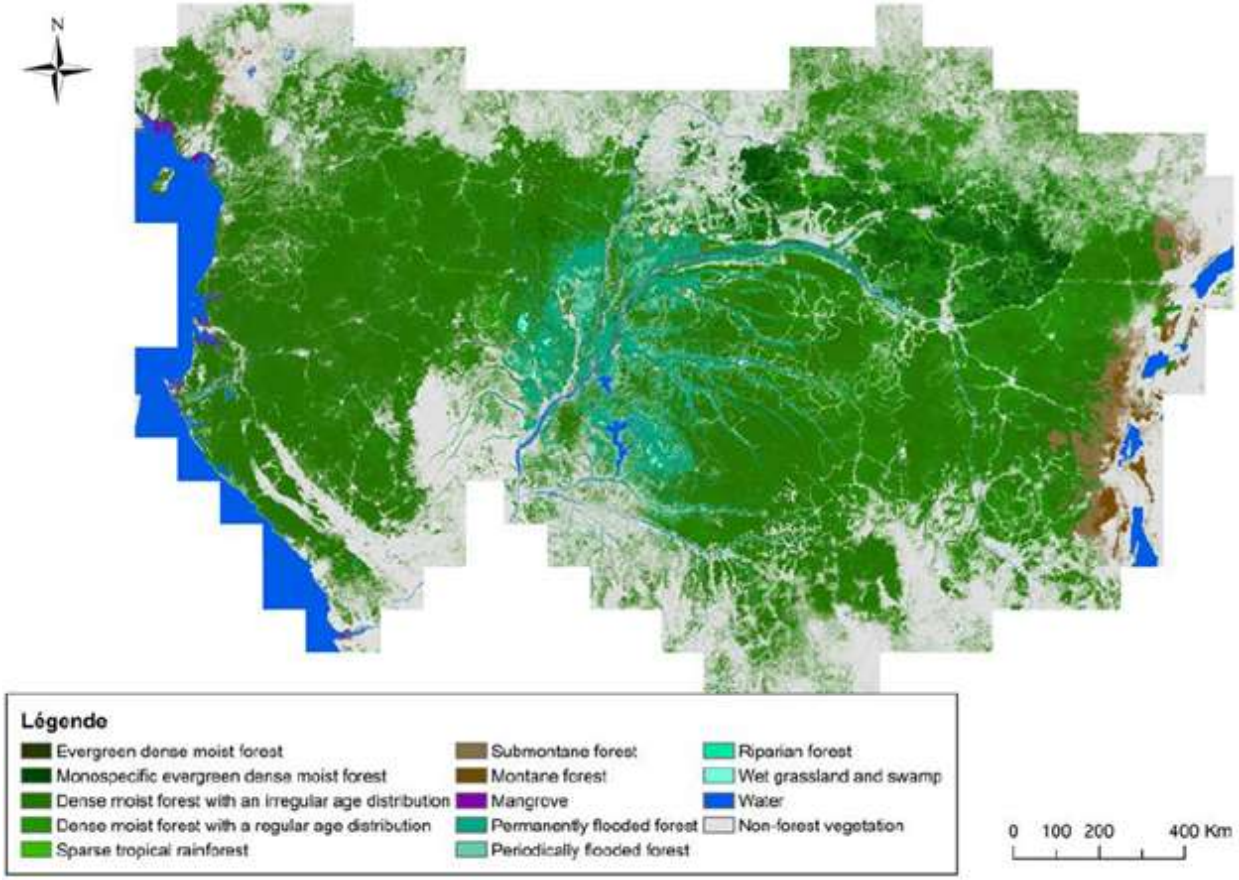
The Congo Basin is a critical tropical rainforest biome for sustaining the health of the planet and flow of vital ecosystem services that underpin human well-being. It harbors a significant portion of the world's biodiversity and represents 70% of the African continent's forest cover.[1] The entire the sedimentary basin of the Congo River extends over approximately 530 million hectares of land, of which 300 million hectares are covered by forest.[2] Of these some 160-200 million hectares can be classified as moist forests[3] (Figure 1) harboring the highest levels of biodiversity. Side-by-side with the Amazon Basin and the Southeast Asian Rain Forests, the Congo Basin one the most important tropical wilderness areas left on the planet and a megadiverse basin that straddles over several countries in Africa and influence the ecology across the entire Afrotropical region.

The biodiversity harbored by the Congo Basin is irreplaceable: Endangered wildlife species, such as forest elephants, chimpanzees, bonobos, and lowland and mountain gorillas, inhabit the forests of the Congo Basin, while a mosaic of woodland savannas provide habitat for lions, antelopes, buffalo, giraffes, savanna elephants, and many other species. Together, these terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems serve as habitat for more than 10,000-11,000 species of plants (of which at least 30% are endemic to the region), 400-450 species of mammals, 1,000 species of birds, and 700 species of fish, in addition to amphibians, insects and microorganisms.[4] Much of the biodiversity in the Congo Basin is not well studied. The Cuvette Centrale region of the Congo Basin e.g. remains a remote, inaccessible area of low-lying dense wet forests and swamps, known to harbor rare, endemic and near endemic species and sub-species, including antelopes (among them the notable okapi), forest elephants, and several primates, among them the rare bonobo (*Pan paniscus*), De Brazza's monkey, crested mangabey and the lowland gorilla.

Dense tropical forests and peatlands regulate the regional climate, providing rainfall and clean water across Africa, affecting climatic patterns not just in Africa, but around the globe, in addition to regulating the planet's climate by dynamically capturing and storing carbon. The regional and global climate depends on the health of these forests. The Congo River delivers fresh water to people and wildlife, besides being a major fisheries area and the backbone of the transportation system in the Central Africa.

Additionally, the Congo Basin tropical rainforest biome is currently considered the largest potential carbon sink worldwide. When compared with the two other large tropical rainforest complexes in the world (the Amazon and Southeast Asia), the Congo Basin is probably the only one that still has enough standing forest left to remain a strong net carbon sink.[5]

Figure 1. Map of forest types in the Congo Basin at 20 m resolution, analysis based on Cloudless Sentinel-2 mosaic of the Central African moist forest area, 2020**[6]**



As a major tropical rainforest biome, the Congo Forest's ability to sequester carbon is dynamic and dependent on land use and land use change. According to a CIFOR study from 2021 on the status of forests in the Congo Basin, standing forests in the region sequester about 40 Gt of carbon and, due to the forests' structural characteristics, their biomass and soils have a higher average level of carbon per hectare than that of Amazonian forests.[7] The same study also highlights the atmospheric carbon absorption capacity of undisturbed forests in the tropics[8]. In the Amazon, this capacity has been declining for the past 30 years, but a similar trend has not yet been observed in Central Africa. Currently, undisturbed forests in Africa are now absorbing more carbon than those in the Amazon[9], stressing their capital importance in a comprehensive conservation effectiveness strategy for the basin.

In the Congo Basin, an estimated 65-80 million people depend directly on forests and other natural assets for surviving on traditional livelihoods.[10] Arround

100 million people in Congo Basin countries are estimated to *indirectly* depend on the ecosystem services rendered by forests. Traditionally, indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) have depended heavily on forest resources for food, shelter and health care. However, they remain among the region's poorest and most marginalized citizens even though they possess an incredible knowledge of the forest, its animals and its medicinal plants.

In terms of economic importance, forests play a vital role in national and local economies of the Congo Basin's countries. Forests enable direct and indirect job creation, generate and redistribute wealth throughout the value chains of various sectors and help broaden the tax base of Congo Basin countries. Without the services rendered by forests in the Congo Basin and its water recycling systems, it is hypothesized that communities in the Congo Basin region would experience, as a result of climate change, more extreme weather events, have higher incidence of disease, and would struggle to find clean water, food, and fuel.

The socio-economic context within Congo IP participating countries is quite varied, with a few common features. It is estimated that in Central Africa at least 40% of the rural population lives in poverty[11] and a large portion of households routinely face chronic food shortages. Households led by women are especially vulnerable. In the DRC, poverty levels reach 50-60% of the population. In contrast, in Sao Tome and Principe, poverty affects only 15% of the population. Equatorial Guinea has one of the highest GDPs per capita in Africa, although very unequally distributed. At the same time, the structure of countries' exports varies considerably. Angola and Equatorial Guinea are major oil exporting countries; so is Cameroon, but to a less extent. The country also exports cocoa and timber. The DRC is an important mineral and timber exporter. In turn, cocoa dominates the exports of Sao Tome and Principe. In spite of these marked differences, in all of the Congo IP participating countries, the primary sector (including agriculture, forestry and other natural resource extraction activities) still employs most people and has capital importance for the national economies.

The afore-mentioned 2021 CIFOR study on forests highlights the importance of **the forest sector in Congo Basin countries** It also highlights why it is key to understand both **the forest sector's dynamics and the role of forest protection** for addressing the problem of deforestation and forest degradation in the Congo Basin countries

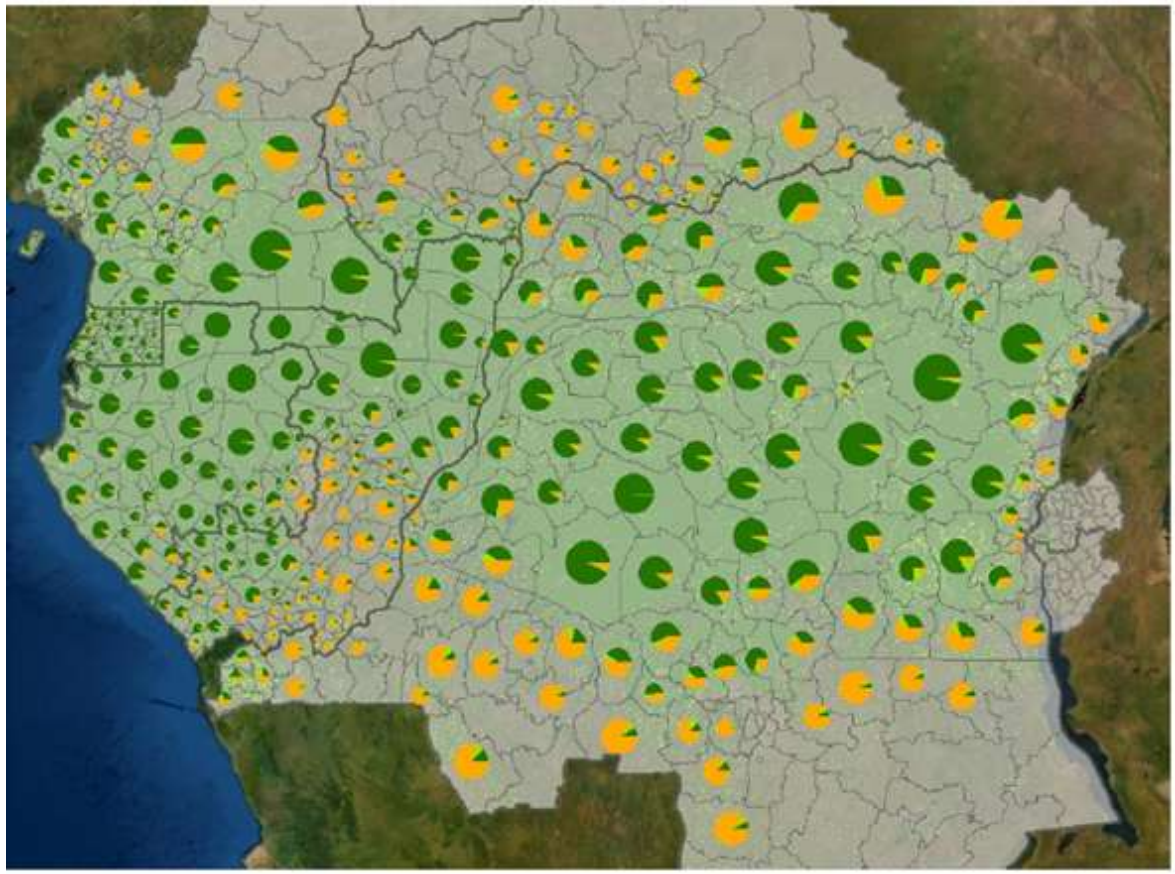
Global Environment Challenges:

The biodiversity and ecosystem services associates with forests and other vegetation types within the Congolian Tropical Rainforest Biome represent an incredible wealth in Congo Basin countries. At the same time, they are under threat. As human activity pushes further into the forests, their carbon sequestration capacity of the Congo Basin is also expected to decline or might even be already declining.[12] In the past, the Congo Basin's forests have been under comparatively little pressure, but now there are signs that this situation has changed. According to the 2022 CIFOR study, since 2000, the loss of intact forests has accelerated in all Central African countries, with deforestation rates reaching highs over the past five years. Along with it, the total that is currently disturbed and becomes degraded is also on the increase. If the current pace of deforestation and forest degradation continues, 27% of the undisturbed moist forest that existed in Central Africa in 2020 will have disappeared by 2050. As a result of deforestation and forest degradation, forest carbon is lost, and CO2 and other GHG are emitted. According to the mentioned CIFOR study, an increase in carbon loss after 2010 has been observed in the Congo Basin countries.

The absorption capacity of intact forests in Central Africa could become saturated, despite the relative stability of land use observed to date.

The rates of forest loss vary temporally and spatially. The status and trends for forest loss and degradation are represented in Figure 2 and Figure 3, and can be thus summarized as follows: Central Africa Republic had the largest annual ratio of undisturbed forest loss over 5-year timeframes among the countries compared in the CIFOR study, going from -1.63% per year in the 2000-2005 period to -2.1% in 2015-2020, followed by the DRC that went from -1.05% per year in 2000-2005 period to -1.46% in 2015-2020.[13] The spatial and relative distribution of intact and degraded forests in decentralized areas of the Congo Basin is illustrated in Figure 2, which shows that degradation tends to be stronger in areas that are not dominated by dense moist forests.

Figure 2. CIFOR's Congo Basin State of the Forests Study (2021): Proportion of intact forests (dark green), degraded forests (light green) and non-forests (orange) at the second administrative level[14]



The general trends of threat to forests are worrying. Overall, close to 9% of all tropical moist forest area of Central Africa have disappeared since 2000, i.e. 18

million ha.[15] Total deforestation affecting tropical moist forests in Central Africa (red line in Figure 3) does not seem to follow any specific pattern, except the constant seesaw from year to year. It peaked in 2013 by reaching 2.0 million ha, and since then, a general decline trend has been observed. During the last 5 years (2015-2020), total deforestation reached 1.79 million ha per year compared to 1.36 million ha per year during the previous decade (2005-2015). Although this could be seen as a positive trend, new surges in total deforestation can be expected.

Forests also tend to recover from disturbance, but the process is slow (depicted by the green columns in Figure 3). Quite importantly, the short and long-term impacts of forest degradation are significant (orange parts of the columns in Figure 3). Once a forest area is degraded, it will tend to be cleared (large swaths of degraded forests are represented by the hashed areas in the columns of Figure 3), highlighting the dynamics between forest clearance and degradation which happens on the ground.

Figure 3. CIFOR's Congo Basin State of the Forests Study (2021): Trends in forest loss Annual change in deforestation (red bar) and degradation (yellow bar) in Central African tropical moist forests, 2001–2019**[16]**

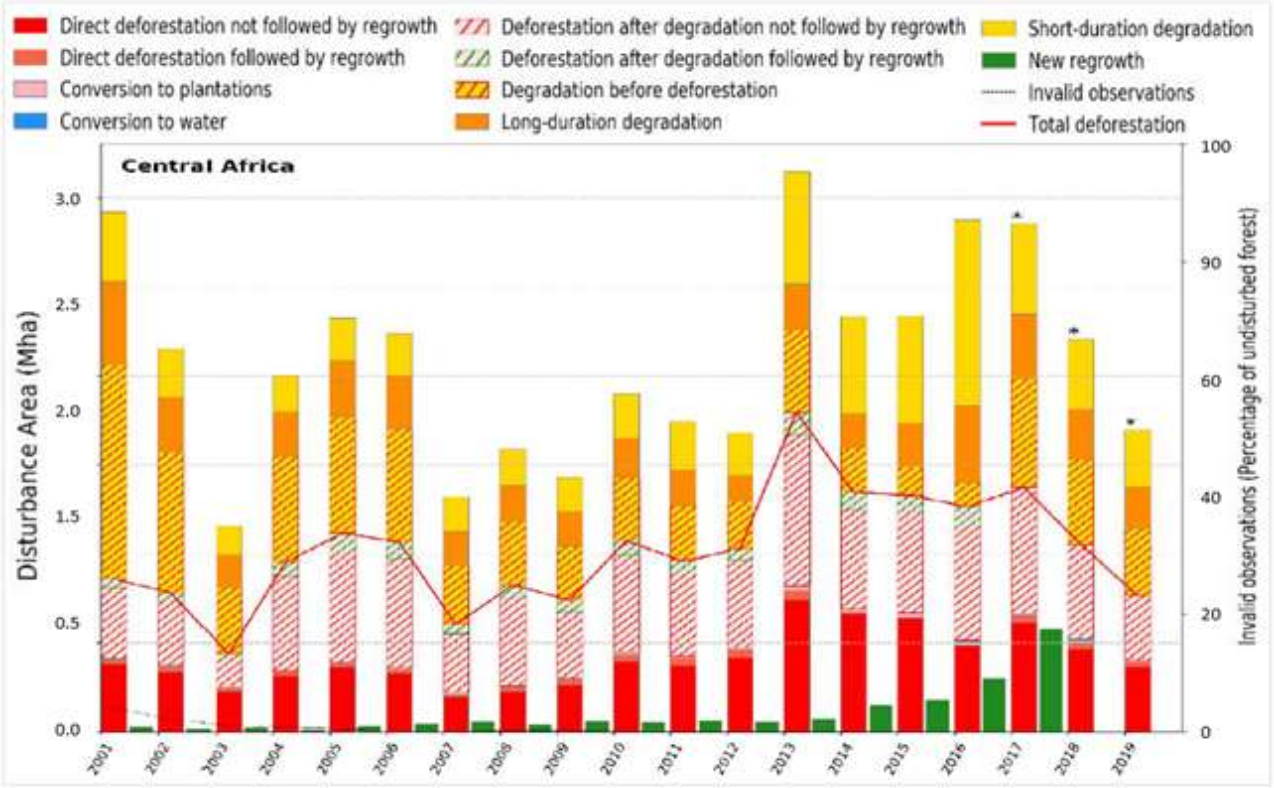


Figure 4 shows, for selected countries in Central Africa, the total and relative level of protection accorded to forests, as well as the role of other relevant land uses in the fate of forests in these countries.

Figure 4. Forest cover (intact and degraded) by land-use classification by country (% and ha)[17]

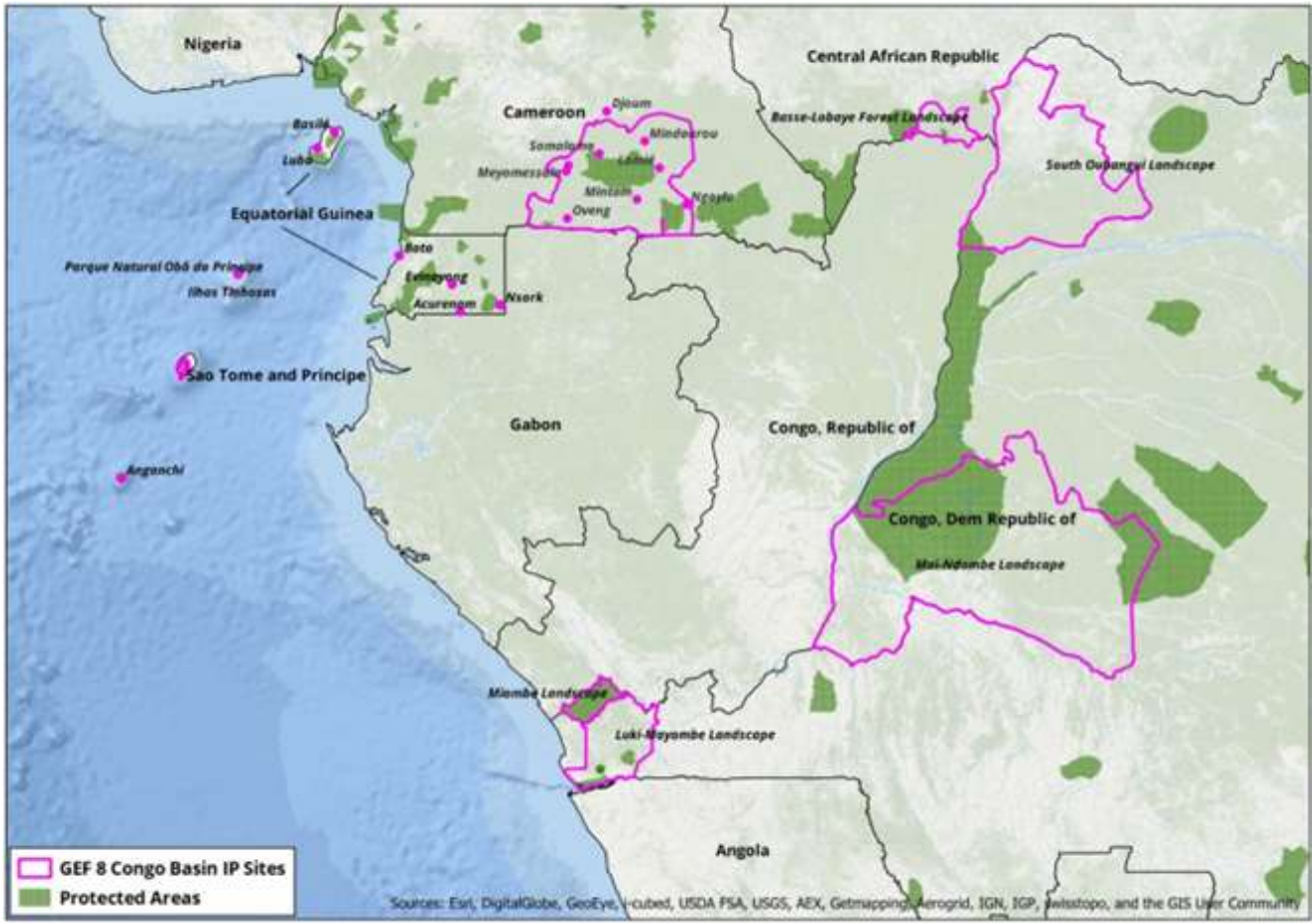
Figure 4 shows that, in Cameroon, forest concessions and mining concessions occupy a much larger portion of land cover than protected areas in forested areas (11% and 31% respectively). Yet, the role of communal and community forests is not negligible and could be key for conservation outcomes. In CAR, forest concessions also occupy a larger portion of land cover than protected areas with forests. For Equatorial Guinea, national forests occupy quite an important part of land cover, including when compared with formal protected areas and forest concessions. Their contribution to conservation should be further investigated. Finally, for DRC, mining concessions occupy the most important portion of land cover (after unclassified land cover), followed by forest protected areas, which because of their size are of capital importance for conservation within the region.

Key system drivers

According to the CIFOR's Congo Basin State of the Forests 2021 study, land-use policies are a valuable tool in the fight against deforestation and forest degradation. Therefore, it is important to analyze land use and its dynamics, including the policy, institutional, economic and social drivers that influence land use.

Within the scope of the present Congo IP's **selected landscapes** within each of the IP participating countries will be targeted for implementing a suite of strategies that together converge towards '**effective forest governance within multi-use landscapes**' and consequently promote carbon sequestration. These landscapes are depicted in Figure 5. These targeted landscapes harbor multiple land uses and are dominated by important protected areas and include a good degree of undisturbed forests[18].

Figure 5. Overview of project sites within the national protected area estate in the background



Therefore, it will be especially important for the Program to devise strategies that can reconcile the presence of IPLCs within the landscapes, and also to reconcile their economic activities with the forest conservation and carbon sequestration goals proposed under the Program. In the Congo Basin, land uses such protected areas, well monitored forestry concessions and community forests can significantly reduce forest loss and engage local people in the

conservation of forests, while securing their livelihoods. And in order to reduce the threats to forests, it is important to understand the dynamics direct threats to the forests' integrity and the drivers behind them.

The analysis that follows is part of the narrative Congo IP's TOC. The TOC is explained and also illustrated by the Figure 6, Figure 7 and Figure 8 further down, which together represent the 'system' that the Congo IP is attempting to influence.

Urgency to tackle the core problem

In line with the GEF 8 Congo Basin Critical Tropical Forest Biome Program objective, main problem to be addressed by the IP is the loss and degradation of forests in Congo Basin countries. Deforestation (forest loss) and forest degradation are two closely connected processes that pose direct and significant threats to forest biodiversity and to the flow of ecosystem services in the mentioned forest biome. In the past, it has been difficult to quantify the problem. With the advancements of GIS technologies, analyses are more accurate, available and in near real time. Elucidating the causal relationships that result in the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the Congo Basin is however more complex, but need to be urgently addressed to avoid the degradation pathway become irreversible.

Figure 6 further down clearly indicates the "Threats to Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service" and what is behind the problem of loss and degradation of forests in Congo Basin countries, namely the "Anthropic activities that cause a direct and negative impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services and result in losses to species' populations, habitats and gene pools in the Congo Rainforest Biome" (in the center of the figure). The root cause behind the core problem and which needs to be addressed can be ultimately summarized as a "Weak forest governance results in unsustainable land and resource use in the Congo Basin and a key driver of loss and degradation of forests in Congo Basin countries" with several causal factors behind it.

Figure 6 also makes a distinction between the "Direct threats to Biodiversity" and the "Threats to the sustainable flow of Ecosystem Services, including the Forest Carbon sink function", the latter as a specific ecosystem service of interest in this Program. Direct threats to biodiversity includes its own typology (inspired by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, and can be manifested as either: (i) Land-use change / habitat loss; (ii) Overexploitation of biological resources; (iii) Pollution; (iv) Invasive Alien Species (IAS); (v) Climate change; or (vi) Disease. Not all threats to biodiversity apply to the concrete situation in the Congo Basin, but some of them do, as discussed herein. Additionally, red arrows in Figure 6 indicate that threats to biodiversity result in loss of ecosystem functions and structure, and that a decreased flow in ecosystem services have a negative feedback loop. It affects the resilience of ecosystems and species, eventually threatening biodiversity.

"Infrastructure extension", "Agricultural expansion", "Wood extraction", and "Other factors, including slow-onset climate change" are the most prominent classes of Threats to Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services that apply to the Congo Basin. Concrete examples of their causal dynamics are included in red boxes of Figure 6.

Additionally, Figure 6 refers to "Contextual Drivers influencing the System" and cite demographic, economic, technological and cultural factors, briefly describing each of them in smaller white boxes at the bottom. These served to also inform the barriers that apply to the Congo IP, which are in turn linked to 'transformational levers of change', as it will be discussed in the next section.

Empirical evidence on the dynamics behind deforestation and forest degradation in the Congo Basin indicate that these processes are primarily linked to conversion of forest into agricultural land, pasture and industrial use through clearings. Most individual forest clearings in the Congo Basin are limited in surface (1-2 ha) as they are linked subsistence small-scale farming.[19] The sheer number of small-scale farming households using slash-and-burn techniques makes this activity the most significant contributor to deforestation.[20] These households also depend on firewood as a cooking fuel, contributing as well to forest degradation. Uncontrolled fires as a result of land conversion, and to a minor extent the drainage of peat soils, are also associated and ecologically destructive land uses that are prevalent in the Congo Basin. In this light, any solutions to addressing the deforestation issue will need to consider the needs of the small-farmers' and of those who depend on the artisanal logging segment[21].

Other threats drivers are on the rise in the Congo Basin, such as unregulated and illegal forest concessions, where wood resources and overexploited without a forest management plan.[22] Mining and infrastructural development are on the rise as well and include the opening up of roads with a multiplying effect on deforestation and forest degradation. Empirical evidence from studies on the Congo Basin also show that, from 2015-20, subsistence agriculture by small-scale farmers in rural areas was the main driver of deforestation and degradation in the Congo Basin – accompanied by the construction of roads and settlements, which accelerate land clearing. Small-scale farmers and charcoal makers have long been blamed for deforestation in the Congo basin. However, plans to drill for oil and gas within forested areas represent another potential threat. These activities attract population to areas that are today relatively untouched.

Artisanal gold mining is gradually gaining scale. Local people tend to resort to this activity in lack of better livelihoods. Often, mercury is used to extract gold. Because artisanal gold mining is an informal activity, little is known about the actual scale of mercury pollution within the Congo Basin.

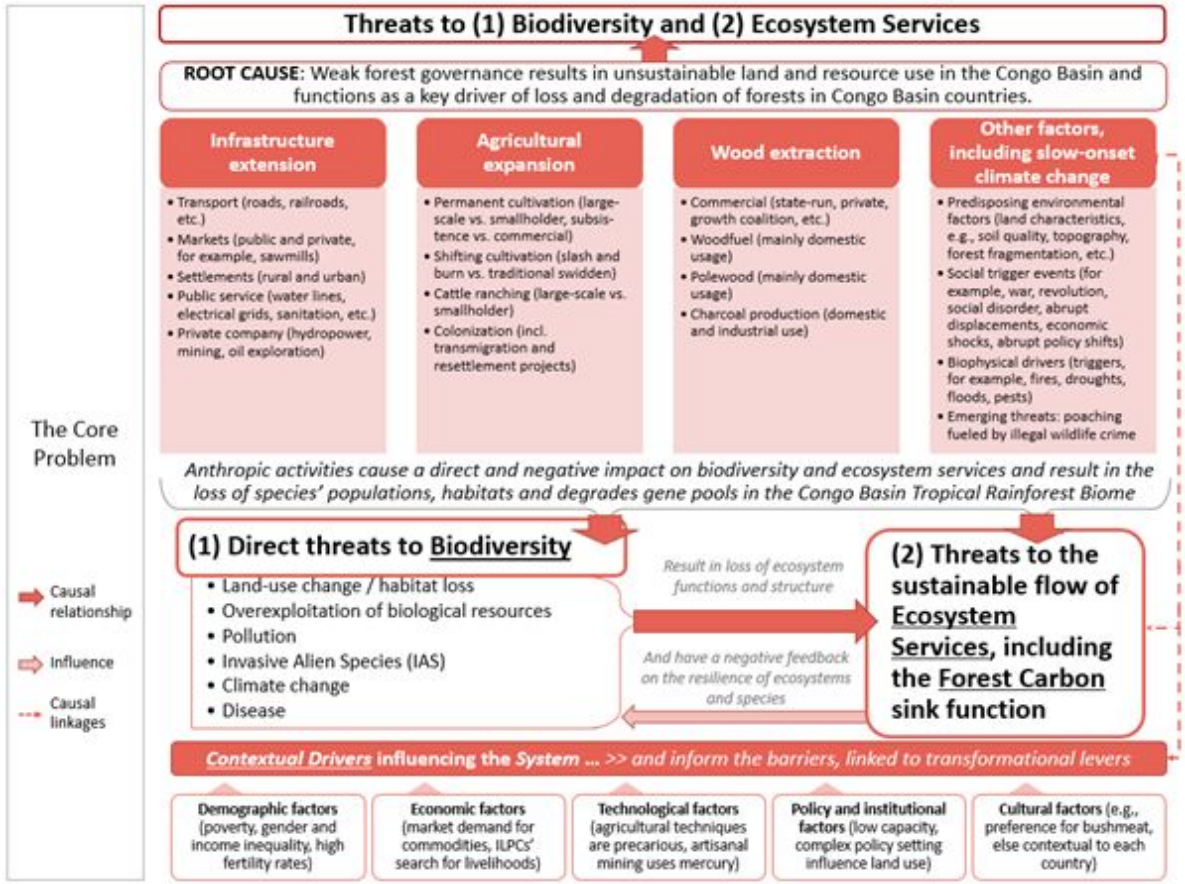
Lack of tenure security for IPLCs and overlapping land use regimes remain an important underlying factor behind deforestation. They directly refer to the issues of forest governance. In addition, weak governance, dysfunctional institutions and lack of law enforcement hamper the protection and sustainable use of forests. They equally also favors the illegal conversion of forests for logging and extractive activities, which have also been increasing.

The expansion of infrastructure, such as roads, markets, settlements, transport, as well as the construction of hydropower plants, mining and oil exploration activities, represent a different class of threats and are also depicted in Figure 6. They also contribute to deforestation in a much larger scales -- in addition to often causing pollution. Furthermore, large scale projects in tropical forest areas provide access to the otherwise remote forests patches, changing the demographic dynamics and possibly unleashing new diseases that can affecting people and wildlife, and also indirectly fuel new deforestation. These direct

and indirect causes of deforestation and degradation are driven by global demand for minerals[23], road construction, the emergence of agribusiness, demand for biofuels, palm oil, and population growth. These threats are particularly prominent in DRC, Cameroon and in the Cabinda province of Angola (on focus in the IP), and to a less extent in CAR and Equatorial Guinea, and are sensitive to factors external to the region.[24] Else, the long-term deforestation trends in the Congo Basin (as per the red line in Figure 3) appear follow its own patterns, which would require a broader in-depth analysis to be fully interpreted.

In sum, anthropogenic activities and other factors directly impact biodiversity and result in losses to species' populations, habitats, and with large scale forest fragmentation, species gene pools may also be affected. Demographic, economic and technological drivers affect land use in different ways; and so do policy, institutional and cultural factors. These factors tending to be contextual in each of the countries of the Congo Basin. An important demographic trait of the Congo Basin includes widespread poverty and gender inequality, plus systemically low levels of capacity within government institutions and low levels of education among the population.

Figure 6. Part of the TOC model – The Core Problem and causal relationships behind biodiversity loss and degradation of ecosystem services in the Congo Basin[25]



The GEF-8 Congo Basin Impact Program (IP) has been designed on the one hand to provide continuity to transformative and innovative approaches to forest conservation that had been initiated in GEF-7 in connection with a Program for same region titled "The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP)"[26]. On the other, although both the GEF7 and GEF8 Programs address the same fundamental problem of forest loss and forest degradation, the GEF-8 Congo IP is clearly additional in relation to its predecessor. At the same time, it builds on the achievements and on partnerships developed through GEF7 CBSL IP, which is already showing the advantages of a programmatic approach as opposed to disparate separate projects.[27]

It is important to mention that the GEF8 Congo IP is also being formulated within a favorable policy environment at the global and regional levels. In March 2023, the Libreville One Forest Summit in Gabon (March 2023) brought together several leaders urged for the advancement of innovative nature financing. An important policy document describes the decisions and proposals from the Libreville Forest Summit, among them the concept of 'Forest Climate Investment Packages'. These ideas which inspired the design of the present IP. Also in 2023, the consolidation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was an important milestone in terms of setting targets for the new global agenda on biodiversity under the CBD. The present IP has strong links to these targets. In 2021 the Glasgow UNFCCC COP 26 Climate Pact was also an important milestone, in which Parties to the Convention acknowledged the needs for scaling up

climate finance including for enhancing the protection, sustainable management and restoration of forests, including in the Congo Basin. Finally, in 2022, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) was created a growing membership, the CBFP work for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable management of forest ecosystems in the Congo Basin, the fight against climate change and poverty reduction in Central Africa in the member countries. The work of CBFP supports the COMIFAC Convergence Plan and has links to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.[28] Policy commitments represent a strong baseline that can back the Program, in addition to the COMIFAC's 2015-2025 Convergence Plan for the Congo Basin forests, which is a token of the engagement of COMIFAC's position on the conservation priorities for the region. Refer to Box 3 (Lessons learned from IP countries and COMIFAC).

There are several relevant initiatives that underpin the implementation of the GEF-8 Congo IP, including programs, projects and initiatives at the global, regional, national and local levels, from which the Congo IP can draw important lessons. The following are worth mentioning a few of the regional and/or global level initiatives to the extent that some of them are proposed as co-financing to the present Child Project:

· COMIFAC is implementing several relevant regional projects (https://www.comifac.org/projets), including several REDD+ initiatives, and others related to protected areas. The programs are instrumental in laying the ground for forest conservation at scale and for pushing the agenda for stronger socio-environmental safeguards at the project and country levels. Estimated annual amounts: $10M

· The Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), supported by USAID, is the largest environmental program funded in the region. Its objective is to maintain the ecological integrity of the second largest tropical humid forest ecosystem in the world, the Congo Basin. The work of CARPE has been essential in setting priorities for conservation across the region for drawing important lessons on regional challenges linked to poverty, conflict and the power of information in spatial decision-making. Estimated annual amounts: $30M.

· The Network of Indigenous Peoples and Local. Communities for the Sustainable Management of the Forest Ecosystems of Central Africa. (REPALEAC) is an important regional NGO that plays an essential role in reaching out to IPLCs across all COMIFAC member States. Although the amounts executed are not estimated, their work constitutes an important baseline for the Congo IP.

· The UNEP Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) has been active since 2001 and with a long-term perspective and has a special focus on the Congo Basin. The Secretariat of GRASP is hosted by UNEP and has been able to mobilize significant resources for the partnership and on behalf of its members. Estimated annual amounts: $200,000.

· The IKI (German International Climate Initiative) funded Congo peatlands project to support cross sectoral land use planning in the Lac Tele (Republic of Congo) and Lac Tumba (DR Congo) landscape.[29] UNEP is accumulating a number of important lessons from the implementation of this IKI funded program, in particular on the methodologies for in land use planning within complex situations on the ground and against a backdrop of low institutional capacity. These will be important for the implementation of the Congo IP. The contribution to DRC is the equivalent of EUR 2 million per annum over 3 years. Total estimated for EUR 15 million.

· The Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI), launched in 2015 is a collaborative partnership between a coalition of willing donors, six Central African partner countries, and Brazil as South-South partner. Resource mobilization by CAFI reached $180M in 2021.

· Relating to protected area knowledge management, it is worth mentioning the work of UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), with a

baseline and co-financing contribution of approximately $200,000 per year.

With the above-listed regional and global financial amounts, the total baseline for the Congo IP has been estimated at $50M per year, part of which will co-finance the Congo IP and help mobilize additional resources.

The list further up is though non-exhaustive, and other important interventions baseline from bilateral and multilateral donors that are congruent with objectives of the Congo Basin IP. During the PPG, further consultations with be conducted and further elaborated baseline situation will be presented in the Child Projects. The following initiatives, which will be thoroughly assessed during the PPG and reported in the Regional Coordination Child project CEO Endorsement, are worth mentioning:

- Germany, Int. Coop.: GIZ, Program Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management (phased VI-VIII)
- Germany, Int. Coop.: Global Program: Human Rights Due Diligence in the Congo Basin - Strengthening the rights of indigenous and local communities (IPLC) in and around protected areas
- Germany, Int. Coop.: Support to the Congo Basin Forest Partnership
- NORAD: Addressing tropical deforestation and degradation with journalism
- NORAD: China - Private sector action and incentives to comply with legislation
- NORAD: Community Livelihoods, Environment & Forests
- NORAD: Congo-Basin - Open Timber Portal
- NORAD: Congo-Basin - Transparency and legality in timber sector
- NORAD: Global policy and normative work to raise awareness on the impacts of deforestation from soy and beef in the Amazon Cerrado and Congo Basin
- NORAD: Innovative technologies for fighting illegal logging: wood identification
- UK-DEFRA: Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund Round 6
- USAID: Community Based Countering Wildlife Trafficking
- USAID: U.S. Forest Resource Management
- USAID: U.S. Forest Service (USFS) PAPA III Agreement
- USAID: USAID - Forestry and Biodiversity Support Activity (FABS)
- The Netherlands, through International Cooperation and Tropenbos International: Working Landscapes

- The Netherlands, through International Cooperation and Tropenbos International: Contribution to CAFI
- EC - International Partnerships: Rapid RESCUE: Rapid Response for Ecosystems, Species and Communities Undergoing Emergencies

At the countries level, various policies and legal frameworks contribute to the conservation and carbon sequestration agenda in the Congo Basin. These are described in the Child Projects. The national and local level baseline financial resources can be summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Country Level Baseline Finance Estimates

Associated Baseline Projects per Country	Estimates $M
Angola	**20.0**
Baseline investment for Angola is provided by several entities and their initiatives. Investments include allocations from the Provincial Government of Cabinda and the Municipality Administrations of Belize, Buco Zau, and Cacongo, Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) implementing a project in the zone, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), The Game Rangers Association of Africa – (GRAA) Angola (national NGO), the national NGO DBDS – Associação de Defesa da Biodiversidade e Desenvolvimento Sustentável and the local CBO titled Gremio ABC. An estimated amount would be around $20M.	
Cameroon	**161.3**
Baseline investment for Cameroon will come from several entities, projects, programs and initiatives as per the EOI. Biodiverse Landscapes Fund (BLF) Commodity Value-Chain Development Support Project (PADFA II)- Phase II (2019 – 2026) Existing initiatives that tap into to mainstream agroecology practices at the policy (various) Management through Community-based Landscape Management – COBALAM (2020-2024) Removing Barriers to Biodiversity Conservation, Land Restoration and Sustainable Forest Rural Development: Youth Agropastoral Entrepreneurship Promotion Program (2014 – 2023) Sustainable farming and critical habitat conservation to achieve biodiversity mainstreaming and protected areas management effectiveness in Western Cameroon – SUFACHAC (2017-2022) The "Strengthening and Innovation in Participatory Forestry project for the benefit of local communities on the periphery of the Protected Areas of the Congo Basin (RIFoP)" Project. Total budget: € 4,332,204	
Central African Republic	**80.8**
The AfDB project: Development of Agricultural Value Chains in the Central African Republic: Total budget: US$ 12.34 million. The project covers the prefectures of Lobaye, Ombella-Mpoko, and Bangui and its surroundings with an extension to Bozoum (Ouham-Pende) for rice cultivation. This area encompasses the following livestock sectors: (i) for Ombella-Mpoko: Bimbo, Boali, Bossembélé, Damara-Bogangolo; and (ii) for Lobaye: Mbaïki-Boda and Boganda-Boganangone. Increasing the Adaptation Capacity and Resilience of Rural Communities to Climate Change in the Central African Republic. Adaption Fund. Requested Financing from Adaptation Fund (US Dollars): 9,999,999. Implementing Entity: International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The Human Capital Project funded by the WB. Total budget: US$50 million. It aims to improve access to health and education services, as well as promote employment opportunities that empower women and adolescent girls in targeted areas of the Central African Republic	

Democratic Republic of the Congo	**300.0**
Several baseline finance initiatives could be mentioned for the DRC's project. The most important one is the investments made by IFAD and AFD, which are the basis for sustainable development interventions within the selected project sites. For the sake of simplicity, the baseline is calculated at approx. $300M.	
Equatorial Guinea	**100.0**
Baseline finance initiative could be Equatorial Guinea. The most important one is AfDB project that is proposed as key co-financing to the GEF project. Although it deals with fisheries, a new initiative focusing on coastal farmers is under preparation and will enhance the baseline and potential co-financing. Currently, the total baseline is estimated at $100M from various sources.	
Sao Tome and Principe	**10.0**
Baseline finance initiative are similar to those proposed as co-financing and come from various sources that will still need to be confirmed. The total estimated amount is $10M.	
Grand Total – Estimated and rounded off	**672.2**

Program objective and barriers to achieving it

In the GEF-8 Strategy, a transformative system's approach is proposed, and in connection with it, a small number of "Desired Outcomes that were proposed for global Integrated Programs dealing with "Nature" (among them the Congo IP). These Desired Outcomes include the following and are represented in Figure 7:

[1] Expanding protection and nature-based solutions

[2] Valuing natural capital and sustainable resource use

[3] Supportive national frameworks

[4] Delivering on global commitments / targets

They have directly inspired the Program's Long-Term Solution and indirectly the Program Objective and Outcomes under the Components.

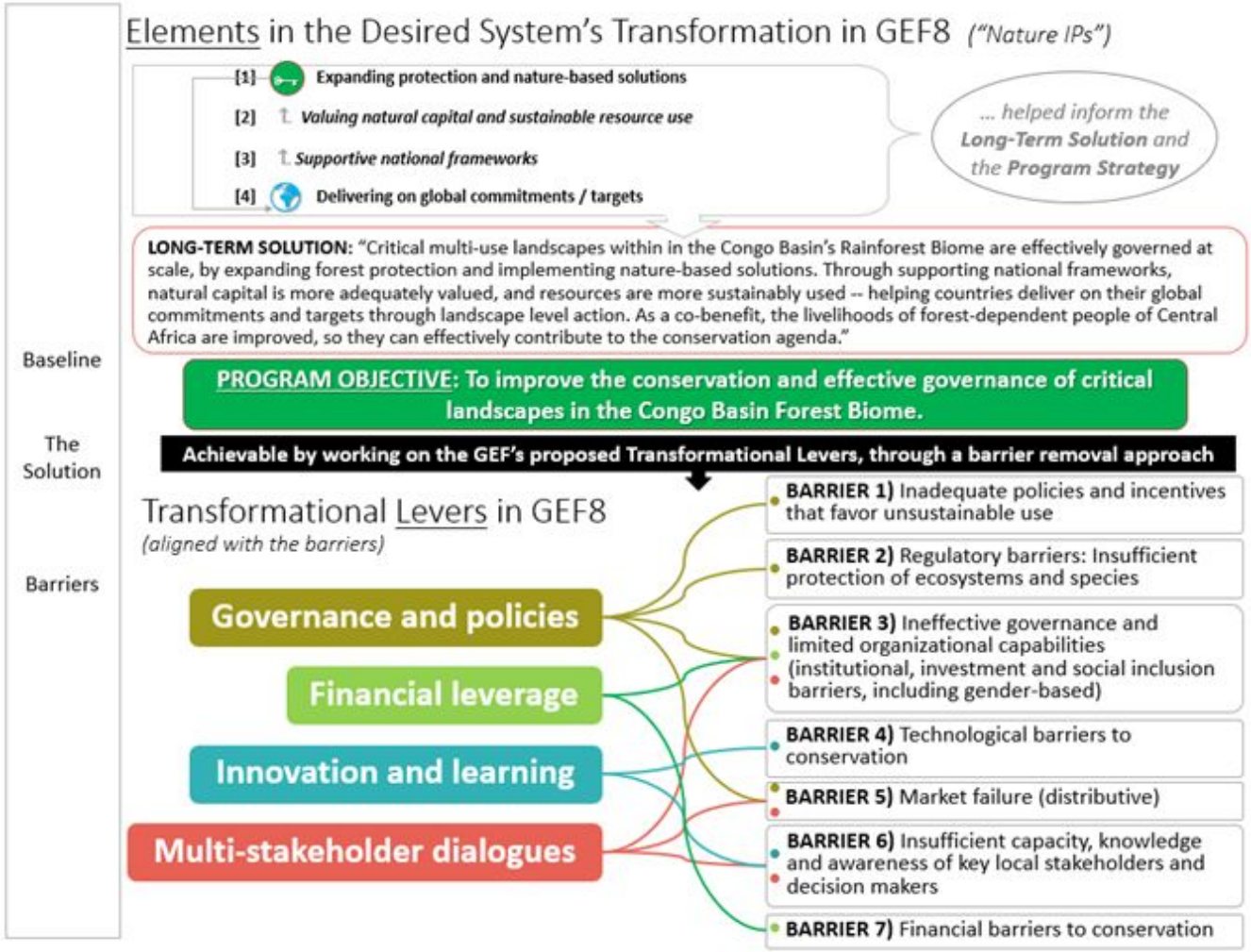
Considering the threats and the scope of the Congo IP, a "Long-term Solution" expressing ambition through 'scale' was formulated (below and in Figure 7). The Solution expresses what would be an ideal situation for the governance of critical forest landscapes.

The long-term solution [TOC element]

"Critical multi-use landscapes within the Congo Basin's Rainforest Biome are effectively governed at scale, by expanding forest protection and implementing nature-based solutions. Through supporting national frameworks, natural capital is more adequately valued, and resources are more sustainably used -- helping countries deliver on their global commitments and targets through landscape level action. As a co-benefit, the livelihoods of forest-dependent people of Central

Africa are improved, so they can effectively contribute to the conservation agenda."

Figure 7. Part of the TOC model – Baseline, Solution and Barriers



The Long-Term Solution implies that, at scale, the conservation and effective governance of critical landscapes can slow down deforestation, reduce forest-based GHG emissions, enhance carbon sequestration, while also contributing to sustainable development, green, blue and inclusive economic growth. (The latter elements are strategically important for UNEP in its own Programming). The Long-term Solution has directly inspired the formulation of a simple **Program Objective** for the Congo IP, as follows:

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE: "To improve in the conservation and effective governance of critical landscapes in the Congo Basin Forest Biome".

By achieving the Program Objective, IP participating countries in the Congo Basin and UNEP, as the Lead GEF Agency responsible for the Regional Child Project, will contribute collectively to the Long-Term Solution, though it remain aspirational within the TOC.

Additionally, the GEF-8 Strategy suggests that project and program design should embrace 'Transformational Levers' and include them in the **pathways of change** that are part of the TOC. They include:

- Governance and policies
- Financial leverage
- Innovation and learning
- Multi-stakeholder dialogues

In the GEF8 Strategy, the above listed 'Transformational Levers' refer to important thematic areas that projects within the IPs should strive to work on. In the present TOC they directly relate to seven 'Barriers to the Long-Term Solution' in the manner shown in Figure 7. (The description of Barriers is developed further down).

Both the four elements in the "Transformative system's approach" and the four "Transformational Levers" provide a logic for the **pathways of change**[30] proposed for the Congo IP – as follows:

- The first "Elements in the Desired System's Transformation in GEF8 in Nature IPs" (#1 *"Expanding protection and nature-based solutions"*) is key, meaning that it needs to be pursued without compromise. In other words, in order to achieve conservation effectiveness in the Congo IP participating countries, forest protection needs to be expanded (either by expanding the spatial coverage of the PA system or by enhancing its management effectiveness). Additionally, nature-based solutions need to be implemented in countries. These may be broadly interpreted and can refer to various methods, techniques, approaches and arrangements to governing landscapes, to using land, managing natural resources, or mobilizing financial resources or any other types of relevant inputs and means to delivering these solutions. Nature-based solutions also includes "forest climate investment packages" that are aligned with the 2023 Libreville Forest Summit Roadmap, as well as other needed work on the ground, as long as the Solutions directly or indirectly contribute to safeguarding forest integrity, in the case of the Congo IP.

- The two Elements in the Desired System's Transformation that follow are considered as a means to an end (#2 "*Valuing natural capital and sustainable*

resource use" and #3 "*Supportive national frameworks*"). In the present TOC they are means to achieving the goals embedded in the first Element.

· Finally, the fourth Element (#4 "*Delivering on global commitments / targets*") can be said to be a consequence of successfully achieving goals embedded in the first Element – as long as national and/or regional policies in question are well aligned with global commitments and targets.

As for the proposed 'Barriers' and 'Transformational Levers', there close correlation between them, as shown in Figure 7. The proposed content for the Barriers is simply a more elaborated way of indicating which hurdles need to be overcome to achieving goals – whether they are linked to "[landscape] governance and the needed policies", to "the leveraging of finance", to any "innovation and learning that needs to be deployed", or to the "issues of multi-stakeholders' relationships addressed through dialogue". The seven Barriers, described in the next section.

Barriers [TOC element]:

The contextual analysis of the baseline situation in the Congo Basin indicates that a number of barriers stand in the way to achieving the Long-Term Solution for this Program. These barriers for the GEF 8 IP, have been compared with those of GEF7 IP to have an update of the situation and build on previously identified barriers in the Congo Basin in order for GEF8 to focus on prevailing ones. The comparison is presented further down after Barrier 7. The barrier analysis for the GEF8 Congo IP follows.

BARRIER 1) Inadequate policies, coordination and incentives that favor unsustainable use

It is very common in Central African countries that mining permits are issued in areas that are otherwise classified as protected areas.[31] From an extractive sector's perspective, this would be understandable, since the economy in several Central African countries depends on mining revenues. However, from a forest governance and a conservation effectiveness perspective, there are contradictions in the policies and practices that end up assigning mining blocs (even if only for exploration purposes) in areas that have been set aside for conservation purposes. Often, IPLCs are not sufficiently consulted on these developments, which may end up impacting their lives in many different ways.

Therefore, it can be said that there is insufficient coordination among sectoral stakeholders, land use planners and forest dwellers. There are also conflicting and isolated sectoral developments that affect forest landscapes, resulting in increased competition for land. In such situations, competing and incompatible land use at the landscape level will often result in land use change – leading to forest loss. This accelerates pressures on natural resources, leading to habitat loss, forest fragmentation and degradation of ecosystem services.

Furthermore, although countries have put in place legal and policy frameworks that regulate land use (e.g. EIA, SEA or LUP requirements) and promote

conservation (PA systems and a minimally functional PA estate), at the national level, there are barriers to the effectiveness of these policies. It is important to understand how the legal, policy and incentives frameworks actually play out within a country to be able to evaluate policy effectiveness.

Other types of policies that influence land use (those that promote the expansion of the agricultural and or timber extraction sectors) have systemically worked as a barrier vis-à-vis conservation and sustainable NRM goals in the Congo Basin. At the level of critical landscapes, the information and data for making informed decision making are often not in place for reconciling conflicting policies vis-à-vis conservation goals.

Additionally, several studies also point out to the complex roles of land and resource tenure frameworks in the outcomes for conservation and in the distribution of benefits among landowners, land users, investors and other players.[32] Whenever there is lack of clarity on land tenure rights or resource tenure rights, there is risk for conflict and also for forest loss. This is especially true in situations where there is competition for land and when the incentives for deriving value from the land are unequal (e.g. when relating to concessions for high impact activities such logging, mining, oil and gas and industrial). Some of the countries participating in the IP are more advance in terms of reviewing such policies and proposing changes, but for others, high impact industries are known to operate with little regulation or control and may even enjoy tax breaks and other incentives. Such policies and practices function as a real perverse incentive that can fuel the threats to biodiversity described in Figure 6.

At the same time, there is within Congo Basin countries a handful of policies that although should incentivize the sustainable land use, are in fact insufficient or inadequate for ensuring that deforestation will not take place as a result of competition for land. Many of the policies and their implementation in the countries of the Congo Basin are not aimed at the facilitating land and resource tenure by communities. This is especially pronounced in DRC and Angola, but also present in other countries in the Congo Basin.

The DRC passed e.g. a bylaw allowing communities to manage their own natural resources in the form of community reserves earlier than many of its neighboring countries. However, implementation on the ground has been a challenge. As an example, in the DRC communities can own the land and dedicate it to conservation, but the legal process is very lengthy and makes it difficult for them to obtain tenure.

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BARRIER 2) Regulatory barriers: Insufficient protection of ecosystems and species

Across the Congo IP participating countries, the ratio of terrestrial PAs vis-à-vis the countries' land surface is 13.1% (Table 2), which is below what the CBD is recommending. Yet, this ratio is very uneven across IP countries. In São Tomé and Príncipe (the smallest of the countries) it is almost 30%, while for Angola and Cameroon it is a little bit more than 10%.

Table 2. Terrestrial PA coverage according to WDPA[33]

	% of the terrestrial PA coverage	Terrestrial PA Land area covered (ha)	Total land area (ha)
Angola	10.75%	13,490,900	125,521,800
Cameroon	10.98%	5,153,800	46,942,800
Central African Republic	18.06%	11,282,900	62,456,800
Democratic Republic of the Congo	13.85%	32,476,800	234,427,500
Equatorial Guinea	19.27%	522,800	2,713,600
Sao Tome and Principe	29.26%	28,900	98,900
TOTAL / PA coverage for all countries	**13.33%**	**62,956,100**	**472,161,400**

Additionally, the management effectiveness of the protected area estate function as a major barrier. The PA estate in Angola e.g. notably includes a high number of paper parks. Across all participating countries, it can be assumed that the conservation sector is underfunded, though more information would be needed about to what extent.

In the present IP, regional collaboration at the landscape level is proposed. Yet, it is also important to consider more fundamental questions relating to the low conservation baseline in some of the participating countries.

Additionally, important and iconic species are not enjoying sufficient protection within countries, notably Forest Elephants, primates and other species that are being impacted by hunting, poaching, illegal trade or habitat loss. In many of the countries, such as The Equatorial Guinea, there is simply not enough protected areas to cover the entire area that requires conservation.

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BARRIER 3) Ineffective governance including lack of engagement of communities, forest dependent people, and private sector in conservation and sustainable use and limited organizational capabilities (institutional, investment and social inclusion barriers, including gender-based)

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‘Governance and policies’ constitute one of the most central transformational levers proposed by the GEF in its current Strategy. Land use governance in most of the participating countries in the IP is the responsibility of several government entities, at times with overlapping or unclear mandates. The coordination between these institutions remains insufficient.

Lack of engagement of communities, of forest dependent people, and private sector in conservation and sustainable use is an important barrier for effective forest governance.

This also applies to policymaking, where different levels of legislators, do not coordinate their efforts, leading to situations, when local land management regulations are implemented before the sectoral laws and policies with potentially high impact on forests are approved and enforced (e.g. in Cameroon and DRC). In countries like Equatorial Guinea, the conservation sector struggles to institute good governance and transparency. Additionally, across the board, institutions tend to have low organizational capacity. They receive limited investment from government, contributing to the low based status quo. In particular, land tenure policies, which are highly central to governing land use across forest landscapes, tend to be unclear and gender-skewed – meaning that when implemented, they would tend to destitute women and other less dominant groups of their land rights. The confluence of these factors creates an unfavorable governance environment for forest conservation.

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BARRIER 4) Technological barriers to conservation

Most of the countries participating in the Congo IP are LDCs, meaning that they have limited access to technologies and methodologies that would be useful in the implementation of conservation measures. Worldwide, there is a handful of existing and emerging opportunities for technologies that could facilitate tasks related to forest conservation. Especially in the area of conservation monitoring, the GIS based technologies and tools are very useful.

For example, technologies such as big data can be used to tracking illegal wood and wildlife trade, and a range of satellite products coupled with machine learning processes could be deployed to monitor the effectiveness of wildlife (such as African elephant) and other aspects of forest conservation. However, in most of the IP countries, the conservation monitoring sector faces serious issues with capacity to access the benefits of technology for conservation effectiveness. This is especially valid because it is expected that new technologies for ecosystem conservation emerge from existing consumer-oriented tools i.e., the development happens bottom-up. Yet, access to such tools in participating countries is quite limited. E.g., in Equatorial Guinea internet penetration rates country-wide reach only 26% and lower in rural areas. This represents a major technological barrier that is particularly pronounced in some, but not all of the IP countries.

BARRIER 5) Market failure (distributive).

Currently, the market for forest resources in the Congo Basin presents an incentive for exploring these resources as quickly as possible and later moving on to the next pristine area. Land and resource tenure frameworks that are prevalent in the Congo Basin countries play an important role in the market logic that results in the above-described exploitative approach to forests.

From a spatial point of view, agriculture and forest conservation are competing land uses. However, new and empirical evidence from forests combined with econometric methods pointed out to the important role played by the agricultural output within the economy as a very strong driver of deforestation.[34] Although a rare and highly biodiverse forest patch has high conservation value, and should be valued accordingly, "the market" (pricing goods/services availability according to offer and demand) is not picking up these signals. Standing forests are assigned a low market value and this value often corresponds only to the most accessible resources (usually timber). Forests are therefore prone to be indiscriminately exploited through different forest products' value chains, in which most of the value of final products is not captured by forest dwellers.

In economic terms, the above-described dynamics constitute 'market failure'. Examples in which the market economy not only fails to attach due value to standing forests but also creates gross inequities in trade relationships are widespread across the Congo Basin and beyond. The low value assigned to forests, especially those that are considered as a common good, and bearing thereby a very low resource rent, creates additional market incentives to deforestation.

Although the global society has an interest in conserving the Congo Basin forests, and in the ecosystem services that they render, the value that they attach to it still is not effectively translated into market signals. This situation involving the global community can also be portrayed as a market failure with an inequitable distribution of benefits.

Ecologically sensitive forest patches once deforested, can never regain their conservation value. Degraded forests may even maintain some of its structure but the diversity of species, gene pools and ecological relationships can hardly be recuperated. This situation may be the source of the dilemma in the climate change mitigation policy arena. Voluntary markets for forest carbon tend to benefit countries with a high deforestation rate while countries that have kept their forest intact benefit less.

BARRIER 6) Insufficient capacity, knowledge and awareness of key local stakeholders and decision makers

Decisions on land use, forest use and water resources in the Congo Basin are made at various levels, by several stakeholders and through complex relationships. Decisions at different levels are influenced by a number of factors. Small-scale agriculture, the collection of fuelwood, charcoal production and artisanal logging are still causing significant forest degradation in the Congo Basin forests. Therefore, it may be said that, at scale, the final decisions on land use is made by forest dwellers on the ground, and that these decisions will ultimately determine the fate of the forests.

Decisions on large scale industrial, mining projects in the Congo Basin are often made in capital cities and involve the international financial system. Yet, at the local level, forest dwellers are at the most important stakeholder in a long chain of decision-making instances that reach all the way to end-consumers of forest products in developed countries. At the local level, forest dwellers and local governments (both of whom can be considered as IPLCs stakeholders) have hardly any control over the main factors that influence decisions, even if they have a genuine interest in conserving tropical forests.

Local subsistence needs tend to be a rather strong driver. So that the weight of their decisions on land use can favor conservation, IPLCs need to have a broader understanding of forest value-chains and their reach, and also of their role and position within these value-chains.

Often, these local stakeholders lack the capacity, knowledge and awareness to make wiser decisions about land use.

Additionally, without proper incentives to pursue conservation strategies and in the lack of incentives and a coordinated effort among higher-level policymakers, these local stakeholders will, more often than not, tend towards more destructive land uses.

Local and regional NGOs, CBOs and advocacy groups can play a pivotal role in changing the capacity, knowledge and awareness status quo for IPLCs. So can targeted research on e.g. the economics of forest-based activities in the Congo Basin. Yet, these organizations lack appropriate support (financial, operational, organizational). In addition, many countries in the Congo Basin suffered serious cuts to the budgets and infrastructure of research institutes, exacerbating capacity issues.

There are not enough initiatives such as the Congo Basin Water Resources Research Center based in Kinshasa (DRC) to compensate for the existing gap. IPLCs, as important local level decision-makers, are often bypassed due to difficulties of travelling to the region, of bringing messages forward and also for lacking themselves decision-making power and the necessary capacity support.

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BARRIER 7) Financial barriers to conservation

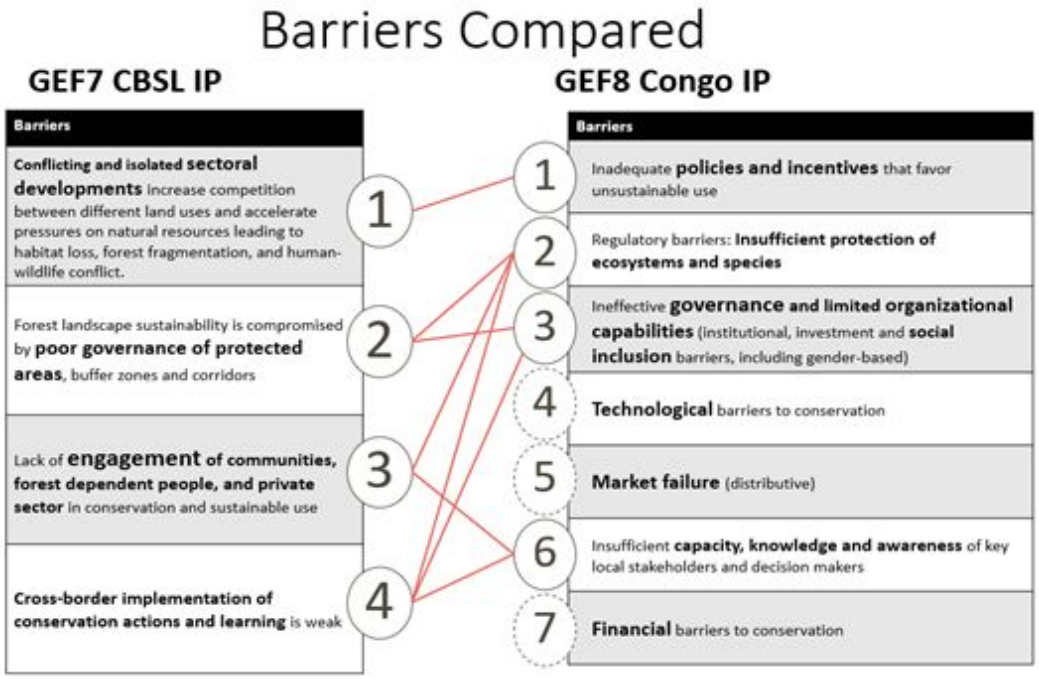
Last, but not least, a major barrier to conservation is access to finance and how financial benefits are distributed. There is not enough involvement in alternative funding sources and private sector engagement and the existing funding is not always sustainable or regular. Available funding is also not being sufficiently pursued by key stakeholders.

There are various trust funds, e.g. the KfW Legacy Landscape Fund and several others, but there is often no functional mechanism which brings the funds to the people who live with wildlife and protect the carbon stocks.

It is worth to mention the Pan African Conservation Trust (A-PACT)[35]which is an ambitious plan to create an independent, African ed, hybrid sustainable financing mechanism that empowers those who manage protected and conserved areas across the continent to have the resources they need to do their jobs. However, accessing it will still take a while and the capacity barrier remains.

The proposed GEF8 Integrated Program for the Congo Basin (Congo IP) will address the drivers of forest loss and degradation by addressing the above listed seven barriers, and namely through strategies aimed at creating a better enabling environment for forest governance and conservation effectiveness.

The Barriers in the GEF7 (CBSL IP) and in the GEF8 Congo IP were compared. The two Programs may be addressing the same fundamental problem (deforestation and forest degradation in the tropical moist forests of the Congo Basin), but they do this from different angles, so their respective barrier analyses differ. This approach ensures that the GEF-8 Congo IP will maximize the results from GEF-7 CBSL IP to create a critical mass or knowledge and community of practices in tackling barriers and challenges to conservation as they evolve. The results from the comparison exercise show that Barriers in the two Programs have some relation to each other, but also marked differences. This is represented in the figure below and summarized further down:



Summary of Barrier Comparison:

· GEF7 (CBSL IP) lists four barriers and the GEF8 Congo IP seven. Barriers 1, 2, 3 and 6 in GEF8 relate to Barriers in GEF7, but Barriers 4, 5 and 7 are specific to GEF8, covering technological, market-related and financial aspects, respectively.

· Barrier 1 in both Programs relate to policies and are correlated – but they are not the same. In GEF8, the issue of incentives is covered in Barrier 1, but not in GEF7.

· Topics from Barrier 2 in GEF7 are reflected and “unpacked" in GEF8 through Barriers 2 and 3. Yet, in GEF7 it is specifically about protected areas, while in GEF8 the barriers in question are about conservation effectiveness and forest governance more generally. Barrier 2 in GEF8 additionally covers species and ecosystems. Here, the “unpacking” of GEF7 Barrier 2 means that there is a distinction between the regulatory aspects of protection and more fundamental dimensions of forest governance. Those are now covered in GEF8.

· Barrier 3 in GEF7 reads as a “lack of” barrier, meaning that it is already announcing the solution through “engagement”. The mentioned barrier relates to Barriers 2 and 6 in GEF8, which point out issues of governance, organizational capacity, inclusion and knowledge as the actual barriers. The issues have been further unpacked.

· Barrier 4 in GEF7 relates to issues of “cross-border implementation of conservation actions and learning”. In GEF8, learning is unpacked through Barriers 3 and 6, and conservation effectiveness through Barrier 2, but without a narrow focus on the cross-border aspect, which is sufficiently covered in GEF7.

Finally, Barriers 3 and 6 in GEF8 are closely related and could (in theory) have been merged. However, UNEP wanted to single out the issue of capacity, knowledge and awareness of *local* stakeholders and decision makers through Barrier 6, while leaving Barrier 3 more focused on governance and organizational capacity, including at the regional level. The latter is particularly important. In a lesson's sharing exercise between UNEP and COMIFAC (consulted on 05-May-2023), the Commission mentioned "weak technical, organizational and financial capacities" as important structural barriers to the fulfilment of their mandate.

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[1] Megevand (2013)

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Estimates vary. UNESCO assesses that humid forests in Central Africa cover some 1.6 million sq km, while the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) mentions 200 million hectares of dense moist forest in Central Africa cross-referencing Vancutsem et al. (2020) for a recent and comprehensive forest mapping assessment in Central Africa.

[4] Duval, Benoit Jobbé (2019). Megabiodiversity in the Congo Basin, The Ecologist newsletter, 30th April 2019.

[5] According to one estimate, the Congo's tropical rainforest sequesters 600 million metric tons more carbon dioxide per year than it emits, equivalent to about one-third of the CO2 emissions from all U.S. transportation. See: https://www.globalforestwatch.org/blog/climate/forests-carbon-emissions-sink-flux/.

[6] Source: Eba'a Atyi R et al. (2022). The Forests of the Congo Basin. State of the Forests 2021. CIFOR.

[7] Eba'a Atyi R et al. (2022). Also, a recent article in Nature (Hubau, W., Lewis, S.L., Phillips, O.L. et al. Asynchronous carbon sink saturation in African and Amazonian tropical forests. Nature 579, 80–87 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-020-2035-0) compared the respective carbon sink potential in African and Amazonian tropical forests and concludes that it is possible that only the Congo Basin remains a net sink at the current stage, although under threat.

[8] The mentioned CIFOR study (Eba'a Atyi R et al. 2022) asserts that no ecosystem may be considered truly 'undisturbed', because some degree of human impact is present everywhere. Yet, for the sake of analysis of the undisturbed moist forests in GIS mapping products that focus on LULUCF, undisturbed moist forests are defined as those for which no change in forest coverage has been observed over the Landsat historical record since 1983.

[9] Source: Eba'a Atyi R et al. (2022).

[10] Estimates vary. GIZ estimates the figure at approximately 65 million with reference to those who directly depend on the forests The World Resources Institute estimated that 80 million people live in and around the Congo Basin. WWF estimates that forest dependent people are approximately 75 million. A recent report by CIFOR mentions that the Congo Basin forests provide a livelihood to 60 million people and help to feed 40 million more in nearby towns and cities. See: Eba'a Atyi R et al. (2022).

[11] World Bank data (2021).

[12] With reference to Hubau, W., Lewis, S.L., Phillips, O.L. et al. (2020).

[13] Source: *Ibid.*

[14] Source: *Ibid.* and according to the Tropical Moist Forest GIS product for 2019. Note: In the figure, areas deforested before 2019 are classed as non-forest. The administrative level includes districts, sub-prefectures, departments or communes for the different countries.

[15] Source: *Ibid.*

[16] Source: Vancutsem et al. 2020, cited in Eba'a Atyi R et al. (2022). The graph depicted in Figure 3 is based on the meticulous review of previous assessments of deforestation and forest degradation in the Congo Basin, which pondered which figures could be reliably validated and also how to consider the complex dynamics of forest loss, degradation and recovery. Therefore, it is considered the most accurate and up-to-date assessment for the Congo Basin region and also a state-of-the-art analysis of deforestation, forest degradation and regrowth in the region.

[17] Source: Eba'a Atyi R et al. (2022). The methodology and data sources behind the chart are explained in pages 21 and 22 of the cited CIFOR 2021 study. The figure from original source was modified and the surface area units corrected to suit the context of the chart's presentation in this PFD.

[18] The GIS analysis needed for determining the ratios of undisturbed forest will be conducted during the PPG with the aim of informing interventions.

[19] The CIFOR 2021 study confirms that, unlike other tropical regions, small-scale processes rather than large-scale agriculture mainly cause deforestation and forest degradation in Africa. Deforestation here is more closely related to subsistence agriculture, small-scale charcoal production and gathering of wood for fuel.

[20] Megevand & Mosnier (2013) for instance argued that, locally, small-scale agriculture and the collection of fuelwood remains the major driving force for deforestation and forest degradation of the Congo Basin forests.

[21] Artisanal logging is defined as a series of operations carried out, with or without permits, by individual small-scale millers whose main purpose is to supply sawn wood to the domestic market.

[22] Eba'a Atyi R et al. (2022).

[23] According to a WB report by Megevand (2013), the Basin is home to mineral resources worth billions of dollars on world markets, but that wealth has been largely untapped so far, mostly because of conflict and poor infrastructure. World demand for mineral resources had significantly increased after 2000, driven by global economic development and particularly China's strong growth, but slowed down with the COVID-19 pandemic. It is though expected to resurge in the next years.

[24] World demand for oil and mineral resources had significantly increased after 2000, driven by global economic development and in particular by strong growth trends in China. Demand but slowed down with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2022. A resurge in demand for oil and minerals is possible in the next years (IMF, Regional Economic Outlook, retrieved from https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/REO in March 2023).

[25] The threat analysis was inspired by: Megevand, Carole (2013): Deforestation Trends in the Congo Basin Reconciling Economic Growth and Forest Protection. WB. Available through https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/175211468257358269/pdf/Deforestation-trends-in-the-Congo-Basin-reconciling-economic-growth-and-forest-protection.pdf.

[26] The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP), GEF ID 10208.

[27] For example the GEF7 CBSL used its regional and global leverage to organize a roundtable discussion titled "Towards an enhanced methodological

approach for land use planning that integrates systems thinking and natural capital accounting" in Libreville, Gabon on 8 July 2022, on the margins of the CBFP 19th MoP bringing together key partners and stakeholders with the objective of agreeing on recommendations for harmonizing LUP in the region and integrating systems thinking and natural capital accounting. Source: GEF7 CBSL PIR 2022.

[28] Refer to https://pfbc-cbfp.org/home.html, accessed on 01-May-2023.

[29] With reference to the broad landscapes that had been prioritized under the CARPE II and CARPE III Programs. Full title: Germany - IKI: Securing crucial biodiversity, carbon and water stores in the Congo Basin Peatlands by enabling evidence-based decision making and good governance.

[30] The template for PFD does not require UNEP to develop project outputs for the Program only outcomes. The Regional Child Project however contains a full set of outputs.

[31] See e.g. this map for DRC and another one for Cameroon, just to illustrate the point.

[32] An important body of work on this topic has been e.g. developed by the UNCCD. See e.g. https://www.unccd.int/resources/publications/land-tenure-and-rights-improved-land-management-and-sustainable-development.

[33] Source: UNEP-WCMC (2023). Protected Area Profile for Cameroon from the World Database on Protected Areas, May 2023. Available at: www.protectedplanet.net, accessed on 01-May-23.

[34] See e.g. Ajong Aquilas, Nkwetta et al. (2022).

[35] A Pan-African Conservation Trust (A-PACT)1 - https://apact.africa/docs/A-PACT_Concept-Note_July-2022.pdf

B. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Program Description

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the program as a whole. The program description is expected to cover the key elements of "good project design" in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF's policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the PFD guidance document. (Approximately 10-15 pages) see guidance here

The Congo IP benefits six countries (Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe). Of these, Angola and Sao Tome and Principe are new to the GEF's programmatic approach to conservation initiatives for the Congo Basin, which builds on the achievements of the GEF7 CBSL and expand conservation actions across landscapes through the GEF8 Congo IP. Through approval of the current PFD in GEF8, a total of eight out of the eleven COMIFAC member countries (including Gabon and Republic of the Congo[1]) will then be benefiting from GEF funding for addressing in an integrated way challenges linked to deforestation and forest degradation in the Congo Basin.

Through the uniting power of COMIFAC, stakeholders in the Commissions' member countries will be supported to work together for pursuing ambitious goals relating to the protection and sustainable management of landscapes in one of the world's most important centers of biodiversity—the Congo Basin tropical rainforest biome. These forests also provide home and livelihood to countless forest-dependent people, many of them indigenous, and among them, women who do not sufficiently enjoy the benefits of gender equality and women's empowerment.

The proposed Program Objective is: To improve in the conservation and effective governance of critical landscapes in the Congo Basin Forest Biome.

The Congo IP will achieve this objective **by adopting a barrier-removal approach** based on sound analysis of context, stakes, by effectively engaging stakeholders, and **by focusing on the desired system's transformation** envisaged by the GEF in its Strategy for the current GEF-8 cycle, which are:

· *Expanding protection and nature-based solutions*: New protected areas will be created (e.g. in Equatorial Guinea, where forest protection has remained insufficient) and existing ones will be strengthened. Forest fragmentation will be reduced through a suite of techniques for landscape management.

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· *Valuing natural capital and sustainable resource use:* barriers linked to market failure drivers that fuel deforestation and reduce the return on investment of sustainable land and resource use will be addressed, including by engaging with selected the private sector players, and by empowering Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) through dedicated organization.

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· *Delivering on global commitments / targets*: All participating countries are committed to the high goals of the Rio Conventions and related frameworks. We specifically mention the 2030 Targets of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, in particular Targets 1 and 2, but also others (refer to Table 6 for a thorough reference on how the policy guidance from Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is reflected in the Program's strategy). Additionally, countries and the regional bloc's commitments under other Rio Conventions are also integrated into the IP's strategy. By acting together, countries will have the opportunity to expand the scale of implementation through transboundary and cross-country collaboration, collective and mutual learning, and through the adoption of innovation. The Regional Coordination Child Project will work with COMIFAC to facilitate this process of collective contribution to global environment agenda linked to the implementation of Rio Conventions.

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· *Supportive national frameworks:* Pervasive barriers to improved forest governance will be addressed through supporting frameworks. The IP will build on the work already started under the GEF-7 CBSL IP by addressing gaps in legislation, policies and practices, and also by exploring transboundary collaborative opportunities.

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Land use policies and practices are at the heart of the Congo IP's main proposition. The necessary baseline study on policy analysis will be conducted during the PPG. For now, it is worth mentioning a cursory and dynamic analysis based on science and empirical evidence from countries that is titled Conservation Effectiveness and it is spearheaded by Mongabay. During the PPG, it will serve as a starting point for further analysis.

Examples of policies and legal frameworks that favor effective forest governance at the regional, national and transfrontier level would be those that are supportive of the implementation of Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework related to the effective conservation and management of at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas by 2030.

Additionally, the UNCCD has developed a suite of resources for addressing land tenure governance, which apply also to forests (see e.g. https://www.unccd.int/land-and-life/land-tenure/resources). These will be reflected in the design of regional and country level activities.

The Program's Theory of Change (TOC), developed further down, considered possible pathways that are viable to be pursued within the scope of the Program for addressing some of the policy, institutional and market-related barriers to a more effective forest governance.

Theory of Change: Main Diagram And Description (Reference to ToC Figure)

The core of the Program's Theory of Change (TOC) is represented in Figure 8, which must be read/interpreted **from the bottom up.**

The Main TOC Diagram in Figure 8 includes all key elements of the Program's TOC. These are:

- The Core Problem
- Baseline & The Solution
- Barriers (to the Solution)
- Core Program Strategy
- Limits of Scope
- The long-term perspective & Global Level Goals

More details on **'The Core Problem'**, **'The Baseline & The Solution'** and the Program's **'Barriers'** were presented in Section A (Program Rationale),

The "**Core Problem**" that is addressed by this IP is the **"loss and degradation of forests in the Congo Basin"**. This is extensively mentioned in Section A, and in the description of **Threats** and **"Barriers"**. Forest loss and degradation are driven by unsustainable land and resource use governance. The governance aspect is explicitly mentioned in the Main TOC Diagram > The Core Problem (Figure 8). Examples of the unsustainable forest-level dynamics that prevail in the Congo Basin had been included in Figure 6 and discussed in the narrative included in the initial sections of this document which explains the causal pathways behind the threats and how they translate into impacts. The narrative also includes with recent scientific evidence, which point out the macro and micro economic drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in the Congo Basin.

In sum, **anthropic activities** that involve 'infrastructure extension`, 'agricultural expansion' and 'wood extraction' result in **direct loss of biodiversity and in the degradation of ecosystems** in the forest of the Congo Basin. This is the main message behind Figure 6, which describes the threats and is also part of the TOC. It also indicates that the **direct threats to biodiversity** can be many and also contextual. Yet, for the sake of modelling, threats affecting biodiversity in the Congo Basin were categorized as the belonging to the following ones[2]:

- Land-use change / habitat loss
- Overexploitation of biological resources
- Pollution
- Invasive Alien Species (IAS)
- Climate change
- Disease

Besides threats to biodiversity, we also have **threats to ecosystem services** affected by the mentioned anthropic activities. They can also be varied and many, and are also contextual: e.g. those relating to the water cycle, nutrient transportation and various provisioning services, among others. Yet, we highlight '**forest carbon** as prominent ecosystem service that will be monitored through this program, to the extent that the forests' carbon sink function is expected to increase in project sites as a result of conservation activities, and also to the extent that this function is threated by deforestation and forest degradation.

Threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services associated with deforestation and forest degradation impact the **soil, water, biomass, ecosystems, and on human well-being and food systems** – this is also represented in the TOC model in Figure 8 – and so is the **"Baseline"**. Here, it stands for the current *status quo* (refer to section **Incremental Reasoning** for description), as well as to the various programs, projects and initiatives that compose the Program's '**Baseline Finance**" (refer to section herein with the same name).

Other factors, including slow-onset climate change, equally influence the TOC model and will influence how the different threats manifest themselves on the Congo Basin's biodiversity and ecosystem services. We highlight in particular the following ones included in Figure 7:

- Predisposing environmental factors (land characteristics, for example, soil quality, topography, forest fragmentation, etc.)
- Social trigger events (for example, war, revolution, social disorder, abrupt displacements, economic shocks, abrupt policy shifts)
- Biophysical drivers (triggers, for example, fires, droughts, floods, pests)

Certain aspects of the programming context in the Congo Basin are included in the TOC's model as part of the Baseline. Yet not all of them can be *directly* addressed by the Program – in particular the **"Pervasive & Systemic Drivers"** that apply: Demographic pressures, widespread poverty and gender inequality, plus systemically low levels of capacity within government institutions and low levels of education among the population.

It should be mentioned that all Child Projects under the GEF-8 Congo IP, including the Coordination Child Project, are expected to address pervasive gender inequality through their respective conservation activities, to ensure the inclusion and effective participation of women, youth and other less dominant groups. Yet, the Program alone cannot address systemic gender inequality in Program countries more broadly. There are obviously limits to scope.

It is important to pay attention to Pervasive & Systemic Drivers, but it is even more important to have clarity on what the program will be able to deliver in spite of these drivers.

For this reason **"Limits to Scope"** were included in the TOC model, namely by drawing a line between the stated "**Objective"** and '**The long-term perspective & Global Level Goals**'. The Program will indeed *contribute* to these goals, but not be accountable for delivering them.

The Long-term vision, whose box is placed above the Accountability Line in Figure 8, is thus formulated: "Maintain the integrity of globally important intact tropical forests in the Congo Basin through conservation and effective governance.", drawing inspiration from the GEF-8 Strategy. The primary Global Goal is linked to the CBD's Post 2020 Framework, but other related targets were also considered and represented in Figure 8, e.g. under the UNFCCC and UNCCD, as well as under other CBD related MEAs.

Long-term Impacts in the Congo Basin, also placed above the Program's Accountability Line, includes the following results, if the entire Congo Basin is considered:

- Strengthened forest protection, ecological connectivity and improved governance of intact forest landscapes
- Integrated water management is more widespread.
- Forest protecting IPLCs receive an equitable share of conservation benefits

· Pervasive gender inequality is addressed through conservation programs and projects.

The Program will deliver on the above, to some degree that is measurable through the Program's indicators, but the longer-term sustainability of results depends on a number of factors, some of which are outside the control of Program stakeholders. We mention therefore two **Extant Drivers**, which are currently considered relevant and were placed right above the **Congo IP's Accountability Line**:

Extant Driver 1) Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, other diseases outbreaks, climatic and other global/regional level shocks.

Extant Driver 2) Variations in the global prices of oil, minerals and food commodities.

These drivers can have either positive or negative developments vis-à-vis the Program's objective. It is difficult to predict, but important to monitor them, as well as other emerging trends that may later be included in the Program as extant drivers.

The current expectation is that **Extant drivers 1, and 2 will not become risks to the achievement of the project's goal** or to its contribution to long-term objectives. Stable or positive developments with these drivers function therefore as pre-conditions for the Program's contribution to **"The Long-Term Impacts"** and '**Global Goals"**.

The Program will need to monitor both the 'Pervasive & Systemic Drivers', as well as other Drivers, for any negative or positive change during implementation. For now, the Program is considered viable despite these drivers.

On a more hopeful note, a statement on **"Long-term Development Drivers"** is included in the TOC's System and placed well above the accountability line, with general contributions to the **"The Long-Term Impacts"** and **"Global Goals"**. It reads: Socio-economic development in Congo Basin countries tends toward gradual poverty reduction and increased income per capita, with positive impacts on development indicators and on national capacity more broadly.

Still concerning the 'The Long-Term Impacts' and 'Global Goals', the so-called **"Transformation Levers"** are equally mentioned in the 'system' represented in the TOC model. These levers are the same that were included in the GEF-8

Strategy and their relationship to the TOC's Barriers is clearly represented in Figure 7, including through color coding. They are:

- Governance and policies
- Financial leverage
- Innovation and learning
- Multi-stakeholder dialogues

Governance for the conservation of nature seeks a balance between the requirements of human and economic development and those of conserving biological diversity. The policy and practice of conservation have always been enmeshed with the struggles for 'power over nature' that have unfolded throughout history. Considerations of governance—that is, who holds de facto power, authority and responsibility to take and implement decisions—are crucial for the conservation of nature. Governance for the conservation[3].

According to WWF in their "Guide to Conservation Finance" (2009), the availability of conservation finance generates new, long-term, and diversified sources of revenue for conservation. Professionals in this field work with stakeholders ranging from local communities to large multilateral finance institutions, private corporations, and country governments. They support conservation work that extends across ecoregions, landscapes, ecological hotspots, protected area networks, and large terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine areas. The purpose is to create revenue that can play a major role in ensuring biodiversity conservation, sometimes in perpetuity. The coordination child project will exploit the resources of the WWF published guidance and other available documentation, to support the countries and the region to leverage on conservation finance.

The innovation and learning will be an important part of the knowledge management of the project. Key initiatives worldwide and resources will be exploited to provide the region and countries with innovative tools and approach to support their conservation efforts.

The Multi-stakeholders' dialogues started in GEF 7 and during the GEF 8 Consultation with stakeholders will be strengthen and will serve avenue for inclusive design and implementation of the program. During the PPG phase and within the framework of the Child Coordination Project, stakeholders' involvement plan will be developed and implemented to ensure participation and inclusivity in the program implementation.

The **Desired System's Transformation** mentioned in GEF-8 for all the "Nature IPs" include the following:

- Expanding protection and nature-based solutions
- Valuing natural capital and sustainable resource use
- Delivering on global commitments / targets

· Supportive national frameworks

The expectation is that, with the Program, the Transformation Levers will develop positively and the 'System's Desired Transformation' will be closer to reality. Both the Desired System's Transformation and the 'Transformation Levers' have inspired the formulation of '**Components/Outcomes"** and '**Barriers"**, departing from the 'Long-Term Solution'.

As per Figure 7, the stated **Program Objective** is achievable by working on the GEF's proposed Transformational Levers through a barrier removal approach.

However, a number of *pre-conditions* need to be in place for this to happen. These are represented by the **Assumptions,** placed in different spots of Figure 8. Nine Assumptions were carefully formulated and are specific to the Congo IP. Refer to Assumptions' formulations further up. Differently from the Extant Drivers, these are totally within the TOC's System (i.e. below the Accountability Line).

The relationships between **Assumptions**, **Barriers** and **Components / Outcomes** in Figure 8 are thus summarized:

· **Assumptions 1 and 2** are pre-conditions for **Component 1 Outcome (color red)** overcoming **Barriers 1, 2 and 3**. These relate to political will supporting the program and developments in sectoral policies being favorable to the achievement of the IP's conservation goals.

· **Assumptions 3 and 5** are pre-conditions for **Component 2 Outcome (color blue)** overcoming **Barriers 3, 4 and 5**. These relate to negative incentives/subsidies, which could pose risk if they cannot be addressed, and the availability of conservation-friendly innovation and learning.

· **Assumptions 4 and 5** are pre-conditions for **Component 3 Outcome (color green)** overcoming **Barriers 3, 4 and 6**. It is also linked to the availability of conservation-friendly innovation and learning, but most importantly to the effective engagement of stakeholders, without which activities relating to governance, innovation and market could face problems.

· **Assumption 6** is a pre-condition for **Component 4 Outcome (color pink)** overcoming **Barriers 3 and 6**. The assumption is directly linked to the availability of finance for the program, but equally on governance and capacity and gender issues reflected in the mentioned barriers not representing a risk.

· **Assumption 4** is a pre-condition for **Component 5 Outcome (color yellow)** overcoming **Barriers 4 and 6**. These relate to capacity, knowledge and collaboration among stakeholders, including at the regional level.

Finally, **Assumptions 7, 8 and 9** could undermine the entire Program if they do not remain sufficiently valid (i.e. the risk of their non-realization is brought down to 'low'). Therefore, they are placed between the Components / Outcome and the Program Objective:

· **Assumption 7** recognizes that there is competition for land and at times social cohesion can break-down in the Congo Region. Yet, the assumption considers that this will not undermine accountability in social relations.

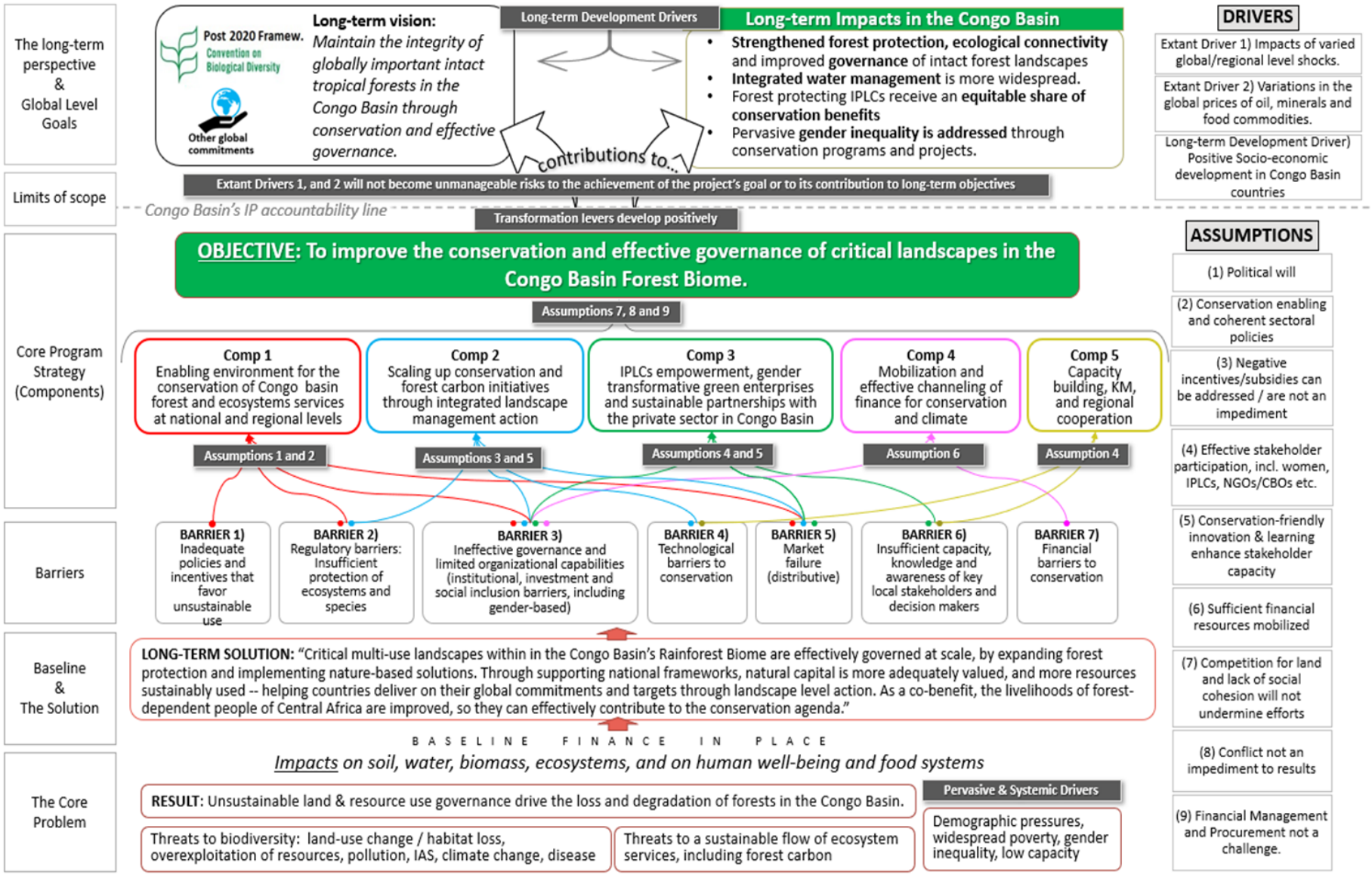
· **Assumption 8** relates to the conflict in the Congo Basin, most prominently in the east of the DRC and noting that Program sites for the Program were selected elsewhere in the country. Assumption 8 states that localized conflict in the Congo Basin will not become an impediment to the realization of key programmatic results.

· Lastly, **Assumption 9** relates to Financial Management and Procurement. Often there are delays and challenges, but it is assumed that they can be overcome.

All assumptions would become project risks if they do not remain sufficiently valid. Project risks have therefore been proposed namely on the basis of the eight assumptions not realizing, and the risk level thereafter analyzed.

Figure 8. TOC model – Main Diagram including all elements of the Program's Theory of Change (version of 16-May-2023)

[See next page]


The long-term perspective & Global Level Goals
Limits of scope
Core Program Strategy (Components)
Barriers
Baseline & The Solution
The Core Problem
Post 2020 Framew.
Convention on Biological Diversity
Other global commitments
Long-term vision:
Maintain the integrity of globally important intact tropical forests in the Congo Basin through conservation and effective governance.
Long-term Development Drivers
Long-term Impacts in the Congo Basin
Strengthened forest protection, ecological connectivity and improved governance of intact forest landscapes
Integrated water management is more widespread.
Forest protecting IPLCs receive an equitable share of conservation benefits
Pervasive gender inequality is addressed through conservation programs and projects.
contributions to...
DRIVERS
Extant Driver 1) Impacts of varied global/regional level shocks.
Extant Driver 2) Variations in the global prices of oil, minerals and food commodities.
Long-term Development Driver) Positive Socio-economic development in Congo Basin countries
Extant Drivers 1, and 2 will not become unmanageable risks to the achievement of the project's goal or to its contribution to long-term objectives
Congo Basin's IP accountability line
Transformation levers develop positively
OBJECTIVE: To improve the conservation and effective governance of critical landscapes in the Congo Basin Forest Biome.
ASSUMPTIONS
(1) Political will
(2) Conservation enabling and coherent sectoral policies
(3) Negative incentives/subsidies can be addressed / are not an impediment
(4) Effective stakeholder participation, incl. women, IPLCs, NGOs/CBOs etc.
(5) Conservation-friendly innovation & learning enhance stakeholder capacity
(6) Sufficient financial resources mobilized
(7) Competition for land and lack of social cohesion will not undermine efforts
(8) Conflict not an impediment to results
(9) Financial Management and Procurement not a challenge.
Assumptions 7, 8 and 9
Comp 1 Enabling environment for the conservation of Congo basin forest and ecosystems services at national and regional levels
Comp 2 Scaling up conservation and forest carbon initiatives through integrated landscape management action
Comp 3 IPLCs empowerment, gender transformative green enterprises and sustainable partnerships with the private sector in Congo Basin
Comp 4 Mobilization and effective channeling of finance for conservation and climate
Comp 5 Capacity building, KM, and regional cooperation
Assumptions 1 and 2
Assumptions 3 and 5
Assumptions 4 and 5
Assumption 6
Assumption 4
BARRIER 1) Inadequate policies and incentives that favor unsustainable use
BARRIER 2) Regulatory barriers: Insufficient protection of ecosystems and species
BARRIER 3) Ineffective governance and limited organizational capabilities (institutional, investment and social inclusion barriers, including gender-based)
BARRIER 4) Technological barriers to conservation
BARRIER 5) Market failure (distributive)
BARRIER 6) Insufficient capacity, knowledge and awareness of key local stakeholders and decision makers
BARRIER 7) Financial barriers to conservation
LONG-TERM SOLUTION: "Critical multi-use landscapes within in the Congo Basin's Rainforest Biome are effectively governed at scale, by expanding forest protection and implementing nature-based solutions. Through supporting national frameworks, natural capital is more adequately valued, and more resources sustainably used -- helping countries deliver on their global commitments and targets through landscape level action. As a co-benefit, the livelihoods of forest-dependent people of Central Africa are improved, so they can effectively contribute to the conservation agenda."
BASELINE FINANCE IN PLACE
Impacts on soil, water, biomass, ecosystems, and on human well-being and food systems
RESULT: Unsustainable land & resource use governance drive the loss and degradation of forests in the Congo Basin.
Threats to biodiversity: land-use change / habitat loss, overexploitation of resources, pollution, IAS, climate change, disease
Threats to a sustainable flow of ecosystem services, including forest carbon
Pervasive & Systemic Drivers
Demographic pressures, widespread poverty, gender inequality, low capacity

TOC Assumptions (full text):

(1) Regional collaboration, national levels governance and political will are supportive of IP implementation

(2) National and regional sectoral policies favor the IP's conservation goals

(3) Negative incentives/subsidies for the IP's conservation goals can be sufficiently addressed through Program level action.

(4) Key stakeholders, including women, IPLCs, NGOs/CBOs and other conservation-friendly non-dominant groups can effectively participate in the program and benefit from activities.

(5) Conservation-friendly innovation and learning (including technology, data, business models, systems and tools) are sufficiently available to key stakeholders for enhancing their capacity.

(6) Sufficient financial resources are mobilized for achieving the goals of the Congo IP

(7) Competition for land and a possible break-down of social cohesion at the local level will not undermine conservation efforts on the ground.

(8) Localized conflict in the Congo Basin will not become an impediment to the realization of key programmatic results.

(9) Challenges linked to Financial Management and Procurement can be overcome.

TOC Drivers (full text):

-

Pervasive & Systemic Drivers) Demographic pressures, widespread poverty and gender inequality, plus systemicall y low levels of capacity within government institutions and low levels of education among the population.

Extant Driver 1) Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, other diseases outbreaks, climatic and other global/regional le vel shocks.

Extant Driver 2) Variations in the global prices of oil, minerals and food commodities.

Long-term Development Driver) Socio-economic development in Congo Basin countries tends toward gradual pov erty reduction and increased income per capita, with positive impacts on development indicators and on national cap acity more broadly.

Incremental reasoning

The project seeks to invest in the conservation and effective governance of critical landscapes in the Congo Basin Forest Biome that contribute to sustaining the health of the planet and flow of vital ecosystem services and support green recovery, and inclusive sustainable development initiatives.

In the Baseline Scenario:

There is a strong baseline of government investment / expenditure in conservation, and several projects and programs aligned with forest conservation goals, but there is also a good degree of policy incoherence across countries and in the region (e.g. supporting the expansion of mining and commercial agriculture sectors with clear detrimental effects on conservation efforts in the same areas).

Without the Program:

· There would not be adequate land planning at national level, neither at regional or local levels, leading to resource use conflict, deforestation and forest degradation.

· Decisions and policies that favor increased output in agricultural sectors of Congo Basin countries would remain a strong driver of deforestation.

· Small-scale farmers and forest dwellers, women included, would remain poor, marginalized and without access to the means and technologies to make more sustainable decisions on land-use, which at scale can determine the fate of the forest.

· Local governments would continue not to have the capacity, knowledge and awareness to help IPLC make more sustainable decisions, including decisions that help enforce land and resource use in protected areas and other high conservation value forests.

· Land use would continue to be unsustainable, driven by market forces and, in some instances also by market failure. The value of forest landscapes will not be sufficiently known or realized. With continued low resource rents and unclear land tenure frameworks, the status quo of deforestation and forest degradation will continue.

· Value chains that depend on forest would continue to be unsustainable (to use resources beyond their regeneration capacity and without regard for the needs of the new generations or global society more broadly).

· Partnerships for conservation will not be sufficiently developed. The status quo of deforestation and forest degradation will continue.

· The funds that are necessary for conserving selected forests in the Congo Basin (especially the most intact and critical forests), and for implementing a transformative approach to conservation across the region and with global support, will not be available. The status quo of deforestation and forest degradation would once more continue.

Without the Regional Coordination Child Project to support Program implementation, technical assistance for implementing adequate land planning at national level would not be available. Decisions and policies that favor increased output in agricultural sectors of Congo Basin countries would remain a strong driver of deforestation. Innovation at scale and sustainable income generating activities would not reach small-scale farmers and forest dwellers in the Basin, women included. Local governments would not benefit from targeted capacity development initiatives for conservation. The capacity, knowledge and awareness to help IPLC make more sustainable decisions on land use would remain limited. The value of forest landscapes will not be sufficiently known or realized. Unregulated market forces will continue to drive deforestation and degradation. With continued low resource rents and unclear land tenure frameworks, the status quo of deforestation and forest degradation will continue. Partnerships for conservation will not be sufficiently developed and the funds that are necessary for conserving selected forests in the Congo Basin (especially the most intact and critical forests) will not be sufficiently mobilized.

In the Alternative Scenario

The Congo IP will leverage investment to improve the conservation and effective governance of critical landscapes in the Congo Basin Forest Biome, in line with inclusive sustainable development principles and policies and consistently pursuing the Program's objective. A total of 207,000, people are expected to benefit from the Congo IP, of whom 106,000 are women.

More specifically, with the Program:

· Assessments and targeted studies that uncover the role of sectoral policies and legal frameworks in fueling deforestation and forest degradation will be conducted, bringing clarity and awareness to the process of decision-making that influence land use and determine the outcome for the forests – especially of the most intact and critical forests of the Congo Basin.

· There will be more awareness on the role of land tenure policies and relationships, including of the less obvious gendered aspects in these policies and

related frameworks.

· Land use competition affecting critical forests will be attenuated with positive effects on the grounds, including as a result of new legislation, regulations and other mechanisms of landscape management. The Program will foster and support the establishment and management of protected areas, which will be strengthening, as well as corridors and other forms of other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs).

· A more transparent, inclusive, gender-transformative and well-informed multi-stakeholder decision making processes regarding forests will be put in place, starting at the country level – and considering the stakes of IPLCs and several stakeholders, and also involving policy-makers, planners, advocacy groups and leaders (including from the private sector). The Program will also reach out to federative institutions at the regional level such as COMIFAC, ECCAS, as well as investors, so that the expected transformative effect of IP implementation can be effective.

· Addressing competing land uses and pressure on a more informed and negotiated basis will eventually allow the successful integration of multiple objectives for different types of land uses and tenure across landscapes—conserving critical and intact forests and reconciling agricultural, forest and other sectoral objectives with conservation through. Suitable approaches to LUP, zoning, enforcement and incentives / benefits distribution will be applied for maximizing the conservation outcome.

· Most importantly, the Program will enhance the mechanisms through which IPLCs, women's groups, youth groups, advocacy groups for environment and inclusive development actually receive an equitable share of the conservation benefit by gaining enhanced access to conservation finance, and by developing strategic and sustainable partnerships for the purpose.

· Initiatives that conserve and restore the landscape will be implemented, along with strengthened protected area management.

· The effective engagement of a wide range of stakeholders in developing sustainable value chains from forests will be crucial for the conservation and restoration efforts foreseen under Component 2. A local economy based conserved forests will emerge through the empowerment of local communities, forest dependent people (indigenous people included), and partnering with the private sector will help bring these to fruition.

· The effective mobilization of finance for conservation, including with the leverage that can be obtained at the regional level, will ensure that the Program can fulfil its mandate. There will be numerous opportunities for countries individually and collectively to implement mechanisms of conservation finance and to have a solid financial plan for protecting, sustainably using and restoring forest biodiversity.

· A well-coordinated regional program will catalyze and facilitate a number of processes for the benefit of countries and all stakeholders more broadly. Exchanges among countries and take holders will help build the capacity on topics related to the conservation of forests in the Congo Basin. Learning will be enhanced, including through contact and events involving other IPs across the globe (in the Amazon or Southeast Asia).

With the Regional Coordination Child Project, a regionally-based team will provide support for catalyzing investments in the conservation and effective governance of critical landscapes in the Congo Basin Forest Biome, in line with inclusive sustainable development principles and policies. The availability of critical studies, assessment, and direct technical assistance support will make a difference for the progress of other Child Projects under the Program. Through broad and inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogues, there will be more awareness on the role of land tenure policies and relationships, including gendered aspects of it. There will be a better understanding of the mechanism that result in land use competition affecting critical forests. Key stakeholders in participating countries will have collective leverage to negotiate with the private sector, especially the large agribusiness corporations that are behind the expansion of agriculture for commodities that fuel deforestation. Contractual frameworks and models for different types of PA management plans will be made available and improved through the work of specialized technical assistance working at the regional and global levels. Support for the establishment and strengthened management of protected areas will be available, when the needs surpass the capacity of national projects. Protected area design will be improved with

dedicated GIS services, so that corridors and other forms of other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) can complement the current sub-system of PA (targeted or not by the Program). *Most importantly,* the Coordination Child Project will be directly responsible for enhancing and facilitating the mechanisms through which IPLCs, women's groups, youth groups, advocacy groups for environment and inclusive development actually receive an equitable share of the conservation benefit, by gaining enhanced access to conservation finance, as well as climate finance, and by developing strategic and sustainable partnerships for the purpose. The effective engagement of a wide range of stakeholders in the Program, as well as exchanges among them, will have a stronger chance of success. The effective mobilization of finance for conservation, including with the leverage that can be obtained at the regional and global levels, will ensure that the Program can fulfil its mandate. In sum, a well-coordinated regional program will catalyze and facilitate a number of processes for the benefit of countries and all stakeholders more broadly.

The GEF's Increment

Multiple environmental benefits will be generated through the implementation of the Congo IP, including its five national Child Projects and a Regional one. The integrated approach ensures that multiple GEBs are maximized. The Program will also ensure the resilience of its results to the effects of climate change, adapting as needed.

The program's differential:

As a result of implementing the GEF-8 Congo IP, forest conservation effectiveness and connectivity across broad landscapes will be enhanced in the Congo Basin region, including in areas containing critical forest ecosystems (habitats for and iconic threatened species), and noting that many of these areas displaying a relatively high degree of intactness. At least 15 forest landscapes sites will be targeted by the Congo IP, encompassing approx. 22.1 million ha of broad landscapes with mixed use. Among the mentioned forest landscapes, transborder connectivity with protected areas in neighboring countries will be possible.

Within forest landscapes sites, it will be ensured that the Congo IP should be an important contributor to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity and that the target under OECM (sub-indicator 4.5) should be an important indicator under it, the Congo IP will report GEBs in approx. 3.3 million ha, as follows:

- Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use: 1,056,794 ha (Core Indicator 1).
- Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas) 2,122,608 ha (Core Indicator 4)
- Area of land restored: 94,923 ha (Core Indicator 3).
- As a result, climate mitigation co-benefits potentially amount to 111.7 million metric tons of CO_2e from avoided deforestation, avoided forest degradation and land restoration, considering a 20-year perspective and uncertainty (Core Indicator 6 on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated).
- Additionally, a small marine area is included in Obô National Park in Sao Tome and Principe, and 917 ha of Marine protected under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Core Indicator 2) as this will help reduce pressure on natural forests.
- Finally, investments leveraged by the Congo IP will contribute to sustaining the health of the planet and, at the country level, to a stronger flow of vital ecosystem services, supporting green recovery, and inclusive sustainable development initiatives.

The Increment for the Coordination Child Project: It will indirectly support the Congo Basin IP to produce GEBs. Else, the Project's increment is linked to the collaborative framework that will be catalyzed at the regional and global levels, including by exchanging lessons with other Critical Biome Programs. For example, the Coordination Child Project will support participating countries to connect with the CBD in view of optimizing the way that they report to the Global Biodiversity Framework, noting that the Congo Basin IP is expected to make important contributions to the CBD Framework's Target 3. In the same spirit, the Coordination Child Project will assist countries in preparing forest climate investment packages and associated mechanisms that are currently on-going and others under development (biodiversity credits, Positive Conservation Partnerships, Project Finance for Permanence, etc.). The Regional Coordination Child Project will also have a role both in supporting the concerned countries and interacting with external stakeholders. The coordination project will also support communication and awareness raising both at regional and national level through implementation of a communication plan/strategy (to be developed at PPG stage) which will target sharing of results, awareness raising and linking the program including the child projects with the regional and national government structures.

Based on the proposed barrier removal approach, five **Program Components** serve to organize the project strategy, under which Programmatic Outcomes are expected to be produced. The realization of Program Outcomes under the components depends on the solidity of TOC assumptions that have been currently proposed for the Program (next section). The validity of these assumptions and of extant and systemic drivers is expected to be monitored throughout implementation.

An indicative set of Program level indicators are also proposed herein. They are expected to aggregate Project-level M&E indicators and data. Alignment between national Child Projects and the Program-level M&E will be developed during the PPG, along with a refinement of these indicators. The fully-fledged M&E Framework for the IP will be also developed after the PPG process and appended to the CEO Endorsement submission of the Regional Coordination Child Project.

Program Objective:	To improve the conservation and effective governance of critical landscapes in the Congo Basin Tropical Rainforest Biome.

Component 1) Enabling environment for the conservation of Congo Basin forests and ecosystems at national and regional levels

Outcome 1) Policies and regulatory frameworks that enhance conservation, forest carbon sequestration and effective forest governance in critical landscapes

> *Measured by:*
>
> *# of changes to policies and legal frameworks that favor effective forest governance in critical landscapes in participating countries and at*

> *the regional and tranfrontier levels (independently assessed by mid-term and end of Program duration)*
>
> *# of people, disaggregated by gender, trained on useful policy transformation tools for developing effective forest governance in critical landscapes*
>
> *# of regional / cross-border conservation initiatives supported by the project*

The Congo IP will promote forest governance by focusing on policy coherence under Component 1. Outputs and activities under it will develop and strengthen policies and regulatory frameworks that enhance conservation, forest carbon sequestration – delivering thereby the key building blocks of effective forest governance in critical landscapes. Assessments and targeted studies that uncover the role of legal frameworks sectoral policies (e.g. local forest concessions, mining, agricultural commodities) in either fueling or avoiding deforestation and forest degradation will be conducted. This will help bring clarity and awareness to the process of decision-making that influence land use and determine the outcome for the forests – especially of the most intact and critical forests of the Congo Basin. More specifically, the Program will:

· Support country level stakeholders towards leading processes that result in improved policies and regulatory frameworks for effective forest & water governance across mixed-use landscapes.
· Focus on promoting broad and accessible consultative platforms for the Congo Basin IP focuses for multi-stakeholder dialogue on improved forest governance
· Support COMIFAC, ECCAs and other supra-national bodies for promoting agendas of policy and regulatory reform both at the regional and national levels(e.g. for addressing issues of policy coherence perverse subsidies to forest impacting sectors)
· Enhance and develop the capacity of key stakeholders for analyzing and promoting effective forest & water governance across mixed-use landscapes is enhanced through training and access to useful analytical tools for effective conservation governance (LUP, Natural Capital Accounting, SEA, EIA, etc.)

Component 2) Scaling up conservation and forest carbon initiatives through integrated landscape management action

Outcome 2) Strategic actions implemented for reducing deforestation / forest degradation and restoring ecosystem services scaled up in multiple landscapes across participating countries

> *Measured by:*
>
> *Systematic monitoring of socio-environmental and economic impacts (positive and negative) of landscape level initiatives in participating countries – proposed in partnership with the Conservation Effectiveness initiative*

> *# of hectares of forests in effectively protected, managed or restored areas with associated forest carbon sequestration (detailed reporting against GEF Core Indicators 1, 4 and 3 respectively, supported by a robust and publicly available data collection system)*
>
> *# of tons of CO2 sequestered through integrated management action at the landscape level (detailed reporting against GEF Core Indicator 6, supported by a robust and publicly available data collection system)*
>
> *# of people, disaggregated by gender and other meaningful segmentations, engaged the application of NCA and other useful tools*
>
> *# of regional / cross-border conservation initiatives supported by the project*
>
> *Establishment of a robust system for consolidated and detailed periodic reporting against GEF Core Indicators 1 (protected area, with ramifications on PA management effectiveness), 4 (improved landscape management), 3 (ecosystem restoration), 6 (forest carbon) and 11 (engagement of program beneficiaries, including women and other relevant groups/segments)*

The Regional coordination Unit of the Congo IPs will work with countries, regional institutions and partners of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP)[4] on valuing natural capital and promoting sustainable resource use across broad landscapes, including by supporting COMIFAC Convergence Plan. The general goal is to expand forest protection and implement relevant nature-based solutions, in line with the proposed Elements in the Desired System's Transformation in GEF8 relating to the "Nature IPs".

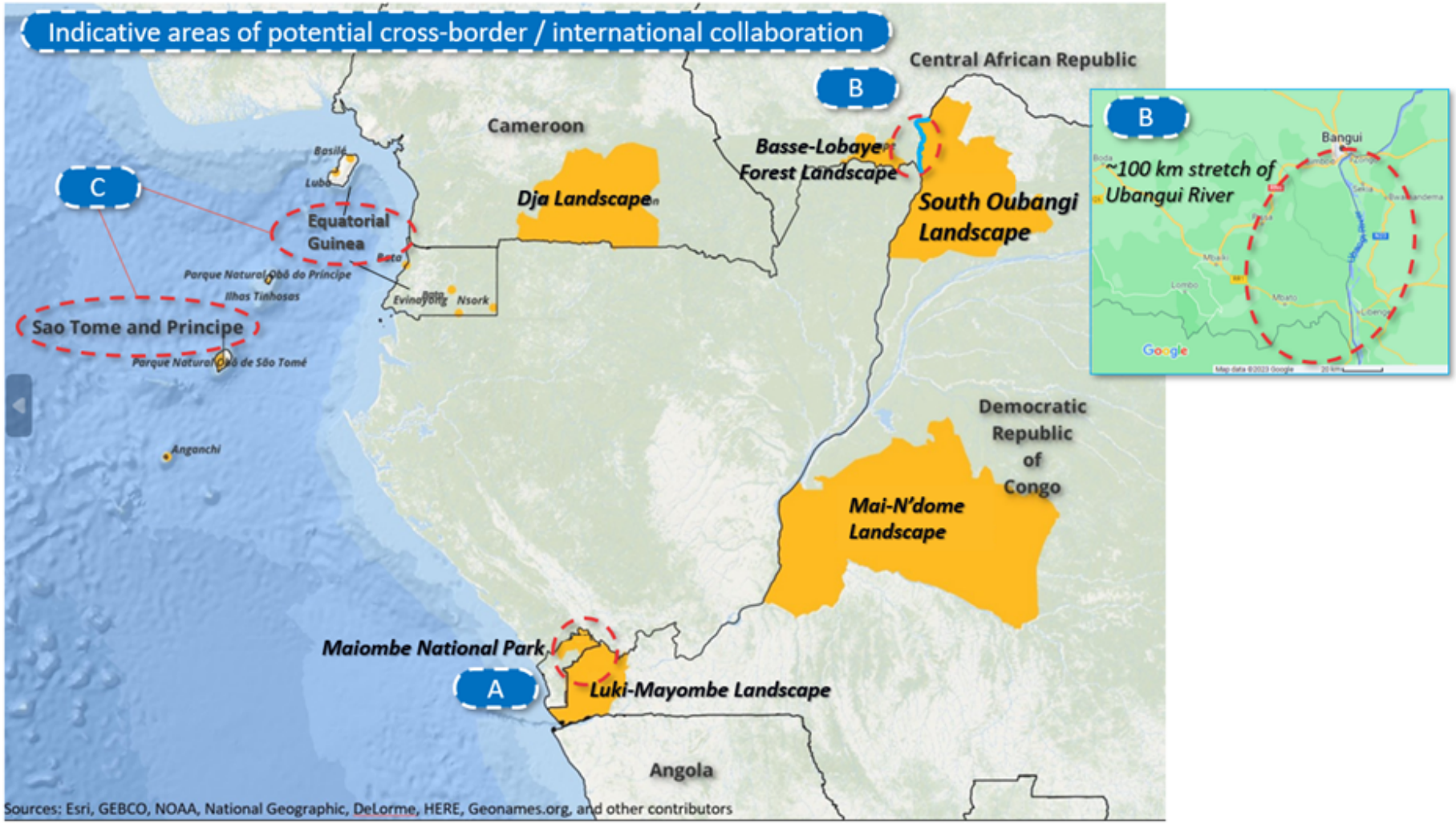
More specifically, under Component 2, the Congo IP will support strategic and scaled-up actions that reduce deforestation and forest degradation, and restore ecosystem services in multiple landscapes across participating countries -- e.g. by assisting countries to prepare forest climate investment packages and associated mechanisms that are currently on-going and others under development (biodiversity credits, Positive Conservation Partnerships, Project Finance for Permanence, etc.). The regional additionality enabled by the programmatic approach will help countries work together and jointly address competing land uses and pressure on a more informed and negotiated basis. Through specific methodologies, a more transparent, inclusive, gender-transformative and well-informed multi-stakeholder decision making processes regarding forests will then be put in place, starting at the country level and considering the stakes of IPLCs and several other stakeholders. It will also involve policy-makers, planners, advocacy groups and leaders—including from the private sector—as well as investors and federative institutions at the regional level such as COMIFAC.

A key contribution from an integrated regional approach will be methodological stringency, in particular in the collection of data to inform Program-level outcomes and project indicators. The integrated regional approach will also be crucial for helping countries mainstream socio-environmental safeguards in the different initiatives relating to forests. Another key contribution will be through the enhancement of opportunities for countries to collaborate and scale up national level interventions. In the Regional Child Project, Output 2.1 is e.g. concerned with developing joint conservation agreements among countries in selected sites or based on thematic collaborations that are mutually interesting. Box 1 further down contain more details and Figure 9 illustrates the content through a map.

Under Component 2, work will also be done on the ecosystem valuation studies and their practical application fill in gaps in selected location to address marked failure and perverse incentives. Congo IP countries are also expected to capitalize on best practices related to other Nature IPs funded by the GEF. The practical implementation of fully fledged PES in Central Africa is still considered risky and challenging, but South-South exchanges relating respect to methodologies for promoting national and cross-border PES schemes would be viable and desirable.

Finally, there are two themes that are planned under the GEF7 CBSL IP, but which could also benefit the additional countries of GEF8 (Angola and São Tomé and Príncipe). They are: (i) The fight against illegal wildlife crime addressed through collaborative international approaches; and (ii) Regional/Global Dialogues on key commodities promoted: Palm oil, cocoa, timber and others relevant ones.

Figure 9. Sites for the Congo Basin IP and indicative sites for cross-border or international collaboration among Congo Basin IP participating countries



Box 1. Ideas for joint conservation agreements and/or collaboration among countries under the Congo IP

Collaboration A) Angola - Democratic Republic of the Congo

***Targeted landscapes:* Luki-Mayombe Landscape (DRC) and Maiombe National Park Landscape (Angola)**

At the regional level, the Program will support the collaboration between support collaboration through Mayombe Transfrontier Initiative between Angola, DRC, R. Congo, and Gabon, and through support to the implementation of key result areas indicated in the Mayombe Transfrontier Protected Area (TPA). The Program for the Mayombe TPA was developed through extensive stakeholder consultations at all levels, and adopted by all four governments in 2013. If needed, countries will be also able to effectively engage in joint faunal surveys (e.g. primates, elephants), data sharing and open data publishing, implementation of certain elements of the existing integrated land use plan for the landscape.

Priority regional-level activities to be supported through include: facilitating transboundary and multi-sectorial inter-agency collaboration in law enforcement, including joint capacity building for combating wildlife and forest crime; ecological monitoring and deployment of conservation technologies; and enhancing local communities' collaboration, peer-assist learning and exchange in addressing key concerns, such as the development of sustainable economic activities, access to education, vocational education and employment opportunities.

In Angola: The Child project will help with: Harmonizing legal and policy frameworks; Establishing institutional frameworks and a participatory approach for the transboundary collaboration; Spatial planning for sustainable management of the Mayombe forest TPA; Sustainable economic development, with focus on local communities; Collaboration in law enforcement; Awareness, education, and technical capacity building; Exploring mechanisms to establish financial sustainability, and; Collaboration in research and ecological monitoring.

In DRC: Support collaboration between DRC and Angola in the sustainable management of the Luki-Mayombe Landscape and the Maiombe National Park, notably through integrated landscape planning, carrying out wildlife surveys (elephants) and joint patrols as well as sharing of research data.

Collaboration B) Democratic Republic of the Congo – Central African Republic

***Targeted landscapes:* Ubangui river, with a focus om a 100-km stretch between the two targeted landscapes (Basse Lobaye amd South Oubangui)**

International level: Both DRC and CAR have accessed International Waters (IW) funds through their respective C hild Project in view of jointly addressing issues linked to a shared landscape bathed by the Ubangui river. Due to the importance of the Ubangui river within the Congo Basin, it is strategic to extend the management of landsca pes to the aquatic environment, including through the use of IW resources. The interventions is a good fit becau se of the proximity of targeted landscapes in the two countries: the South Oubangui Landscape in the DRC and t he Basse-Lobaye Forest Landscape in CAR. The Ubangui river is, however, very long and the funds limited. There fore, interventions will be scoped within a 100-km stretch of the river where the two target landscapes are closer to each other (reference in Figure 9). At the regional level, activities will sstrengthen the cooperation among DRC and CAR and CICOS for the sustainable management of the resources of the Oubangui River, notably the signing of at least one Transboundary Agreement on the sustainable management of the Oubangui Transboundary Wat er.

In CAR: A series of outputs relate to the proposed intervention in CAR's Child Project (2.1, 2.2.3 and 4.2[5]) Activi ties will focus on the sustainable management of water resources within and adjacent to the Ubangi Transboun dary River, mainly because of its importance within the Congo Basin. We will focus on issues such as bilateral p olicy dialogues and exchanges, fundraising, collaborative water resource management between all stakeholder s, including local and indigenous communities, etc.

In DRC: It is expected that the relevant IW activities will function as seed funding aimed at galvanizing the two G overnments and other key actors like local International Commission for the Congo-Ubangui-Sangah (CICOS), IU CN, IFAD, UNEP, local and indigenous communities, to mobilising additional funds to support the sustainable ma nagement of the Ubangui River and its resources.

Collaboration C) São Tomé and Príncipe – Equatorial Guinea

***Proposition:* Technical collaboration and exchanges between peer institutions in São Tomé and Prín cipe and Equatorial Guinea**

At the regional level, the following justifies the intervention:

· Both countries have certain degree of language proximity and both are part of the Community of Portugue se Language Countries CPLP (after the acronym in Portuguese: *Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa;*

abbr.: CPLP).

· The two countries share “Atlantic Equatorial coastal forests” within the Congolian Rainforest Biome, found on São Tomé, Príncipe and Bioko islands

· Of the two countries, São Tomé and Príncipe is the one with most experience in establishing and managing protected areas. In Equatorial Guinea, the structuring of the conservation sector is still incipient.

At the regional level collaboration and technical exchanges would focus on:

· Jointly developing methodologies relating to conservation e.g. for preparing a quality PA management plan and for ensuring the conditions for its implementation.

· Ecological data: collaboration among herbaria in both countries and other data sharing initiatives (advancing with taxon identification through scientific collaboration).

· Jointly pursue resource mobilization efforts for the protection of "Atlantic Equatorial coastal forests".

Joint purpose: São Tomé and Príncipe Equatorial Guinea will jointly pursue south-south exchange learning on: Sustainable financing plan rolled-out, including certification/issuing of carbon credit, which will enable to protect the “Atlantic Equatorial coastal Forests”.

Scientific baseline: “Annobón, São Tomé, Principe, and Bioko are volcanic islands. They were formed through volcanic activity and are part of the Cameroon Volcanic Line, a chain of volcanoes that runs from Cameroon in West Africa to the island of Annobón, which is the southernmost point of the line. They share commonalities in terms of their nature conservation efforts. However, Bioko lies on the African continental shelf, separated from the African mainland by only 32 km water with a depth of only 60 metres while Príncipe, São Tomé, and Annobón are oceanic islands of the Gulf of Guinea, they therefore have unique and distinct ecosystems with a high degree of endemism (from the unique combination of isolation, recent geological origin, and limited resources). The Biodiversity of the Gulf of Guinea Oceanic Islands: Science and Conservation | SpringerLink[6] in which BirdLife participated with (co-)authors and donor, published in 2022, is the most comprehensive and updated book about the biodiversity and conservation of the Gulf of Guinea Oceanic Islands and clarifies this question. If Annobón were to be included in the Equatorial Guinea Child Concept, the “transboundary” approach would therefore make great sense. The commonalities with Bioko are less obvious. However, the Child projects for STP and Equatorial Guinea can certainly inform each other, building on the conservation of IFLs in islands ecosystems, and in particular the proposed integrated islands-wide biodiversity positive development models promoted by the intervention. The respective child projects can provide insights and lessons that can further inform regional efforts in the Congo

e respective child projects can provide insights and lessons that can further inform regional efforts in the Congo Basin (conservation strategies, ecosystem-based approach, community-based conservation, green economy, sc ientific research & monitoring).

Joint collaboration and technical exchanges are indicatively proposed focused on:

· Ecosystem services & Natural Capital assessments: liveability (beyond sustainability) of the islands are fir mly dependant on ecosystem services coming from the forest ecosystems (e.g., water resource).

· Integrated Islands-approach to biodiversity conservation: development of common tools for PA managem ent. (This process has been particularly efficient in São Tomé and Príncipe, as it involves significant support and capacity from BirdLife International i.e., this technology has not yet been fully transferred to local authorities), La nd-Use/Spatial Planning, biodiversity-positive businesses, greening the economy working with high level commo dities and the agro-industry sector (niche market, transformation), ecotourism and high standing sustainable to urism (one of the top 3 revenue options promoted by the Sustainable Financing Plan for PAs and biodiversity in São Tomé and Príncipe is a concession mechanism scheme promoting green investment in ecotourism, and ev entually biodiversity-neutral deforestation-free value chains), etc.

· Management Oriented Biodiversity Monitoring: BirdLife is supporting the São Tomé and Príncipe Governm ent to develop and endorse SMART (Spatial Monitoring And Report Tool) for MOBM at national level vs. SMART in Bioko ("Gran Caldera de Luba").

· Other areas: resource mobilisation (eventually but probably not a priority), cocoa and high value commodit ies, Carbon Certification (e.g., Plan Vivo, under assessment in São Tomé and Príncipe), etc.

Note: In São Tomé and Príncipe's Child Project: refer to Output 2.1. During PPGs activities will be fully develope d.

Component 3) IPLCs empowerment, gender transformative green enterprises and sustainable partnerships with the private sector in Congo basin.

Outcome 3) Sustainable forest-related value chains promoted by empowering local communities, forest dependent people, and partnering with the private sector

> *Measured by:*
>
> *# of people belonging to IPLC groups, including women and other relevant segments, engaged in implementing activities under the Congo IP in relation to the total number of beneficiaries*

> *# of and type of IPLC organizations receiving funding through the Program (directly and indirectly)*
>
> *# of private sector partnerships facilitated by the project*

The critical landscapes targeted by the Congo IP are home to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), whose households (many of which led by women) often struggle to fulfil basic needs. IPLCs are key protagonists of land use decisions within these landscapes. It is therefore important that they are not just "engaged" by the Program, but also supported as directly as possible, so that they effectively benefit from conservation finance initiatives and adhere to forest protection practices and nature-based solutions.

The Congo IP is expected to promote IPLCs empowerment, gender transformative green enterprises and sustainable partnerships with the private sector in Congo basin. Under Component 3, proposed methodologies and arrangements will equally include new mechanisms that will facilitate access to conservation finance and climate finance by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), including among them women.

By adopting a gender-transformative approach, the Program will work with multiple stakeholders at the local, national and international levels for delivering on key targets related to global commitments under the Rio Conventions through supportive national and regional frameworks.

The actual outline of mechanism for providing support to the grassroots level is yet to be elaborated and will require a specific scoping and viability study, as well the development of partnerships for operationalizing them – both to be fully developed during the PPG.

The potential role of private sector players will also be firmed up during the PPG. This applies to their potential roles under Components 3 and 4.

Key activities under Component 3 targeting IPLCS will include a mentoring initiative (targeted training), segmenting key IPLC stakeholders into meaningful groups (e.g. women's groups, youth groups, advocacy groups for environment and inclusive development). The aim is for these groups to gradually gain enhanced access to conservation finance and develop strategic and sustainable partnerships. They will be challenged to use innovative technologies and methods, so specific training on this aspect will also be required. Else, the project will help maintain an existing comprehensive stakeholder engagement database already established under the GEF7 CBSL IP with the aim of dynamically enhancing positive and inclusive participation in the Congo IP

Component 4) Mobilization and effective channeling of finance for conservation and climate outcomes

Outcome 4) Resources mobilized to sustain conservation and forest carbon sequestration efforts in the Congo Basin are mobilized and invested, including through partnerships with the private sector

> *Measured by:*

> *Amounts, sources and types of additional financial resources mobilized for the Congo IP and associated initiatives*
>
> *# of innovative financial mechanisms trialed for (i) channeling conservation and climate finance to local stakeholder across the Congo Basin; and (ii) ensuring the permanence of protected area systems/sub-systems through sustainable flows of funds for their management*

The Program's Component 4 is dedicated to the mobilization and effective channeling of finance for conservation and climate outcomes. It may also eventually lead to NGI agreements, which could not yet be explored, due to the expedited way through which the PFD and Child Projects were developed. The project will target partnerships with bilateral and multilateral donors. An initial assessment of existing interventions has funded by those been included in the section "Baseline" and the potential for resource mobilization. Key donors to the region currently include USAID, Germany, NORAD, CAFI, the Netherlands, the UK and the EC. This list is though not at all exhaustive and other donors may also be important players in the region, but information is yet to be collected.

Resource mobilization will also target the private sector. For both activities under Component 3 and 4, a specific strategy for private sector engagement will need to be developed during the PPG.

Activities under Component 4 will have on the one hand focus on the resource mobilization facilitation leading to funding agreements congruent with the goals and outcomes of the Program and targeting its beneficiaries. This implies the strategic engagement of bilateral/multilateral donors and private sector stakeholders for promoting conservation and sustainable management of forests. On the other hand, activities will focus on developing conservation leadership mentoring towards the development of innovative financing mechanisms for conservation.

Component 5) Capacity building, knowledge management, and regional cooperation

Outcome 5) Improved national and regional inter-agency coordination on efforts to maintain forest resources, protect biodiversity, enhance forest management, and restore forest ecosystems through enhanced knowledge, technology exchange and financing

> *Measured by*
>
> *# of practitioners according to segment that benefitted from the trainings from the Global Congo Basin IP Platform (gender disaggregated)*

> *# of practitioners according to segment that used the knowledge acquired from the trainings or materials from the Global Congo Basin IP Platform (gender disaggregated)*
>
> *# of* Communication Plan/Strategy for the Program for awareness raising and dissemination of Program outputs/results, including outreach & dissemination to/from child projects.
>
> *# of communication and awareness raising products and tools developed for use by the program at regional level and by the Child projects at national level*

Component 5 activities will ensure the improved purposeful coordination among Congo IP stakeholders, whether at the national, regional inter-agency levels. This will be done through enhanced knowledge, technology and methodology exchanges/development and through the transparent management of Program's operations and finance.

Under Component 5, synergies and potential collaboration that go activities beyond the Congo IP are also be envisaged, e.g. in collaboration with the other PFD under the Critical Forest Biomes IPs, including inter-regional or global level activities which will be identified and described during the PPG as part of the Regional Coordination Child Project. These may include global workshops, developing a pool of technical and consultants, etc. The Regional Coordination Child Project will also have a role both in supporting the concerned countries and interacting with external stakeholders. The role and support to COMIFAC which will include facilitating coordination and monitoring of the Program contribution to the COMIFAC convergence Plan, coordination and build capacity for monitoring of the participating countries and the COMIFAC member states at large, contribution to international environment agenda linked to Rio Conventions including the National Determined contribution, the Global Biodiversity Framework, the LDN and other relevant process, including the Bonn Challenge and FR100 among others.

Furthermore, through the component 5, the regional child project will support development of communication strategies/plan in order to increase the program awareness and dissemination of the program and child projects results which will be generated at regional and national level. The regional coordination project will support capacity development and elaboration of tools for countries to engage in communication that will not only support the awareness raising and dissemination of results but also to strengthen countries voices at regional and global arena, link the national projects in the wider governments structures and to conduct targeted analysis which will provide long term opportunities and sustainability of forest conservation efforts both at national and regional level.

Stakeholders, including private sector and women

An indicative stakeholder mapping has been done both at regional level for the program formulation and at national level for the Child Projects designation. Below are the main stakeholders' categories description and a comprehensive stakeholder mapping and their possible role will be conducted. The main stakeholders' categories include:

National Governments entities: In the different countries of the program, national line ministries and departments will be involved both at design stage and

implementation phase. Depending on the country, these national entities will include for example departments in charge of Environment, Rural Development, Public Health, Hygiene, Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry, Scientific Research in DRC; the Provincial Government of Cabinda, and the Municipality Administrations of Belize, Buco Zau, and Cacongo in Angola. Each child project will hold consultations during PPG and the key stakeholders together with their respective role will be identified and presented in engagement plan.

National NGOs: Preliminary discussion have been conducted by the child projects teams and key national NGOs are identified and their role in the project design at PPG stage and implementation phase will be discussed and agreed upon in the engagement plan. These NGO include: Friends of Nature and Development (ANDEGE), The Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program (BBPP) of Equatorial Guinea; Monte Pico, ARBIP, ZATONA-ADIL, ADAPPA, FP, PTRS, in STP; CAD through the Londo Community Forest , Catholic Church: involved in the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples, Centre pour l'Information Environnementale et le Développement Durable (CIEDD), an NGO which is part of the institutional governance established to ensure the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the VPA between the CAR Government and the EU, MEFP (NGO involved in the protection and defense of indigenous peoples rights and in landscape restoration activities) , OCDN (NGO involved in raising awareness and restoration of degraded landscapes) in CAR; the Game Rangers Association of Africa, The MTI Executive Secretariat in Angola.

Regional NGO Networks: During the regional consultation meeting held from 14 to 16 March 2023 in Douala, Cameroon, some regional networks of CSO have been invited and they participate actively in the discussion on the design of the program. These regional networks share perspective of their engagement in the program at regional level and at national level through their national representations. These networks include African Women in Sustainable Development Network (REFADD), the indigenous people network REPALEAC, the network of central African parliamentarian on environment; the Network of Youths for the Central Africa Forests (**REJEFAC**); The Network for the Management of Forest Ecosystems of Central African countries (REPAR). During the PPG, both the regional and national child projects will strengthen the mapping of these key stakeholders and engagement plans will be negotiated.

Academia: Universities and research institutions are very crucial *in order to help improve the sharing of information between researchers, policy makers and protected area managers in central Africa*. To achieve this, substantial innovative advances in science and technology and a thorough analysis of the feasibility and inclusiveness of proposed solutions are necessary. By exchanging and applying scientific knowledge, the creativity and practice of engineering and technology taken into consideration specific condition in each country and local needs and respects local traditions and history, academic and research institutions – will provide opportunities for experimenting feasible sustainable solutions in most areas of conservation and quality of life. The program will encourage and support child projects in learning from successful experience in the region. During the regional consultation meeting the experience of **Ebony Taylor/ Crelicam Project** was presented as a show case integrated approach. Further experience like the one for CIFOR's project FORETS (Formation, Recherche et Environment dans la Tshopo) in northern DRC can be capitalized. The project is funded by the European Union and has two main components: First, in partnership with the University of Kisangani (UNIKIS), one of the country's top higher education institutions. The project is training graduate and doctoral degree students in sustainable forest management. It is also working with potential investors, private companies, government institutions and development practitioners to kick off evidence-based initiatives to protect the Yangambi Biosphere Reserve and to improve the living conditions of the neighboring communities. In Equatorial Guinea, the Child Project will collaborate with University of the West of England (UWE Bristol) on different thematic to advance the conservation effort in the country.

International NGOs and other GEF Agencies active in the region: Zoological Society of London in EG; Birdlife in STP; WWF in CAR, which is involved in the conservation of the Mbaéré bodingué NP; the Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Jane Goodall will support child projects implementation at national level in Angola, with potential to extend the partnership to other countries, including the leverage of UNEP Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP). WWF-US, UNDP the WB, which are GEF Agencies currently implementing a GEF7 Child Projects under the CBSL IP will be engaged in the further development of knowledge management products, regional and global exchanges relevant to both the GEF7 and GEF8 Congo IPs.

Regional institutions and initiatives including COMIFAC, Mayombe Transboundary Initiative and the regional Economic Commission are being engaged and further elaborated stakeholder participation plan will be developed by the Regional Child Project during the PPG. Through recent exchanges, UNEP and COMIFAC held a lessons' sharing exercise (05-May-2025). The Commission mentioned the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of COMIFAC's Convergence Plan for Central African Forests (2015-2025). The results are summarized in Box 3.

Private Sector: As indicated in UNEP Expression of Interest for Lead Agency, the private sector has a significant role to play in improving the sustainability of many sectors operating in the Congo Basin. In this aspect, UNEP has wide experience in engaging with the private sector and securing private sector financing for environmental causes. Examples include the 'decoupling' deforestation from agricultural commodity production (working with Green Fund to co-invest alongside agri-food companies and banks), co-created the AGRI3 Fund, which is a guarantee and grant fund to increase the risk appetite and duration of loans by commercial and development banks going towards rural clients (farmers) and corporate clients (agri-food companies), and working with Sustainable Investment Management, which recently issued a structured finance vehicle financing deforestation-free and conversion-free commodities. UNEP is actively catalysing private equity investment in forest and landscape restoration through the Restoration Seed Capital Facility, which provides reimbursable grants on a cost-sharing basis to private equity investors/investment advisors for fund-, pipeline- and project development. UNEP has also been instrumental in setting up The Restoration Factory, a mentoring and business incubation support program that assists entrepreneurs and businesses in developing and attractive business models that focuses on restoration of landscapes and ecosystems. Both the GEF 7 CBSL IP and the GEF 8 Congo Basin Integrated Program will benefit greatly from UNEP bringing the experiences gained elsewhere to this region, and, from the initial onset of the program, incorporating the private sector as a key partner in the sustainable development of the region. UNEP, in collaboration with UNDP, is also leading the design of a multi-jurisdictional financing mechanism to unlock private sector capital for biodiversity and climate. The mechanism, once fully designed in collaboration with jurisdictions, bi-lateral and multi-lateral investors, corporates, and investment bank, will be deployed across several jurisdictions in tropical countries to advance landscape or jurisdictional scale biodiversity and habitat conservation efforts. The mechanism will leverage the evolving nature markets to underwrite debt instruments based on the offtake agreement with the corporates and jurisdictions' plan to conserve and restore biodiversity.

During the development of countries expression of interest, some private sector players had been already identified include among others, the SCAD forestry company which has an operating and development permit (PEA 178) in the Basse Lobaye forest in CAR, the PROPHYAROMA, involved in Maize farming and valorization of medicinal plants, the **Femme et Environnement BATA-GBAKO**, OFCA, Organisation des Femmes de Centrafrique, and the National Council of Girls (Conseil National de la Filles CNJ), which group all organizations working on gender equality and women empowerment together at the national level. in

CAR. During the regional consultation meeting in Mach 2023, the experience of **Ebony Taylor/ Crelicam Project in Cameroon** was presented as a showcase for potential integrated approaches that benefit forests, local communities and the private sector in what can be described as a form of PES. Further experience like the one for CIFOR's project FORETS (Formation, Recherche et Environment dans la Tshopo) in northern DRC can also be capitalized upon and potentially duplicated.

Table 3. National stakeholders list

Stakeholder table
Angola
· Conservation International - GEF Implementing Agency · DBDS - Associação de Defesa da Biodiversidade e Desenvolvimento Sustentável (national NGO) · Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) · Gremio ABC – local NGO/CBO · International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF) · Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) · Local communities: Key beneficiaries; support project activities. · Ministry of Environment - Lead Executing Agency, overall project coordination, and guidance; co-financer. The GoA will host the Project Management Unit (PMU) under Maiombe National Park (MNP) staff at the Ministry of Environment · MNP –Main beneficiary and co-executing partner. · National and local NGOs/CSOs/CBOs: Potential executing partners of specific activities; co-financers; beneficiaries. · Other line Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) (TBD) – Potential executing partners of specific activities; co-financers. · Other potential executing partners: · Private sector: Logging, mining, infrastructures, tourism, forest certification, irrecoverable mapping, conservation technology, law enforcement support, etc.– Potential executing partners of specific activities; co-financers; support project activities. · Technical / Research institutions: Potential executing partners of specific activities; co-financers; support project activities. · The Game Rangers Association of Africa – (GRAA) Angola (national NGO) · The MTI Executive Secretariat and national representatives – Partners of specific activities. · The Nature Conservancy (TNC) · The Provincial Government of Cabinda, and the Municipality Administrations of Belize, Buco Zau, and

Cacongo – Key beneficiaries and potential executing partners of specific activities; co-financers · Third-Party Organization (TBD) – Co-executing Agency responsible for providing technical and operational support to the Ministry of Environment; project monitoring and reporting.
Cameroon
· Government: MINEPAT, MINEPDED, MINFOF · Municipalities: Mintom, Lomié, Somalomo · CSOs: local NGOs (APIFED, SAPED, TF-RD) IPLCs (REPALEF/REPALEAC) · International NGO: Rainforest Alliance, AWF, WWF, ZSL · Private sector: PALLISCO, TELCAR (GARGIL), Sud-Cameroon Hévéa
Central African Republic
· CAD, a national NGO through the Londo Community Forest · Catholic Church: involved in the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples · Centre pour l'Information Environnementale et le Développement Durable (CIEDD): An NGO involved which is part of the institutional governance established to ensure the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the VPA between the CAR Government and the EU, which aim to to fight against illegal logging and reduce poverty. Réseau des Populations Autochtones et Locales de Centrafrique (REPALCA): involved in the protection of Indigenous Peoples rights · MEFP, an NGO involved in the protection and defense of indigenous peoples' rights and in landscape restoration activities, with the planting of MORINGA). · OCDN; an NGO involved in raising awareness and restoration of degraded landscapes · Private Sector: The SCAD forestry company has an operating and development permit (PEA 178) in the Basse Lobaye forest. · PROPHYAROMA, involved in Maize farming and valorization of medicinal plants. · Semi-artisanal mining along the Lobaye river · Women associations: Femme et Environnement BATA-GBAKO, OFCA : Organisation des Femmes de Centrafrique, and the National Council of Girls (Conseil National de la Filles CNJ) group all organizations working on gender equality and women empowerment together at the national level. · WWF CAR, which is involved in the conservation of the Mbaéré bodingué NP)

Equatorial Guinea
· A description of these non-state actors and their involvement can be found in Annex 2. · African Women in Sustainable Development Network (REFADD), REPALEAC. · Community based organizations · International and regional non-government stakeholders: · National and local non-government stakeholders: · NGO Friends of Nature and Development of Equatorial Guinea (ANDEGE) · REFADD and its five organizations: ADMAD, ARICOR, GRAIFEM, ASOMUDEA, ASOJADE. · REPALEAC · Society (BZS), University of the West of England (UWE Bristol), · The Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program (BBPP) · UNDP, FAO, AfDB, WCS, Biodiversity Initiative (BI), Bristol Zoological · Zoological Society of London
Sao Tome and Principe
· CSOs such as Birdlife, Monte Pico, ARBIP, ZATONA-ADIL, ADAPPA, FP, PTRS, etc. will be directly involve in project design and implementation. · Government authorities (from national to local): Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development, and Fisheries; Ministry of Infrastructure, Public Works, Natural Resources and Environment; Principe Regional Secretariat for Environment and Sustainable Development, and District administrations · Multilateral agencies (UNDP, IFAD, FAO, AfDB, World Bank or the EU) are supporting the country's commitment to multilateral environmental agreements, providing resources and expertise toward the country's forest management, conservation, and restoration commitments. · NGOs, including international: AMP, ARBIP, Birdlife, Oikos, ZATONA-ADIL, ADAPPA, Fundação Principe, PTRS, etc. -- all with the ability to engage, enable and empower local communities and group of users & built capacities of other CSOs in managing environmental resources. · Private sector tourism operators or export cooperatives share responsibilities over conservation of the landscape and promote sustainability, with business incentives coming from conservation initiatives.

· The project will also build on the knowledge of the University of Sao Tome and Principe and the Eco-Guides associations

· The project will mobilize actors from the private sector such as Tourism operators, SMEs active in the commodities sector, export cooperatives.

Specifically relating to consultations with National level entities, local NGOs/CBOs and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), all of which are relevant stakeholders for the GEF8 Congo IP, refer to separate report titled “Ad hoc Report on Country Level Consultations” (of 10-May-2023), compiled by UNEP with inputs from the GEF Agencies (IUCN, IFAD and CI). The report mentions that FPIC procedures and other relevant safeguards will apply when engaging with partners during the PPGs.

For regional level consultations refer to separate report.

Elements towards a Gender Transformative Approach in the IP

In the Congo Basin, women play an important role in forest management by either practicing traditional agroforestry or collecting fuelwood and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) for food, livestock, and health care or income generation. As women are involved in forest management, they must also be recognized as key players in community forest initiatives and encouraged to contribute[7]. According to H.C. Peach Brown, in Gender, climate change and REDD+ in the Congo Basin forests of Central Africa, International Forestry Review Vol.13(2) 2011, men and women relate to and use the forest differently and so may experience the effects of climate change and REDD+ policies differently. Investigations through semi-structured interviews and document reviews in three countries of the region revealed that women have had limited participation in discussions on issues of climate change or REDD+. There is some evidence that gender consideration will become part of future national REDD+ strategies. Strategies to foster the effective participation of all stakeholders are essential to ensure that gender dimensions are addressed in issues of climate change, forest access, forest management and distribution carbon benefits.

In Africa, over two-thirds of the population of approximately one billion people, rely directly or indirectly on forests and woodlands for their livelihood, as well as medicinal plants and common pool forest resources for meeting essential fuel wood, grazing, and other needs (The World Bank 2004). Similar patterns of dependency are observed in the Congo Basin forests whose over 30 million inhabitants representing over 150 ethnic groups, depend on the forest for food, shelter, and other livelihood activities (Congo Basin Forest Partnership 2006, Nkem et al. 2010). However, there are gender differences in how men and women relate to forests and forest resources. While like men, women in the Congo Basin are very dependent on forest resources as a source of livelihood, similarly to women in other parts of the world, they continue to be disadvantaged by insecure access and property to land, forest and tree resources and to discrimination and male bias in the provision of services (Gurung and Quesada 2009, Bandiaky and Tiani 2010, et al. 2011).

Peach Brown continues by indicating that given the importance of forests to the livelihoods of women and their marginalization from decision making processes on climate change and forests, it is important to understand how to foster their inclusion in decision-making and benefiting from such important

policy discussions. While statements concerning the importance of the promotion of gender-equality are necessary and important, such recognition or potential invitation to participate in a process is not sufficient to ensure effective participation. Being involved in a process is not equivalent to having a voice or the ability to influence outcomes (Cornwall 2008). Agency requires that an actor that participates in decision-making have the capacity to make decisions or influence the decisions of others. It intersects with issues of power, norms and knowledge (Biermann et al. 2009).

Research has shown that there are gender differentiated rights, roles and responsibilities related to use of forests and forest resources. Forests are important for the collection of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), which is done throughout the world by both men and women (Neumann and Hirsch 2000).

In Cameroon, NTFP exploitation is closely related to the task and activities of different members of a household, with women tending to collect more food products in the fields, fallows and secondary forests. Men, in general, are more aware of primary forest species which they collect while on hunting trips (van Dijk 1999, Russell and Tchamou 2001). The products that women collect generally contribute to satisfying the food needs, medicinal needs and practical needs of daily life, such as firewood (Tobith and Cuny 2006). Markets for NTFPs in the Congo Basin are organized and dominated by women, representing the traditional division of labour in a household, where women specialize in the sale of NTFPs and food crops while men specialize in the marketing of cocoa and coffee (Ndoye et al. 1997/98, Nkem et al. 2010).

Although women often dominate the collection and commercialization of NTFPs they do not have security of access to these products or land and natural resources in general. In the humid forest zone of Cameroon, a woman has access to forest products in most cases by virtue of her relationship to the men of the family. While still a child, a girl helps her family with crops and collecting NTFPs on land that her father holds in the traditional tenure system (Guyer 1984, Diaw 1997). Marriage is a radical change in the life of a girl, at which time she loses all usufruct rights to the goods she had spent her life gathering or developing, and she leaves her village and joins her husband's family. There she acquires a share in the usufruct rights to the forest resources of her mother-in-law and those left behind by her sisters-in-law, who have left in marriage. The situation of access to resources is even more unstable if the woman is divorced, never marries or only bears girls (Tiani 2001). While the traditional tenure system persists in Cameroon, there is some evidence that this may be changing in some areas. In the Congo Basin Forest, the management of timber and wildlife generally falls under the responsibility of men (Tiani 2001, Tiani et al. 2004). Policies on decentralization of forest management have been implemented with the expectation of giving marginalized groups more influence on local policy and forest management.

Given the differences in the relationship of men and women to forest resources in the Congo Basin, and its importance for climate change adaptation and mitigation, it is important to understand how to foster gender equity in decision-making and benefiting from such important policy discussion. Results indicated that while NAPA documents stated the need for a gender sensitive approach to climate change adaptation, it did not appear that there had been broad participation in the development of the documents. Any strategies to address gender concerns were vague. For the most part, government departments with a mandate to address issues of gender were not included in climate change and REDD+ policy forums and processes. Initial REDD+ documents did not address gender equality concerns but development of some later documents indicated a concern to increase the participation of women in the process. The R-PP of DRC pledges to make sure that issues of gender are streamlined throughout the REDD+ readiness process to make sure that gender dimensions are addressed in community forest management and the distribution of benefits. While inclusion of language to address a concern for gender equity and women's empowerment in climate change and REDD+ policies and processes is welcome, translating it into reality is a complex process. Approaches, strategies and tactics that take into account the power effects of difference and combine advocacy with processes that enable all people to recognize and use their agency are needed. This will ultimately lead to better outcomes for both adaptation and mitigation of climate change.

The Regional Coordination Child project will take into consideration the above analysis together with other done in different conditions to engage regional discussion on how to consider gender equity in the GEF 8 Congo Integrated Program. The outcome of the general discussion together with specific conditions of participating countries will help to develop a general gender action plan and needs identified to support countries child projects in collaboration with implementing agencies. Each Child project will conduct or capitalize on, nation gender assessments and come up with project level gender action plan. The engagement with Central Africa Women Network during the Douala March 2023, regional consultation workshop is a first step toward that direction. The women's network has already engaged with is representations in different countries of the program to inform them on the need to collaborate with the national child projects in their respective countries to ensure envisaged project activities have concreate gender consideration with specific gender sensitive indicators.

Knowledge Management

The KM component will establish mechanisms for assimilating, documenting and sharing knowledge gained through project experiences. KM instruments such as knowledge products, Community of Practice, KM Platform, exchanges and field visits, online learning events, learning and training workshops will be used to promote and strengthen sharing of lessons learned and best practices to help the six national projects to deliver effective interventions in key sectors such as biodiversity, SFM and livelihood. The website for the GEF 7 Congo Program will be the primary one for sharing knowledge and experience. The website, whose beta version will be soon launched, will be hosted under UNEP's Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP). This will allow for a broad outreach beyond the Congo Basin. The platform also will be maintained beyond GEF7 and used for the GEF 8 cycle. Going forward, under the GEF 8 Congo Basin Integrated Program, the KM component of the ongoing Impact program will continue to be implemented in close coordination with the Program Steering Committee (established under GEF 7 and the composition amended to include new actors which are now key players in GEF 8 Program) and national child projects teams, to ensure that emerging knowledge is captured, and capacity building activities are well tailored to the needs of the countries and their varied stakeholder groups at all levels (forest dependent people, private sector, decision makers, etc.).

For the platform's users there will be no distinction between GEF-7 and GEF-8, providing thereby a sense of Program continuity between the two Programs, and also expansion. The latter means that *direct* outreach to stakeholders through the platform will now also include those in newer Program countries (namely Angola and São Tomé and Príncipe). In fact the outreach strategy will also be broad enough to also include all COMIFAC countries.

Another important element are the thematic coordination group meetings. We have set up thematic groups on land use, illegal trade and IPLCs, the land use group is meeting virtually tomorrow for the first time. The idea is to share experience across countries and sectors. The groups can change in focus and composition over time, we might establish new groups, but this arrangement should extend into GEF 8.

The above-described strategy for the platform will certainly enhance both the efficiency of resource use and the effectiveness of the outreach.

[1] Refer to Table 4 for an overview of countries participating in the GEF7 CBSL IP and in the GEF8 Congo IP. Gabon and Republic of the Congo are benefitting from GEF7 funds e.g. but not GEF8.

[2] The typology of direct threats draws inspiration from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2000). Additionally, the current TOC model mentions “disease” as another threat to humans and wildlife – one that is becoming more prevalent since the Covid-19 pandemic. E.g. it was recently discovered that covid viruses affect great apes as well as humans.

[3] Borrini-Feyerabend, G. and Hill, R. (2015) ‘Governance for the conservation of nature’, in G. L. Worboys, M. Lockwood, A. Kothari, S. Feary and I. Pulsford (eds) Protected Area Governance and Management, pp. 169–206, ANU Press, Canberra.

[4] Created in 2022 and with a growing membership, the CBFP work for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable management of forest ecosystems in the Congo Basin, the fight against climate change and poverty reduction in Central Africa in the member countries, in accordance with the COMIFAC Convergence Plan and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Refer to https://pfbc-cbfp.org/home.html, accessed on 01-May-2023.

[5] Reference to CAR Child Project: Output 2.1 Regional Cooperation between CAR and DR Congo for the management of the Ubangui Sub basin promoted; Output 2.2.3. On-the-ground interventions for the Ubangui Sub-Basin watershed management lead to more secure livelihoods and water resilience; Output 4.2 Data and analytics to help officials at the Ubangui Sub-basin, region and prefecture level understand current and future water risks and better prepare for and manage those risks are enhanced.

[6] https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-06153-0.

[7] With reference to project « La foresterie communautaire : Opportunité ou chimère pour les femmes du Bassin du Congo ?".

Monitoring and Evaluation

Describe the approach to program-level Monitoring and Evaluation, including ways to ensure coherence across Child Projects and to allow for adapting to changing conditions, consistent with GEF policies. In addition, please list results indicators that will track the Program Objective, beyond Core Indicators. (Max 1-2 pages).

The Costed M&E Workplan (GEF-8 Congo Basin IP) is included in a table further down. The M&E framework at the regional level will have a key role in ensuring methodology consistency across countries in the application of tracking tools, carbon assessments and other relevant monitoring instruments. The Congo IP Child Project will provide training as needed to ensure methodological stringency.

Additionally, the approach to program-level Monitoring and Evaluation also envisages ways to ensure coherence across Child Projects and to allow for adapting to changing conditions, consistent with GEF policies. E.g. the consolidation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework may require that indicators are reconsidered in a new light and methods for data collection developed. Some of this work may be sought completed in collaboration with other Critical Forest Biomes IPs, whose PFDs and Child Projects are under development.

Costed M&E Workplan (GEF-8 Congo Basin IP)

Type of M&E activity	Responsible Parties	Budget from GEF	Budget co-finance	Time Frame
Regional Inception Meeting	Coordination Child Project Management Unit (PMU) UNEP	150,000	20,000	Within 2 months of project start-up
Inception Report	PMU	0	2,500	1 month after project inception meeting
Measurement of project progress and performance indicators	Coordination Child Project Management Unit (PMU) UNEP			Annually
Baseline measurement of project outcome indicators, GEF Core indicators and project indicators monitoring (Tracking tools)	Coordination Child Project M&E Expert PMU UNEP	40,000	12,500	Annualy
Semi-annual Progress/ Operational Reports	Coordination Child Project Coordinator with inputs from countries child projects	0	12,500	Within 1 month of the end of reporting period i.e. on or before 31 January and 31 July
Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings	Coordination Child Project Coordinator PMU UNEP	250,000	30,000	Once a year minimum
Reports of PSC meetings	PMU UNEP	0	10,000	Annually
Project Implementation Review (PIR) report	Coordination Child Project Coordinator PMU UNEP	55,000	3,000	Annually, part of reporting routine
Mid Term Review/Evaluation	UNEP Evaluation Office PMU in collaboration with Countries Child Projects teams	55,000	3,000	At mid-point of project implementation
Terminal Review/Evaluation *(whether a project requires a management-led review or an independent evaluation is determined annually b*	UNEP Evaluation Office in collaboration with participating Agencies Evaluat	55,000	1,000	Typically initiated after the project's operational completion

on is determined annually by UNEP's Evaluation Office)	uating Agencies Evaluation Offices			
Audit	PMUs	15,000	0	Annually
Project Operational Completion Report	Coordination Child Project Coordinator with inputs from participating agencies and partners	0	0	Within 2 months of the project completion date
Co-financing report (including supporting evidence for in-kind co-finance)	Coordination Child Project Coordinator and input from other agencies	0	0	Within 1 month of the PIR reporting period, i.e. on or before 31 July
Publication of Lessons Learnt	Coordination Child Project Coordinator with inputs from partners	20,000	1,000	Annually, part of Semi-annual reports & Project Final Report
TOTAL		**585,000**	**100,000**	

Note: The M&E costs presented here are consistent with the amounts in the Regional Coordination Child Project. All national Child Projects will have their respective M&E budgets. The GEF amount for M&E indicated in the table "Indicative Program Overview" reflect a roughly estimated for the sum of M&E for all Child Projects.

Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Programs.

Is the GEF Agency being asked to play an execution role on this program? Yes

If so, please describe that role here. Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

Implementation and Execution: UNEP will be the Lead Implementing Agency of the Program. UNEP's Ecosystems Division will execute the coordination child project. Country Child Projects will be implemented by The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Conservation International (CI) and UNEP. A Programme Advisory Group (PAG) which will serve to optimize alignment between the IP/GCP and global initiatives/actors, established by the GEF will also serve the project at global level.

The overall framework diagram is presented in Figure 10:

As the Lead Agency, UNEP will be responsible for:

1. coordinating progress between Child Projects to ensure Program results are achieved;
2. convening workshops and meetings to ensure all partners and the countries understand, confirm and coordinate to achieve overall purposes of the project;
3. convening regional, and global high-level meetings on behalf of the Program;
4. initiating the annual Program report with the Country Child Projects;
5. compiling an annual report with contributions from all child project partners and submit to the GEF Secretariat;
6. conducting the mid-term and final Program evaluations and;
7. convenes and chairs the Program Steering Committee;
8. seeks synergies with external institutions and partners.

Program Coordination Unit: will provide coordination and manage the knowledge management, Capacity Building, Communications functions of the overall Integrated Program. It will also manage the standardized M&E system to be harmonized with the one developed under the GEF 7 CBSL IP, to aggregate data from national child projects, track program results, outcomes and risks. It will also provide Technical Assistance service on specific targeted issues such as: IPLCs engagement with the Private sector, Public-Private Collaboration on Deforestation-Free commodity and supply Chains, engagement with financial institutions coordination with UNODC, TRAFFIC, MIKE, INTERPOL to address wildlife crime and illegal trade in Fauna and flora, Natural Capital accounting and PES design and implementation, engagement with other Global Platform and initiatives such as COMIFAC, Regional Economic Commission Environment Commission, the inclusive development of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, Project Finance for Permanence – PFP, Ebony Taylor/CRELICAM Project etc.

Principles of resource efficiency and effectiveness will apply e.g. in the management of the web-based outreach platform between the GEF7 CBSL IP and the GEF8 Congo IP, as well as to other outreach and M&E functions between the two Programs, as both are management by UNEP.

The Congo IP Program Steering Committee (SC): The members of the SC will be representatives of: UNEP, IUCN, IFAD, CI, the GEF Secretariat, country focal points, COMIFAC, ECCAS, the Regional Networks (REPALEAC, Women, Youths and Parliamentarians) and Rain Forest Alliance. UNEP will serve as the Secretariat of the meetings and chair of the meetings as the Lead Agency of the Program. The Steering committee will be a coordination forum and a monitoring platform during the implementation phase of the Program. The role of the SC members will be to report on the progress of their child projects and advise on the types of support they need under the Program and promote coordination between Program and child projects. The SC will meet every year, or more frequently by request of one of the advisory committee members. Meetings will be virtual or face to face and where possible in conjunction with other meetings to manage costs.

Country Child Project governance arrangements: Each Country Child Project will have its own governance arrangements, which the IA will define during project development. As a minimum, however, each Country Child Project's steering committee will involve representatives of relevant ministries, civil society, women groups, representatives of pilot sites, GEF Agency implementing the child project, CAFI representative in the country, other donors/partners operating in the project area, and UNEP.

A common protocol for the Program will be agreed at the PPG phase. The common protocol will comprise:

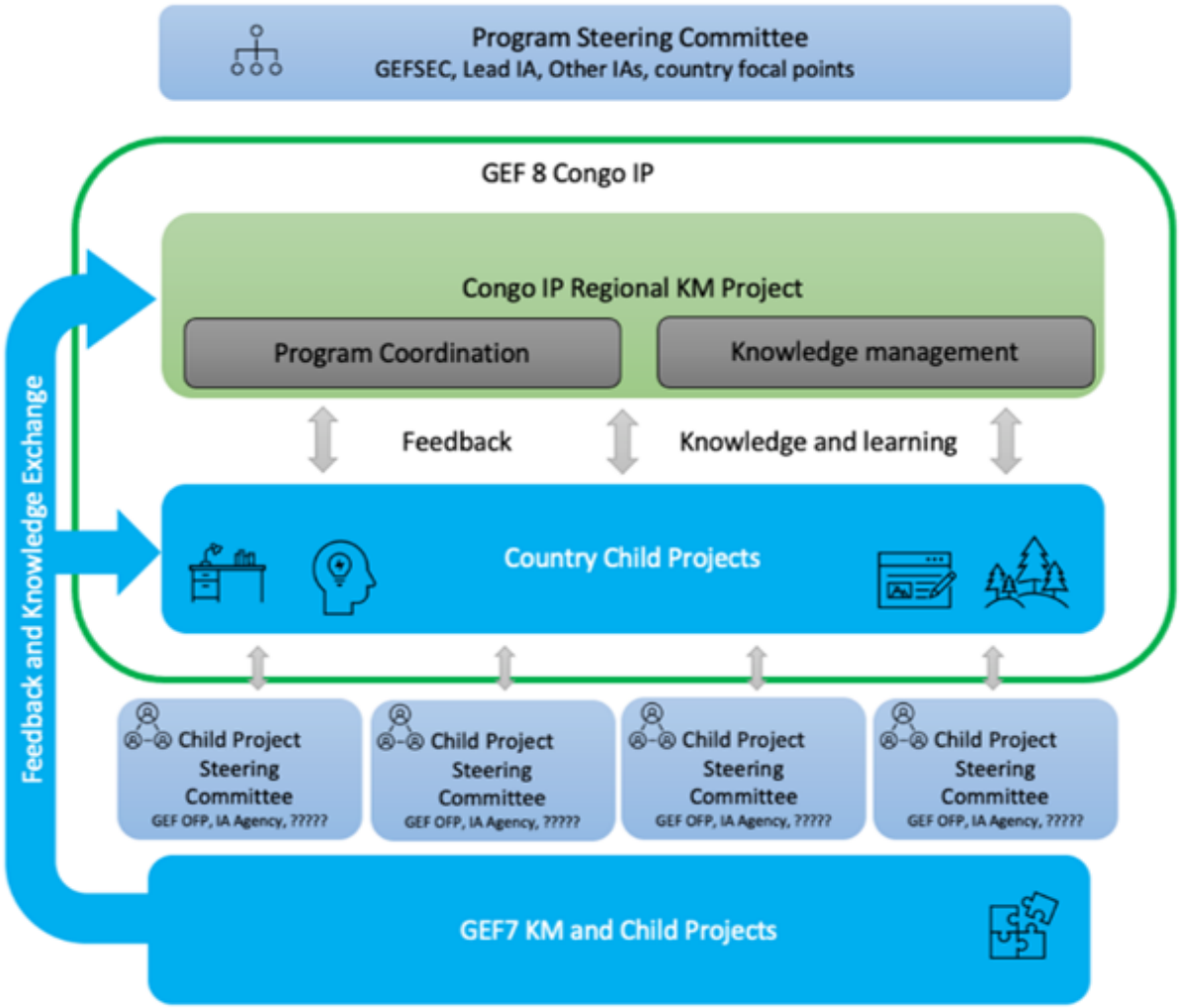
1. Framework for reporting, transparency and grievance mechanism.
2. Visual identity of the Congo IP (including branding materials and resources).
3. Standard format and language for documentation to ensure that all stakeholders are using the same documentation templates and terminology.
4. Common platform for communication and material repository (for e.g Teams, Zoom, Cloud Storage, Data access, mapping and visualization).

Additionally, the Steering Committee will also have informal role relating to:

- attracting new partners,
- creating the space that allows the engagement and partnership
- attracting the private sector and other actors
- contributing to systems transformation and to achieving impacts at scale.

Under the latter, a possible activity could be to support COMIFAC with strengthening a mechanism for monitoring contributions from donors to the implementation of its 'Convergence Plan' for the sustainable management of Central African forest ecosystems (2015–2025), as well as the preparation of the next Convergence Plan.

Figure 9. Governance Framework Diagram



Cooperation mechanism with relevant initiatives

Under the GEF 8 Integrated Program, UNEP have had advance discussions with a number of institutions to evolve its partnership approach, building on its strengths of the GEF 7 CBSL IP (refer to Box further down) and leveraging opportunities to bring in new partners such as the following:

- **the African Development Bank (AfDB)**: UNEP approached AfDB to explore possibilities to collaborate and work together under the GEF 8 Congo Basin Integrated Program (including possibly on other relevant IPs as well). UNEP agree with the Bank to pursue the discussion to explore synergies on potential collaboration in the delivery of the program, after the award of the Leadership role for the GEF 8 Congo Basin Integrated Program.

- **COMIFAC and REPALEAC**: UNEP conducted consultations with both institutions during the development of Expression of Interest to Lead the GEF 8 Congo Basin IP. COMIFAC express concerns about the low space on which the GEF 7 IP Coordination Program is evolving, however they understood the challenges UNEP faced to put in place the Regional Coordination Unit and they are confident that the program will start to deliver soon. As per the GEF 8 Program, COMIFAC reiterated its commitment to continue working with UNEP but has requested support to the institution to implement the Convergence Plan and ensure contribution of the institutions to the international environment Agenda. Furthermore, COMIFAC, even though was not able to participate to the Program Consultation in March (14 – 16th, 2023) in Douala Cameroon, due to the internal statutory meetings (experts and Ministerial meetings), the institution reiterated its commitments to support the program and request support for ensuring that the institution contribution to international environment agenda (Contribution to Paris Agreement implementation; the Glasgow UNFCCC Agenda, the Global Biodiversity Framework) and resources mobilization for the conservation of Congo Basin Forest resources. During the PPG, these consultations will continue and will help to define concreate actions to be supported and the collaboration mechanism to be put in place. Collaboration with UNEP and REPALEAC has started to be more concreate during GEF7 Congo Basin IP development including at the national level with Child Projects in DRC and Republic of Congo. REPALEAC has expressed satisfaction of the collaboration and during the March 2023 Regional Consultation meeting on GEF 8, requested other agencies to learn lesson from UNEP engagement process to strengthen their collaboration with REPALEAC national representative organization to ameliorate collaboration on national projects. Both COMIFAC and REPALEAC expressed the desire to continue to be involved in the design and implementation of the GEF 8 Integrated Program. Whether their involvement will follow a similar approach to the GEF 7 CBSL IP or will require more specific collaborative action within the coordination Child project for these institutions will be discussed and agree at PPG stage and submitted in the CEO Endorsement for consideration.

- **Rainforest Alliance (RA)**: UNEP had advance discussion with RA. Building on their comparative advantage, RA is committed to support conservation-friendly livelihoods activities and improve the sustainability of the "productive" sectors, strengthen multi-stakeholder governance, work with REPALEAC to improve land tenure rights and policies especially the legal recognition of the customary rights and tenure security of IPLCs.

The Program will cooperate, seek synergies and complementarities with several existing aligned initiatives. UNEP will ensure coordination with the investments and initiatives funded by other donors (as described in the section on baseline scenario and any associated baseline program/ projects). During PPG implementation, close coordination with CAFI will take place both at the country level in the development of child projects, as well as at the regional level in the development of the regional child project, to identify and capitalize on synergies between the Program and CAFI activities.

More specifically, the GEF-8 Congo IP will also coordinate with initiatives and programs being run by other bilateral and multilateral donors (comprehensive list to be established at PPG stage), by governments (to be developed at PPG), private sector (to be developed at PPG) and research institutions (universities e.g. American University in Equatorial Guinea, University of Kinshasa, Dchang University in Cameroon, etc., technical centers in countries), to name a few. Coordination will be done at country level (see lists of co-financing partners in each child project) and by the global child project for regional and global partnerships.

Engagement with Private Sector players. Through the United Nations Environment Program Finance Initiative (UNEP FI), UNEP catalyzes action across the financial system to align the economies with sustainable development including private sector leadership in delivery on the Paris Agreement and the forthcoming Global Biodiversity Framework. UNEP FI has been a founding member of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), and now supports the Taskforce through efforts including capacity building in emerging markets, piloting the TNFD framework with African financial institutions, and support to the co-Chair and CBD Executive Secretariat. UNEP FI has presence on the continent, supporting dozens of members from the financial sector in the region including African Natural Capital Alliance | FSD Africa members Access Bank, Ecobank, FirstRand, Investec, Sanlam, and local offices of Standard Chartered, as well as regional biodiversity champions such as Finance in Motion

Box 2. Differences and Commonalities between the GEF7 Program for Congo Basin region titled “The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP)”[1] and the current GEF8 Program titled “Congo Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program” (Congo IP, in short)

Concerning the respective programmatic scope and the differential focus of the GEF7 IP for the Congo Basin an d the GEF8 Congo IP, this box establishes both a “demarcation” between the two Programs and the “additionalit y” of the contribution of the GEF8 one in relation to the former.

The GEF7 IP was approved by the GEF Council in 2019 and mobilized $57 million in GEF funding (net of fees) thr ough seven Child Projects (six national projects and a regional one). The GEF8 Congo IP is expected approved b y the GEF Council in June 2023 and includes six Child Projects (five national projects and a regional one), which mobilizing $56 million in GEF funds (net of fees).

Both Programs have a few elements in common but also marked differences. The key elements of the “demarc ation” and the “additionality” relationships between the GEF7 and GEF8 Programs for the Congo Basin can be su mmarized as follow:

· Both Programs address the problem of forest loss and degradation in the Congolian Forests Biome. Also, b oth Programs benefit member States of COMIFAC (The Commission for Central African Forests) and national C hild Project under it adopt a landscape approach. Both programs build on the solutions that seek to stabilize for est cover (and peatlands where applicable) and to reduce the threats to wildlife populations in the Congo Basin forest ecosystem, generating thereby multiple benefits.

· The GEF8 IP is clearly additional to the GEF7 one, to the extent that it is dealing with conservation effective ness across landscapes, while the GEF7 has a strong focus on transboundary sustainable forest management within landscapes. The inclusion of Angola and of the SIDS São Tomé and Príncipe are also an a GEF8 additiona lity.

· More specifically, the GEF8 Congo IP deals with how to bring conservation effectiveness across landscape s to scale through policy coherence, regional collaboration and enhanced access to benefits by forest dwellers who commit to protecting the forest (women included). A key element in the GEF8 Congo IP is ‘forest governan ce’, which is considered necessary for stabilizing land use and avoid forest loss. The GEF8 IP is also focusing o n new methodologies (ecosystem valuation) and arrangements that will strengthen conservation effectiveness across landscapes, including hereunder by facilitating access to conservation and climate finance by Indigenou s Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). These elements that are present in the strategy for the GEF8 IP and not in the one for GEF7. The GEF8 Congo IP also includes an enhanced strategic agenda for strengthening gend er equality and women’s empowerment across the two Programs.

· Both Programs contribute to COMIFAC’s Convergence Plan for 2015-2025 which includes: (a) Priority strate gic themes: harmonization of forestry and fiscal policies; management and sustainable development of forest r esources; conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity; combatting climate change and desertificati on; socio-economic development and multi-actor participation; and (b) Cross-cutting themes: sustainable fundi ng; training and capacity building; research and development; communication, awareness building and educatio

ng, training and capacity building, research and development, communication, awareness building and educatio
n.

· Both Programs have in common UNEP as the lead Program Agency and as the Agency for the respective R egional Child Projects, but the composition of participating countries in each IP and the respective GEF Agencie s assisting them is different (see overview in Table 4 further down). The themes of Child Projects are also differ ent, especially for the countries that are accessing GEF funding under both IPs. This stresses the additionality el ement and opens up for interesting programmatic opportunities for synergies with respect to knowledge manag ement and partnerships – some of which can be hinted at now, and others to be developed and explored during implementation.

· At programmatic level, there are some similarities, but also marked differences, stressing again the additio nality of the GEF8 Congo IP in relation to the GEF7 one. More specifically on high level focal area objectives: bot h Programs include GEF funds from STAR focal areas Biodiversity (BD), Land Degradation (LD) and Climate Cha nge Mitigation (CCM). Hence, both Programs share broad objectives under these focal areas and related monito ring indicators, but the GEF8 IP includes a novelty -- as follows:

- Conserving globally important biodiversity in key landscapes and forested areas under BD, monitoring her eunder the hectarage of protected areas and their management effectiveness;

- Improved management of landscapes through Sustainable Forest Management and Sustainable Land Ma nagement under LD;

- GHG emissions reductions from landscape forest conservation and management under CCM; and

- The GEF8 Congo IP (differently from GEF7) includes funds from International Waters (IW) to deal with tra nsboundary issues in at least one shared waterbody.

Other marked differences, stressing the "demarcation" elements between the two Programs, include:

· The GEF7 IP has a broad objective statement, which starts by mentioning "catalyze transformational chang e at a regional level" and which also mentions "best practices and innovations". It has a strong focus on sustain able forest management (SFM) in transboundary landscapes, developing instruments such as Integrated Transb oundary Land Use Planning (ILUMPs). Component 2 of the GEF7 IP focuses on populations of endangered spec ies and on action relating to illegal wildlife crime, with a specific focus on elephants and primates.

· The GEF8 Congo IP has a broad objective “To improve the conservation and effective governance of critical landscapes in the Congo Basin Forest Biome.” Land use planning is an essential means to achieving conservati on goals and effective governance at the level of landscapes, but not the only one. Policy coherence, including with respect to sectoral developments that potential harm forests is on focus in the GEF8 IP under Component 1. The mention of scaling up action on conservation and on enhancing forest carbon through integrated landsca pe management is also present in Component 2 of the GEF8 Program, but differently from GEF7, the regional fo cus is not only on transboundary issues problems. It is equally on how cross-country collaboration can show sc alable and replicable solutions.

· Finally, the GEF8 IP departs from a more the current and more practical definition of “intact forests” in relation to the studies that underpinned the GEF7 IP justification, namely by equating them to “undisturbed forests” as per the CIFOR’s 2022 Study: Eba’a Atyi R et al. (2022). The Forests of the Congo Basin. State of the Forests 2021. CIFOR[2]. In contrast, some of the mapping in the GEF7 IP had initially built on older data from Potapov et al. (2008) Mapping the World's Intact Forest Landscapes by Remote Sensing. Ecology and Society 13 (2)[3]. The afore-mentioned 2022 CIFOR Study provides reference to several REDD+ and similar programs implemented across the Congo Basin. It uses newer satellite images from Sentinel-2 and a pondered methodology for stratifying forests (including hereunder what can be considered “undisturbed forests”[4]). Therefore, it can be considered not just a more up-to-date dataset, but also a ‘state-of-the art knowledge baseline’ on forests in Congo Basin, including on the level of deforestation and forest degradation affecting them, and how these phenomena manifest themselves at the decentralized level.

Refer additionally to “*A summary of ‘Barrier Comparison’ between the GEF7 CBSL and the GEF8 Congo IP”,* included further up under the Barriers Analysis.

Table 4. Overview of COMIFAC participating countries accessing GEF funding through the GEF7 and GEF8 Congo IPs

	COMIFAC Member States	**GEF7 Agency**	**GEF8 Agency**
1	Angola		CI
2	Burundi		
3	Cameroon	WWF-US	UNEP
4	Central African Republic	WB	UNEP
5	Chad		
6	Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)	WB	IUCN and IFAD
7	Equatorial Guinea	IUCN	
8	Gabon	WB	
9	Republic of the Congo	UNEP	
10	Rwanda		
11	São Tome and Príncipe		IUCN

Box 3. Lessons learned from IP countries and COMIFAC

Through recent exchanges, UNEP and COMIFAC held a lessons' sharing exercise (05-May-2025). The Commi ssion mentioned the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of COMIFAC's Convergence Plan for Central African Forests (2015-2025). The results are thus summarized:

1) Difficulties and constraints in implementing the Convergence Plan

Despite the progress made, a number of structural and cyclical difficulties have had a negative impact on the implementation of the Convergence Plan. Similarly, several constraints have impacted on the satisfactory ac hievement of results.

Some **structural difficulties** are:

- The weak authority of the National Coordination COMIFAC (CNC) because of its institutional positioning within the Ministry in charge of forests where it is not included in the organizational chart;
- The irregular payment and arrears of contributions of member countries for the financing of COMIFAC;
- The weak technical, organizational and financial capacities of the NQFs;
- The lack of technical staff within the Executive Secretariat of COMIFAC (SEC).

Some **of the economic difficulties** identified are:

- The lack of popularization of the Convergence Plan in the member countries has resulted in a low knowl edge and ownership of the Convergence Plan in the countries;
- The Covid-19 pandemic crisis in 2020 has reduced the capacity to finance and implement projects and i nitiatives in countries and the sub-region;
- The lack of synergies between the administration, CSOs and the private sector in countries has not fost ered sufficient ownership of the Convergence Plan;
- The absence of a permanent consultation framework between the ESA and the subregional partners for monitoring the implementation of the Convergence Plan.

The **constraints** that have hampered the implementation of the Convergence Plan are:

- the absence of a sustainable Convergence Plan financing mechanism to provide funding to countries a nd sub-regional bodies;
- the absence of an inter-ministerial coordination framework on forest and environmental issues in count ries;
- the lack of a coherence framework for internalizing the priorities of the Convergence Plan in strategies and action plans at national level.

2) Challenges

Over the past decade, several challenges have been exacerbated at the subregional level. These include:

- zoning and securing forest areas;
- securing and managing protected areas;
- concerted management of transboundary protected areas;
- poaching of large mammals (elephants and great apes) and illegal trafficking of wildlife species;
- the management of permanent forest estates and other types of forests;
- the legality and traceability of forest products;
- monitoring and monitoring of forest cover;
- mitigation (REDD+, NAMA) and adaptation to climate change;
- deforestation and forest degradation.

3) Recommendations

In order to substantially improve the level of implementation of the Convergence Plan, member countries and organizations will have to readjust and strengthen their intervention strategies.

For **member countries**, it is recommended to:

- Strengthen the visibility and authority of the National Coordinating Comissions (CNC) by integrating it in to the organizational chart of the Ministry in charge of forests and/or the environment and in a position equiv alent to a ministry directorate;
- Set up a platform for consultation and dialogue between the NQFs[5] and the other technical directorate s of the Ministry and the national focal points of the international conventions for the follow-up of the Conver gence Plan;
- Implement a concerted strategy for the regular payment of contributions and arrears due to COMIFAC;
- Provide the CNCs with human, material and financial resources for the satisfactory achievement of their missions;
- Improve the popularization of the Convergence Plan among all national stakeholders in order to strengt hen its ownership;
- Formalize a framework for inter-ministerial coordination on forest and environmental issues in the coun

try;

- Ensure during operational planning processes the coherence of actions and priorities of the Convergence Plan.

At the level of **COMIFAC** and subregional organizations, it is recommended:

- Strengthen the capacities of the Executive Secretariat by providing it with adequate human and financial resources;

- Strengthen the technical and financial capacities of COMIFAC partner sub-regional organizations and sub-regional networks (REPALEAC, REFADD, REPAR, REJEFAC, RECIEAC, etc.);

- Continue to advocate with the authorities of member countries for the establishment of an autonomous financing mechanism for COMIFAC and the Convergence Plan;

- Develop a concerted strategy of lobbying donors (old and new) for the mobilization of funding for the implementation of the Convergence Plan;

- Formalize a permanent consultation framework between the Secretariat and sub-regional partners for the monitoring of the implementation of the Convergence Plan;

- Revise certain indicators of the Convergence Plan that do not seem very SMART to facilitate its implementation.

For **development partners**, it is recommended that:

- The CBFP Facilitation can accompany the COMIFAC SE in advocating with Member States for the establishment of sustainable financing of COMIFAC and the Convergence Plan;

- Traditional donors (EU, GEF, CAFI, Germany, France, USA, etc.) can increase their financial allocations to support and strengthen the implementation of the Convergence Plan;

- Partners can further involve countries or sub-regional organizations in the process of designing and developing projects and programs;

- The partners can set up consultation frameworks in the different countries where they operate to facilitate the harmonization of their interventions.

4) Prospects

· The ESA will coordinate the revision and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans in the eleven (11) COMIFAC member countries;

· The ESA plans to launch the process of revising the convergence plan this year (2023) to align it with the objectives of the post-2020 Strategic Framework for Biodiversity, the Strategic Framework to Combat Desertification and Drought, the CITES Strategic Plan, the UNFF Strategic Program, the Paris Climate Agreement, etc. This process will be inclusive, interactive and participatory. In order to ensure its success, several stakeholder consultations will be organized in all eleven COMIFAC member countries and at the sub-regional level. Several studies will also be conducted in order to have the basic level data for certain challenges and priority themes that will be selected.

SELECTED LESSONS SHARED BY AGENCIES FROM COUNTRIES

The GEF8 Congo IP will build upon outcomes and lessons learned through past GEF 5 & 6 funded Projects, as well through the emerging lessons from GEF 7 CBSL IP in land planning and management, alternative livelihoods and economic development for communities around globally significant biodiversity, good practices to enable synergies through promoting multi-stakeholder participation, valuation of natural capital. These lessons learned and best practices from past or ongoing Project will be captured on an ongoing basis, documented and integrate those into project activities.

From the management of the Dja landscape in Cameroon and from the TRIDOM Landscape more broadly:

The GEF 6 COBALAM (9604) has succeeded to set up and implement clear cross-sector coordination mechanisms for integrated landscape management in the Western Highlands of Cameroon, and to ensure the effective participation of women and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in the sustainable management of two landscapes. Under GEF 7 the Congo Basin several tools are being developed for integrated landscape assessment, action planning, access to finance and outcome monitoring. This child project will grow and scale the governance models and tools for improved Dja landscape management. Other lessons will be drawn from past UNDP interventions for the TRIDOM zone[6].

From Sao Tome and Principe on the four Transformation levers in GEF8:

· **Financial leverage** - the intrinsic value of standing primary forest is higher than conversion to other uses. For example, the parks and surrounding forests in São Tomé and Príncipe provide ecosystem services that are central to the viability of the islands (e.g. as water towers for the islands). However, the mobilization of funds for the custodians of the standing forests (countries, local communities) is insufficient. The IP resources and platform will be used to mobilize finance for conservation, in particular to further implement the Sustainable Financing Plan for Protected Areas and Biodiversity in São Tomé and Príncipe, to operationalize and capitalize the Conservation Trust Fund currently being developed (e.g. using debt-for-nature swap opportunities or promoting high quality tourism investments, promoting the development of forest-friendly SMEs and greening private sector investments), among other innovative approaches.

· **Innovation and learning** - Incremental progress is not enough to achieve transformational change. Innovations in technology will be realized through activities such as the demonstration of alternative construction techniques (less dependent on timber) or adapted certification mechanisms for timber and high-value commodity products. Innovations in finance are reflected in activities such as the development and launch of international tenders for sustainable investments in Special Reserves or Multi-Use Zones of Parks, and the promotion of co-management mechanisms with local communities, also linked to innovations in business model

ution of co-management mechanisms with local communities, also linked to innovations in business model
s. Policy innovations for the long-term conservation of IFLs will be embedded in ensuring an enabling environ
ment for green investment, as well as institutional innovations in streamlining the existing institutional frame
work for biodiversity and forests. On the learning front, a range of proven approaches will be supported, inclu
ding technical exchanges and South-South learning, as well as awareness-raising to change consumer behav
ior and build new coalitions for change.

· **Multi-stakeholder dialogues** - Identifying a shared understanding and vision for forests requires new
partnerships, new stakeholder considerations and multi-stakeholder platforms to build coalitions for change.
IUCN's and BirdLife's (through BirdLife's STP programme) joint approach of unique membership of governme
nt and civil society organizations provides both convening power and impartial, trusted science to inform an
d support the integration of multi-stakeholder dialogues in this IP.

· **Governance and policy coherence** - Market failures and perverse incentives create the conditions tha
t encourage deforestation for more "productive" uses such as agriculture. Governance at all levels and the rul
e of law, including land tenure, are often weak or non-existent. The Amazon, Congo and Critical Forest Biome
s IPs provide opportunities to support policy reforms, including new and strengthened forest protection, secu
ring and ensuring private sector commitments to responsible sourcing, strengthening enforcement and redu
cing illegal logging and land conversion, and recognition of local communities in managing and protecting fo
rests, and more.

From the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the four Transformation levers in GEF8:

Levers of transformation that will be targeted in line with the theory of change to address the drivers and thre
ats include ***a) Governance and policy coherence*** (improve land tenure rights and policies for local comm
unities, including capacities on LUP and effective management of PAs; ***b) Financial* Leverage** (innovative f
unding for conservation and agricultural landscapes (carbon credits, blended finance, green bonds, debt-for-
nature swaps, biodiversity offsets, REDD+); ***c)* Multi-Stakeholder dialogue/partnerships**; ***d) Innovation
and learning*** (effective deployment of innovative finance and approaches for mobilizing funding for conserv
ation, capture and sharing of experiences, etc). It is expected that the above 4 levers will have the following i
mpact through this child project: policy and legislative reforms (land tenure rights, improved capacities, fund
s) will enable communities to own and effectively manage community landscapes and PAs with other key st
akeholders. Another impact will be the promotion of private sector engagement through innovative funding
mechanisms for conservation and agricultural landscapes. The promotion and/or introduction of carbon cre
dits, blended finance, green bonds, debt-for-nature swaps, biodiversity off-sets, etc. will not only breach the fi
nancial poverty gaps that have been preventing sustainable natural resource management after projects end,
but will also attract the private sector to fully engage in conservation project because of economic and ecolo
gical benefits. The project will also build a robust multi-stakeholder partnership at the landscape level, notab
ly by training them to understand and attach value to their various roles in favor of conservation at the landsc
ape level.

From Angola on the four Transformation levers in GEF8:

The project will support conservation, sustainable management, and effective governance of globally import
ant ecosystems at the southern-western margin of the Congo Basin tropical rainforest, at the local level in An
gola, and in a transboundary context, with significant contribution to carbon sequestration over time. It is furt
her expected to provide a model for Nature-Based-Solutions, by protecting healthy ecosystems with enhance
d climate resilience, green growth, and human well-being. Aiming to achieve the outcome of a transformation
al change at a local and national scale and with regional impact, for maintaining the ecological integrity of th

e Maiombe forest ecosystems and their carbon capture value, as well as enhancing local communities' acce ss and rights, the project will be based on an integrated approach and on an inclusive participatory process with all key stakeholders. It will address the main threats to forest ecosystem degradation and biodiversity lo ss in and around the MNP, and their underlining drivers through:

· Innovation and learning: Collection and dissemination of knowledge and best practices, informing land u se/spatial planning, design of governance arrangements, support for alternative livelihoods and nature-friend ly enterprise, and policy reform and alignment

· Financial leverage: Enhanced ability to secure innovative and sustainable financing to sustain conservati on and sustainable management in the long term

· Governance and policies: Improved incentive-environment through income generation and supportive po licies that reinforce social, economic, and environmental drivers of sustained, positive behavior change

· Multi-stakeholder dialogues: Alignment and collaboration fostered through processes ranging from com munity-level participatory land use planning and protected area co-management to multi-stakeholder spatial planning at the landscape scale to multi-country dialogue around transboundary forest landscape managem ent

[1] The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP), GEF ID 10208.

[2] See: https://www.cifor.org/knowledge/publication/8700.

[3] See: https://www.jstor.org/stable/26267984.

[4] The CIFOR 2022 Study mentions the following on page 13: "Although no ecosystem may be considered truly undisturbed, because some degree of human impact is present everywhere (Sanderson et al. 2002), the undisturbed moist forests in the [tropical moist forest GIS] product are defined as undisturbed (degradation or deforestation) tropical moist forest coverage observed over the Landsat historical record since 1983. A deforested land is defined as a permanent conversion from moist forest cover to another land cover whereas a degraded forest is defined as a moist forest cover where disturbances (canopy opening in a 0.9 ha Landsat pixel) were observed over a short period of time." Source: Eba'a Atyi R et al. (2022). The Forests of the Congo Basin. State of the Forests 2021. CIFOR.

[5] NQF = National Qualifications Framework.

[6] See e.g. https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/7457.

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Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
1,056,794.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
12,384.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
Special reserves		Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources	12,384.00			

Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
1,044,410.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
A portion of the entire PA estate, corresponding to approx. 9% of it is reported here - Equatorial Guinea		Others	60,000.00						

Basse-Lobaye, UNESCO-MAB Biosphere Reserve - CAR	2059	Protected Landscape/Seascape	18,200.00
Dja faunal Reserve - Cameroon	1240	Habitat/Species Management Area	526,004.00
Luki Biosphere Reserve - DRC	555512071	National Park	33,000.00
Maiombe National Park (Parque Nacional do Maiombe) - Angola	555756392	National Park	193,000.00

Mengame Gorilla Sanctuary - Cameroon	308636	Habitat/Species Management Area	26,000.00
Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve - Cameroon	555622119	Habitat/Species Management Area	156,672.00
Sao Tome and Príncipe Natural Park - core area / terrestrial	555592842	Natural Monument or Feature	6,207.00
São Tomé Obô Natural Park - core area / Forest area	124355	Natural Monument or Feature	24,570.40

São Tomé Obô Natural Park - core area / Mangrove area	124355	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources	230.80
São Tomé Obô Natural Park - core area / Savannah area	124355	Protected Landscape/Seascape	525.80

Indicator 2 Marine protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
917.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 2.1 Marine Protected Areas Newly created

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

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

Indicator 2.2 Marine Protected Areas Under improved management effectiveness

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
917.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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

Sao Tome and Príncipe Natural Park - core area / marine	555592842	Protected Landscape/Seascape	917.00

Indicator 3 Area of land and ecosystems under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
99423.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
Cropland	2,500.00			

Indicator 3.2 Area of forest and forest land under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
94,923.00			

Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and woodland under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
Woodlands	1,500.00			

Indicator 3.4 Area of wetlands (including estuaries, mangroves) under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
500.00			

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

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

2102608.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
2,102,608.00			

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

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

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

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

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

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

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

Title	Submitted

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

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

Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)	111719431	0	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)	0	0	0	0

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

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)	107,719,431			
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting	2025			
Duration of accounting	20			

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

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)	4,000,000			
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting	2025			
Duration of accounting	20			

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

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

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

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

Indicator 7 Shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Shared water Ecosystem	Congo/Zaire			
Count	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Indicator 7.1 Level of Transboundary Diagonostic Analysis and Strategic Action Program (TDA/SAP) formulation and implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Congo/Zaire	2			

Indicator 7.2 Level of Regional Legal Agreements and Regional management institution(s) (RMI) to support its implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Congo/Zaire	2

Indicator 7.3 Level of National/Local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministeral Committees (IMC; scale 1 to 4; See Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Congo/Zaire	2			

Indicator 7.4 Level of engagement in IWLEARN throgh participation and delivery of key products(scale 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Congo/Zaire	2			

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	106,000			

Male	101,000			
Total	207000	0	0	0

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)
Angola: CORE INDICATOR 1: Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management. The project is expected to support the improved management of the Maiombe National Park (MNP) in Angola and to support the implementation of the MNP management plan. The MNP size is 193,000 ha. CORE INDICATOR 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectare) The project is expected to support sustainable land management in an additional area of 67,000 ha west of the MNP. Improved sustainability of land management will be achieved through capacity-building activities and facilitating the local community members to shift to climate-resilient sustainable cultivation practices and other sustainable livelihoods, including direct engagement in forest ecosystem conservation. CORE INDICATOR 6: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (metric ton of CO2e) The forest conservation improved protected area management, and ecosystem restoration, through this project, is expected to result in Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigation estimated at 4M metric tons of CO2e. At the moment, we do not have access to the baseline data. A full GIS analysis will be conducted at the PPG phase and the FAO ExACT Tool will be applied. CORE INDICATOR 11: People benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex (count) The project will aim to benefit directly 8,500 (4,250 women and 4,250 men) people of IPLC residing in and around the MNP through this support and capacity building, based on "train the trainers" strategy. This number includes at least 30 community forest scouts (15 men and 15 women) that will be recruited, trained, and deployed to work with the MNP rangers. The MNP rangers (2 women and 19 men, including the Park Administrator) will also be direct beneficiaries of the project. The whole population residing in and around the MNP is estimated at 56,000 people (51% women, based on the National Institute of Statistics (INE), Angola, 2014. National Census). This whole population is expected to benefit indirectly and over time from the project through training by the direct beneficiaries that the project will train. The additional number of community members who might benefit from this project will be added at the PPG Phase. Cameroon, Core Indicator 6 notes: C6: The areas from which carbon benefits will be derived are yet to be defined. For now, rough estimated carbon benefits of at least 17,000,000 tCO2e for first period of 10 years, and of 33,000,000 tCO2 over a 20-year period can be expected. The application of FAO ex-ACT tool will be conducted during the PPG. Central African Republic, Core Indicator 6 notes: The net carbon balance per hectare per year is -26.8 tCO2-eq Carbon benefits are modest, considering that the country is not accessing CCM funds under the GEF. Equatorial Guinea, Core Indicator 6 notes: The net carbon balance per hectare per year is -3.8 tCO2-eq The São Tomé Obô Natural Park (PNOST) has a core area of 25,327.07 ha. The Príncipe NP (PNP) has a core area of 6,207 ha (terrestrial) and 917ha (marine). METTs are carried out annually in the parks to monitor management effectiveness. The 11 forests of high conservation value (12,383.96ha) identified by BirdLife and government authorities in 2019 were declared Special Reserves in March 2023. However, they do not have management plans and do not benefit from conservation investment. [43,918.03ha terrestrial & 917ha marine protected areas under improved management for conservation and sustainable use] The PNP Buffer Zone (1,149 ha) and the PNOST Buffer Zone Conservation Agriculture areas (4,459ha) will benefit from implementation of the Park management plan and therefore considered as landscapes under improved practices [5,608ha]. The PNOST Buffer Zone Conservation Forest will be restored [19,923ha]. Based on on pro-rata per area of data provided under the STP National Landscape & Forest restoration Plan (respectively 0.085, 12.6, and 3.9 tCO2

eq/ha/year for tropical forest from very low to no degradation, from low to very low degradation, and additional carbon sequestration rate in improved agroforestry systems), the revised low estimate on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated would be of 831,628 tCO2e (considering effective conservation/restoration over a 3-years period). The project will benefit at least 10,000 people (5,000 men, 5.000 women) including farming communities living and/or benefiting from subsistence farming and timber/non-timber forests products collection, and indirectly benefiting the entire population of the country estimated to 210,240 inhabitants in 2023.

Risks to Achieving Program Outcomes **Describe any risks that might emerge from preparation and implementation phases of child projects under the program, and what are the mitigation strategies the child project preparation process will undertake to address these (e.g. what alternatives may be considered during child project preparation-such as in terms of consultations, role and choice of counterparts, delivery mechanisms, locations in country, flexible design elements, etc.). Identify any of the risks listed below that would call in question the viability of the child project during its implementation. Please describe any possible mitigation measures needed.**

The risk rating should reflect the overall risk to program outcomes considering the global context and ambition of the program. The rating scale is: High, Substantial, Moderate, Low.

Risk Categories	Rating	Comments
Climate	Low	Climate change is considered an Extant Driver in the TOC. It cannot be avoided, but its impact on the program is, for now, expected to be low. Risk mitigation measure embedded in IP design: Adaptive management applies. Projects approved under the pipeline will be encouraged and capacitated to consider climate risk contingencies during design, including insurance, and redundancy to withstand extreme events.
Environment and Social	Moderate	Competition for land and the break-down of social cohesion will undermine accountability in social relations, putting Program activities at risk. (Linked to Key Assumption 7) Enhanced risk mitigation measures: First it is important to understand which areas among Program sites have the highest risks already during the PPG and then monitor. The Program will address issues of competing land uses and the break-down of cohesion at the local level through various tools, in particular inclusive land use planning, consultative governance platforms at sub national level to support multi-stakeholder decision-making. Component 3 activities are dedicated to the engagement of stakeholders, including IPLCs, NGOs/CBOs and other conservation-friendly non-dominant groups.
Political and Governance	Moderate	There is not enough political will and not an adequate level of collaboration at the regional at national levels to sustain a successful implementation of the IP. (Linked to Assumption 1) Risk mitigation measure embedded in IP design: The Program considers that there is sufficient political will from country governments for implementation. This aspect of the risk is low. Also, the Program will support the coalescing role of ministries responsible for the environment for pushing the IP's agenda forward in high-level political fora at country level so that Component 1 activities will gain traction. As for collaboration among regional institutions, there is prior evidence of difficulties; hence the overall risk is elevated to 'Moderate'. Collaborative relationships (e.g. between ECCAS and COMIFAC) will need to be strengthened through the Program and other supportive initiatives. A series of Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues are foreseen in the Program for achieving this goal. Localized conflict in the Congo Basin becomes an impediment to the realization of key programmatic results. (Linked to key Assumption 8) Enhanced risk mitigation measures: The choice of sites is not in areas riddled by conflicts, so the impact is low. The development of this risk will be monitored during implementation, including in collaboration with UN Security.
Macro-economic		[covered under "Other" as it includes other topics as well]

Strategies and Policies	Low	There are negative incentives/subsidies at country level to the point of severely weakening the IP's conservation goals. (Linked to Assumption 3) Risk mitigation measure embedded in IP design: Through the Coordination Child Project, a study will be conducted to identify policy issues that lack coherence at the at the national and international level. Then, a plan for addressing those will be devised. Financial resources mobilized for achieving the goals of the Congo IP will be ultimately insufficient. (Linked to Assumption 6) Risk mitigation measure embedded in IP design: Program design conducted a careful analysis of stakes and context to determine the optimal level of ambition for the Program with the resources available. Component 3 activities is dedicated to the leveraging of resources.
Technical design of project or program	Low	There are insufficient opportunities for conservation-friendly innovation and learning and key stakeholders are unable to enhance their capacity through targeted training provided by the Program. (Linked to Assumption 5) Risk mitigation measure embedded in IP design: Component 5 activities are dedicated to the KM and learning.
Institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability	Moderate	National and regional sectoral policies lack coherence and end up not favoring the IP's conservation goals. (Linked to Assumption 2 Risk mitigation measure embedded in IP design: Component 1 activities are dedicated to fixing the enabling environment, including policies and regulations.
Fiduciary: Financial Management and Procurement	High	Risk of delays in upstarting and during implementation due to difficulties with Financial Management and Procurement. (Linked to Key Assumption 9) Enhanced risk mitigation measures: Evidence from the implementation of the GEF-7 Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP) indicates that this risk can be expected. It will be managed pre-emptively through process streamlining within UNEP. The gradual adoption of e-technologies in program management, financial transactions and communication is expected to help bring transparency and speed to processes that are currently challenging.
Stakeholder Engagement	Substantial	Key stakeholders, including women, IPLCs, NGOs/CBOs and other conservation-friendly non-dominant groups are not able to effectively participate in the program nor to benefit from activities. (Linked to Assumption 4) Risk mitigation measure embedded in IP design: Component 2 activities are dedicated to the engagement of stakeholders. The risk will be mitigated through dedicated investment, systematic engagement and targeted training of leaders from non-dominant groups.
Other	Low	Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, other diseases outbreaks, climatic and other global/regional level shocks delay the Program and make it unviable. These risks are considered under an Extant Driver in the TOC. Such events cannot be avoided, but their impact on the program is, for now, expected to be low. Risk mitigation measure embedded in IP design: Adaptive management applies.
Financial Risks for NGI projects		

Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	

C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Describe how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

Confirm that any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified.

(approximately 2-3 pages)

The Congo basin countries, have each at its national jurisdiction and within the framework of regional cooperation, develop policies frameworks and develop tools in favour of sound and integrated forest conservation and generation of livelihood to support local development and national economy. The GEF 8 Integrated Program will address the drivers of forest loss and degradation through strategies aimed at creating a better enabling environment for forest governance; supporting national and sub-national land use planning across mixed-use landscapes; strengthening effective protected areas management; clarifying land tenure and other relevant policies; supporting alternative livelihoods and the sustainable management of commercial and subsistence agriculture lands to reduce pressure on forests, biodiversity and water; and utilizing financial mechanisms and incentives for sustainable forest utilization such as markets, the REDD+ Framework, Natural Capital Accounting and other PES. The program will deliver it objectives implementation of national child projects, each contribution within target landscape multiple global environment benefits in integrated manner.

In Angola, the child project will focus on enhancing the integrated conservation of the Maiombe forest ecosystems in Angola, based on the MNP management plan, and additional landscape, as a model for a nature-based solution for climate change mitigation and with the aim to benefit IPLCs through improved practices and sustainability, as well as on mainstreaming forest conservation into the national legislation and policy frameworks. It will also support transboundary collaboration through the MTI, based on the MTI strategic plan.

In Cameroon, the child project will contribute to generating global environmental benefits for biodiversity and ecosystem services over the Dja Biosphere Reserve, agricultural lands, fallows and forest lands managed by communities and councils in the Dja landscape. This will benefit the globally significant biodiversity that depends on them and contribute to the GEF core indicators as defined above. The project will demonstrate livelihood benefits (diversification and improved income) through business support for green livelihoods options to improve livelihoods of local households (including smallholder farmers) in the demonstration sites, with the potential for wide replication.

In Central African Republic, the project will contribute to generating global environmental benefits for biodiversity and a wide range of socio-economic and environmental benefits. This will also enhance biodiversity conservation as well as increase rates of forest carbon sequestration.

In DRC, the child project support biodiversity assessment and update using cost – effective technology and best science. The project will support community based natural resources management within provincial land use planning, and support for strengthening recognition local community land tenure and usage

rights on ancestral lands within national, provincial and local policies and land use frameworks. The project will also support integration of community – based patrol teams and approaches to control and monitor illegal logging and poaching inside and outside Protected Areas.

In Equatorial Guinea, the child project will contribute to various global environmental benefits (GEBs) related to the conservation and sustainable development of the Congo Basin globally significant biome, and will help Equatorial Guinea to reach GBF Target 3 goal, by ensuring the sustainability of the national protected areas system, and helping to maintain the integrity of globally significant forested areas outside PAs and the ecosystem services they provide. The project will contribute to exploring application of Biodiversity-Positive Carbon Credits and Nature Certificates, economic instruments for biodiversity conservation and investigate the feasibility of enabling conditions that could support the delivery of the "Project Finance for Permanence". The project will help to safeguard socio-economic benefits provided by nature to local communities as well as to national economies, through investment in community-based activities surrounding the protected areas and catalyzing private sector investments that can help create needed green and blue jobs.

In Sao Tome and Principe, the Child project will promote and support an enhanced management of the area covered by the Obo Natural and Principe Natural Park (PNP) Parks, and surrounding "intact" forests ecosystems. This will generate global environment benefits by enhancing the carbon stock potential of this tropical forest landscape. Exact carbon sequestration potential will be quantified during the preparation of the project. The enhancement of carbon stock, through conservation measures will ultimately preserve biodiversity, through the maintenance of the forest as their habitat.

The Regional Coordination Child Project will provide Coordination and manage the KM, Capacity Building, Communications functions of the overall Integrated Program. It will also manage the standardized M&E system to be developed under the GEF 7 CBSL IP, to aggregate data from national child projects, track program results, outcomes and risks. It will also provide Technical Assistance service on specific targeted issues such as: IPLCs engagement with Private sector, Public-Private Collaboration on Deforestation-Free commodity and supply Chains, engagement with financial institutions coordination with UNODC, TRAFFIC, MiKE, INTERPOL to address wildlife crime and illegal trade in Fauna and flora, Natural Capital accounting and PES design and implementation, engagement with other Global Platform and initiatives such as the inclusive development of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, etc.

Relating to the CBD Post-2020 Framework for the CBD, also known as the "The "Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework" (GBF) [1], the Congo IP will make important contributions to the GBF (see e.g. Figure 8 with the TOC and related narrative). For how this contribution is specifically foreseen in relation to all of the 20 targets under the GBF, refer to Table 6 below.

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Table 6. How the Congo IP is aligned with the 2030 Targets of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

2030 Targets of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework	GEF Core indicators	Explanation of the link	How the Program intends to incorporate the policy guidance	Linkages to Regional Coordination Child Project's Outputs
Reducing threats to biodiversity (Targets 1-8)				
TARGET 1 Ensure that **all areas are under participatory integrated biodiversity inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes** addressing land and sea use change, **to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030,** while respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.	1, 4	This program will address the drivers of forest loss and degradation -specific to each region- and may include supporting national and sub-national land use planning across mixed-use landscapes; strengthening of protected areas; clarifying land tenure and other relevant policies; supporting alternative livelihoods and the sustainable management of commercial and subsistence agriculture lands to reduce pressure on adjoining forests.	The Congo IP will address the drivers of forest loss and degradation that are specific to the region. Strategies that will apply and may include supporting national and sub-national land use planning across mixed-use landscapes; strengthening of protected areas; clarifying land tenure and other relevant policies; supporting alternative livelihoods and the sustainable management of commercial and subsistence agriculture lands to reduce pressure on adjoining forests. Priority interventions at country level includes (a) Strengthening the management of Protected Areas, including by leveraging finance for their long-term management; (b) Develop integrated land-use planning (supported by the Regional Coordination Child Project; and	Outputs 1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5

			(c) Promote the adoption of emerging modalities of conservation on the ground, such as Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and various Nature-based Solutions to achieve conservation outside the protected areas.	
TARGET 2 Ensure that by 2030 at least ***30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration,*** in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity.	3	Support analysis to enhance the role of forest conservation and restoration in ambitious nationally determined contributions (NDCs), net zero emissions strategies, 30 x 30 targets, Bonn Challenge targets, and other national strategies and targets.	Restoration is not a strong element of the Congo IP, although some of the Child Projects have proposed restoration actions at the landscape level. The Program can support from the regional level by helping mobilize resources and develop methodologies.	NA
TARGET 3 Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least ***30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories,*** where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.	1, 4.5	The Program aims to expand the coverage of protected areas in the critical forest biomes to safeguard globally significant biodiversity, carbon stocks and sinks, and improve ecological connectivity in the forest biomes (national, sub-national, transboundary). The Program will also promote Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and various	Currently, the targets are still being worked out with countries in order to enhance the level of protection. São Tomé and Principe is proposing the creation of new PAs. Equatorial Guinea is considering to embrace the OECM modality for the management of landscapes.	Outputs 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 4.1 and 4.2

		ures (OECMs) and various Nature-based Solutions to achieve conservation outside the protected areas.		
TARGET 8 ***Minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience through mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction actions, including through nature-based solution and/or ecosystem-based approaches,*** while minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity.	6	The Program aims to expand the coverage of protected areas in the critical forest biomes to safeguard globally significant biodiversity, carbon stocks and sinks, and improve ecological connectivity in the forest biomes (national, sub-national, transboundary). The Program aims to strengthen the management of existing forests, including those in protected areas and protected area systems (national and sub-national).	The focus on undisturbed forests and the need to stabilize land use is present in the Program.	Component 2 under which scaled up actions on conservation and landscape management are be expected operationalized (i.e. are aligned with the subject matter of the Component).
Meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit-sharing (Targets 9-13)				
TARGET 9 Ensure that the ***management and use of wild species are sustainable, thereby providing social, economic and environmental benefits for people, especially those in vulnerable situations and those most dependent on biodiversity,*** including through sustainable biodiversity-based activities, products and services that enhance biodiversity, and protecting and encouraging customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities.	4	The Program aims to: a) Support conservation-friendly livelihoods at the local level and improve the sustainability of the "productive" sectors to ensure that they are compatible with the conservation of critical forest biomes, including primary forests.	Mixed use landscapes include productive forests which are proposed managed for enhancing conservation. Land-use policies are a valuable tool in the fight against deforestation and forest degradation.	Component 2 under which scaled up actions on conservation and landscape management are be expected operationalized (i.e. are aligned

			Protected areas, forestry concessions and community forests can significantly reduce forest loss and engage IPLCs in the conservation of forests, while securing their livelihoods.	with the subject matter of the Component).
TARGET 10 Ensure that ***areas under agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry are managed sustainably, in particular through the sustainable use of biodiversity, including through a substantial increase of the application of biodiversity friendly practices, such as sustainable intensification, agroecological and other innovative approaches*** contributing to the resilience and long-term efficiency and productivity of these production systems and to food security, conserving and restoring biodiversity and maintaining nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services.	4	Program aims to strengthen the management of existing forests, including those in protected areas and protected area systems (national and sub-national). Program aims to: a) Support conservation-friendly livelihoods at the local level and improve the sustainability of the "productive" sectors to ensure that they are compatible with the conservation of critical forest biomes, including primary forests.	[As above]	[as above]
TARGET 11 ***Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services,*** such as regulation of air, water, and climate, soil health, pollination and reduction of disease risk, ***as well as protection from natural hazards and disasters,*** through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches for the benefit of all people and nature	4 and 6	Program aims to strengthen the management of existing forests, including those in protected areas and protected area systems (national and sub-national).	[As above]	[as above]

of all people and nature.		Program aims to expand the coverage of protected areas in the critical forest biomes to safeguard globally significant biodiversity, carbon stocks and sinks, and improve ecological connectivity in the forest biomes (national, sub-national, transboundary).		
Tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming (Targets 14-23)				
TARGET 14 Ensure the ***full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning and development processes, poverty eradication strategies, strategic environmental assessments, environmental impact assessments and, as appropriate, national accounting, within and across all levels of government and across all sectors,*** in particular those with significant impacts on biodiversity, progressively aligning all relevant public and private activities, fiscal and financial flows with the goals and targets of this framework.	No core indicators.	Improve land tenure rights and policies especially the legal recognition of the customary rights and tenure security of IPLCs (e.g., free, prior, and informed consent processes and Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas).	The IP's Component 3 is focusing on IPLCs and the need to ensure that IPLCs have effective access to conservation and climate finance, including through gender transformative approaches. Component 1 focuses on governance and policies. Component 1 outputs (Enabling environment for the conservation of Congo Basin forest and ecosystems services at national and regional levels)	All outputs under Components 1 and 3.
TARGET 18 ***Identify by 2025, and eliminate, phase out or reform incentives, in***	No core in	Program aims to: a) Strengthen multi-scale and multi-stakeholder governance	Multi-stakeholder processes are a key element of the IP's strategy, and an important e	Component 1 outputs.

cluding subsidies, harmful for biodiversity, in a proportionate, just, fair, effective and equitable way, while substantially and progressively reducing them by at least 500 billion United States dollars per year by 2030, starting with the most harmful incentives, and scale up positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.	e in dicators.	ti-stakeholder governance and law enforcement for increased policy coherence on incentives and mechanisms to conserve and sustainably manage forests and eliminate perverse subsidies; and b) Assist developing financial and other incentives for forest conservation while promoting the elimination of perverse incentives that increase the pressure on critical forests.	strategy, and an important one for addressing conflict, including land use conflict. Gender transformative approaches will apply.	
TARGET 19 ***Substantially and progressively increase the level of financial resources from all sources,*** in an effective, timely and easily accessible manner, including domestic, international, public and private resources, in accordance with Article 20 of the Convention, to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans, by 2030 mobilizing at least 200 billion United States dollars per year,	No core indicators.	Improve resource mobilization and contribute to the implementation of the international development agenda related to financial incentives to conserve and restore critical forests, including the REDD+ Framework, carbon markets, nature-positive trade policies that reward forest conservation and restoration, and long-term financing of protected areas.	Component 4 is dedicated to leveraging finance for the effective governance of forest landscapes.	All outputs under Component 4.
TARGET 20 ***Strengthen capacity-building and development, access to and transfer of technology, and promote development of and access to innovation and technical and scientific cooperation, including throug***		All IPs through their regional or global coordination platforms.	Component 5 is focused on capacity building, communication, although a gender capacity development, with due consideration for gender e	All outputs under Component 5.

h South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, to meet the needs for effective implementation, particularly in developing countries, f ostering joint technology development and joint scientific research progra ms for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and strengthe ning scientific research and monitoring capacities, commensurate with th e ambition of the goals and targets of the framework.			e consideration for gender e quality and women's empow erment.	

[1] Reference is: https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-final-text-kunming-montreal-gbf-221222, accessed on 05-May-2023.

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the program have been addressed as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Program Description (Section B).

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during PFD development as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to program outcomes and plan to develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan in the Coordination Child Project before CEO endorsement has been clearly articulated in the Program Description (Section B).

Yes

Were the following stakeholders consulted during PFD preparation phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Yes

Civil Society Organizations: Yes

Private Sector: Yes

Provide a brief summary and list of names and dates of consultations

(Please upload to the portal documents tab any stakeholder engagement plan or assessments that have been done during the PFD preparation phase.)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the program?

Yes

And if so, has its role been described and justified in the section B program description?

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguards

We confirm that we have provided indicative information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed program and any measures to address such risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex D).

Yes

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Medium/Moderate			

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described in the Program Description (Section B)

Yes

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

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

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	GEF Program Financing($)	Agency Fee($)	Total GEF Financing($)
UNEP	GET	Cameroon	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	7,139,450	642,550	7,782,000.00
UNEP	GET	Cameroon	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	2,379,817	214,183	2,594,000.00
UNEP	GET	Cameroon	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	446,216	40,159	486,375.00
UNEP	GET	Cameroon	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	446,216	40,159	486,375.00
UNEP	GET	Cameroon	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	148,739	13,386	162,125.00
UNEP	GET	Cameroon	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	148,739	13,386	162,125.00
IUCN	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	2,484,223	223,580	2,707,803.00

IUCN	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	1,974,394	177,695	2,152,089.00
IUCN	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	442,645	39,838	482,483.00
IUCN	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	828,074	74,527	902,601.00
IUCN	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	658,131	59,232	717,363.00
IUCN	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	147,548	13,279	160,827.00
CI	GET	Angola	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	3,114,564	280,311	3,394,875.00
CI	GET	Angola	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	1,038,188	93,437	1,131,625.00
IUCN	GET	Congo DR	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	6,479,410	583,147	7,062,557.00
IFAD	GET	Congo DR	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	4,319,607	388,765	4,708,372.00
IUCN	GET	Congo DR	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	2,159,803	194,382	2,354,185.00
IFAD	GET	Congo DR	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	1,439,869	129,588	1,569,457.00
IUCN	GET	Congo DR	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	610,144	54,913	665,057.00
IFAD	GET	Congo DR	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	406,763	36,609	443,372.00
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	3,582,102	322,389	3,904,491.00

UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	895,526	80,597	976,123.00
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	895,526	80,597	976,123.00
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	1,011,943	91,075	1,103,018.00
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	1,194,034	107,463	1,301,497.00
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	298,508	26,866	325,374.00
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	298,508	26,866	325,374.00
UNEP	GET	Equatorial Guinea	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	1,770,533	159,486	1,930,019.00
UNEP	GET	Equatorial Guinea	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	885,288	79,676	964,964.00
UNEP	GET	Equatorial Guinea	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	442,645	39,838	482,483.00
UNEP	GET	Equatorial Guinea	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	590,192	53,117	643,309.00
UNEP	GET	Equatorial Guinea	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	295,095	26,559	321,654.00
UNEP	GET	Equatorial Guinea	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	147,548	13,279	160,827.00
UNEP	GET	Regional	Biodiversity	BD IP Global Platforms	2,379,817	214,138	2,593,955.00
UNEP	GET	Regional	Land Degradation	LD IP Global Platforms	2,379,817	214,138	2,593,955.00

UNEP	GET	Regional	Climate Change	CC IP Global Platforms	2,379,817	214,139	2,593,956.00
				Total GEF Resources($)	**56,259,439.00**	**5,063,349.00**	**61,322,788.00**

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	PPG($)	Agency Fee($)	Total PPG Funding($)
UNEP	GET	Cameroon	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	200,000	18,000	**218,000.00**
UNEP	GET	Cameroon	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	66,666	6,000	**72,666.00**
UNEP	GET	Cameroon	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	12,501	1,124	**13,625.00**
UNEP	GET	Cameroon	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	12,501	1,124	**13,625.00**
UNEP	GET	Cameroon	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	4,166	375	**4,541.00**
UNEP	GET	Cameroon	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	4,166	375	**4,541.00**
IUCN	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	64,287	5,785	**70,072.00**
IUCN	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	32,143	2,893	**35,036.00**
IUCN	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	16,071	1,446	**17,517.00**
IUCN	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	21,428	1,929	**23,357.00**
IUCN	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	10,714	964	**11,678.00**
IUCN	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	5,357	482	**5,839.00**
CI	GET	Angola	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	112,500	10,125	**122,625.00**

CI	GET	Angola	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	37,500	3,375	**40,875.00**
IUCN	GET	Congo DR	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	126,095	11,347	**137,442.00**
IFAD	GET	Congo DR	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	84,063	7,566	**91,629.00**
IUCN	GET	Congo DR	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	11,874	1,070	**12,944.00**
IFAD	GET	Congo DR	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	7,916	712	**8,628.00**
IUCN	GET	Congo DR	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	42,031	3,783	**45,814.00**
IFAD	GET	Congo DR	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	28,021	2,522	**30,543.00**
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	87,623	7,885	**95,508.00**
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	21,906	1,972	**23,878.00**
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	21,906	1,971	**23,877.00**
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	24,756	2,229	**26,985.00**
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	29,207	2,629	**31,836.00**
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	7,301	657	**7,958.00**
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	7,301	657	**7,958.00**

UNEP	GET	Equatorial Guinea	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	64,240	5,741	**69,981.00**
UNEP	GET	Equatorial Guinea	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	32,144	2,892	**35,036.00**
UNEP	GET	Equatorial Guinea	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	16,071	1,446	**17,517.00**
UNEP	GET	Equatorial Guinea	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	21,000	1,890	**22,890.00**
UNEP	GET	Equatorial Guinea	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	10,714	964	**11,678.00**
UNEP	GET	Equatorial Guinea	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	5,357	482	**5,839.00**
UNEP	GET	Regional	Biodiversity	BD IP Global Platforms	66,667	6,000	**72,667.00**
UNEP	GET	Regional	Land Degradation	LD IP Global Platforms	66,667	6,000	**72,667.00**
UNEP	GET	Regional	Climate Change	CC IP Global Platforms	66,666	6,000	**72,666.00**
				Total PPG Amount	**1,449,526.00**	**130,412.00**	**1,579,938.00**

Sources of Funds for Country STAR Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Source of Funds	Total($)
UNEP	GET	Cameroon	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	8,000,000.00
UNEP	GET	Cameroon	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	500,000.00
UNEP	GET	Cameroon	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	500,000.00

IUCN	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	2,777,875.00
IUCN	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	2,187,125.00
IUCN	GET	Sao Tome and Principe	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	500,000.00
CI	GET	Angola	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	3,517,500.00
IUCN	GET	Congo DR	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	7,200,000.00
IFAD	GET	Congo DR	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	4,800,000.00
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	4,000,000.00
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	1,000,000.00
UNEP	GET	Central African Republic	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	1,000,000.00
UNEP	GET	Equatorial Guinea	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	2,000,000.00
UNEP	GET	Equatorial Guinea	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	1,000,000.00
UNEP	GET	Equatorial Guinea	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	500,000.00
				Total GEF Resources($)	**39,482,500.00**

Indicative Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Co-financing($)
CFB Congo IP	GET	10,709,177.00	90,000,000.00
CFB Congo IP	GET	6,535,015.00	6,300,000.00
CFB Congo IP	GET	4,152,752.00	68,800,178.00
CFB Congo IP	GET	15,415,596.00	175,500,000.00

CFB Congo IP	GET		8,176,147.00	32,539,999.00
CFB Congo IP	GET		4,131,301.00	33,000,000.00
CFB Congo IP	GET		7,139,451.00	22,500,000.00
		Total Project Cost ($)	**56,259,439.00**	**428,640,177.00**

Indicative Co-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount($)
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED)	Public Investment	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	10,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Economy, Planning and Land Planning	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Forests and Wildlife	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Rainforest Alliance	Grant	Investment mobilized	3,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Rainforest Alliance	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Biodiverse Landscapes Fund (BLF) / /UK DEFRA	Grant	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Municipalities of Somalomo, Messamena, Mindourou, Lomié, Messok, Ngoyla, Mintom, Djoum, Oveng, Mvangan, Meyomessala	Public Investment	Investment mobilized	20,000,000.00

Private Sector	PALLISCO, FIPCAM, TELCAR (GARGIL), OLAM, HEVECAM, Sud-Cameroun Hévéa	Equity	Investment mobilized	30,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization	APIFED, SAPED, TF-RD, AAFEBEN, REPALEF,REPALEAC, AWF, WWF, ZSL, Noé	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development, and Fisheries / Directorate for Forest and Biodiversity	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development, and Fisheries / Directorate for Forest and Biodiversity	Grant	Investment mobilized	250,000.00
Civil Society Organization	BirdLife International and local NGOs under its umbrella	Grant	Investment mobilized	2,820,000.00
Civil Society Organization	BirdLife International and local NGOs under its umbrella	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	180,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Infrastructure, Public Works, Natural Resources and Environment / General Directorate for the Environment	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	400,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Recipient Country Government	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	150,000.00
Civil Society Organization	EU Executing Agencies or NGOs	Grant	Investment mobilized	2,000,000.00
GEF Agency	Conservation International Foundation	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	732,395.00
Recipient Country Government	Government of Angola - Ministry of Environment	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	30,314,704.00
Recipient Country Government	Government of Angola - Provincial Government of Cabinda	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	6,265,217.00
Recipient Country Government	Government of Angola - Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	31,487,862.00

Recipient Country Government	Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development,	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	59,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization		In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	8,000,000.00
GEF Agency	IFAD	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	40,000,000.00
GEF Agency	IUCN	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization	AFD	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	53,500,000.00
Civil Society Organization	ICCN	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
Civil Society Organization	WWF RCA	Grant	Investment mobilized	2,040,000.00
Donor Agency	World Bank	Grant	Investment mobilized	20,000,000.00
GEF Agency	IFAD	Grant	Investment mobilized	9,999,999.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Forests and Environment	Public Investment	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Forests and Environment	Public Investment	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00

Donor Agency	AfDB	Grant	Investment mobilized	22,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Positive Conservation Partnerships fund	Grant	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Donor Agency	USAID (Forest and biodiversity related Programs)	Grant	Investment mobilized	10,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization	EC - International Partnerships through the Rapid RESCUE: Rapid Response for Ecosystems, Species and Communities Undergoing Emergencies	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Private Sector	CAFI investments through grants and other mechanisms	Grant	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
GEF Agency	UNEP GRASP	Grant	Investment mobilized	2,000,000.00
GEF Agency	UNEP GRASP	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3,000,000.00
Others	WCMC	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization	IUCN Palm Oil Task Force	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
			Total Co-financing($)	**428,640,177.00**

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Type	Name	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	Victoria Luque	4/12/2023	UNEP GEF Coordinator - Victoria Luque	+254207624544	victoria.luque@un.org

Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

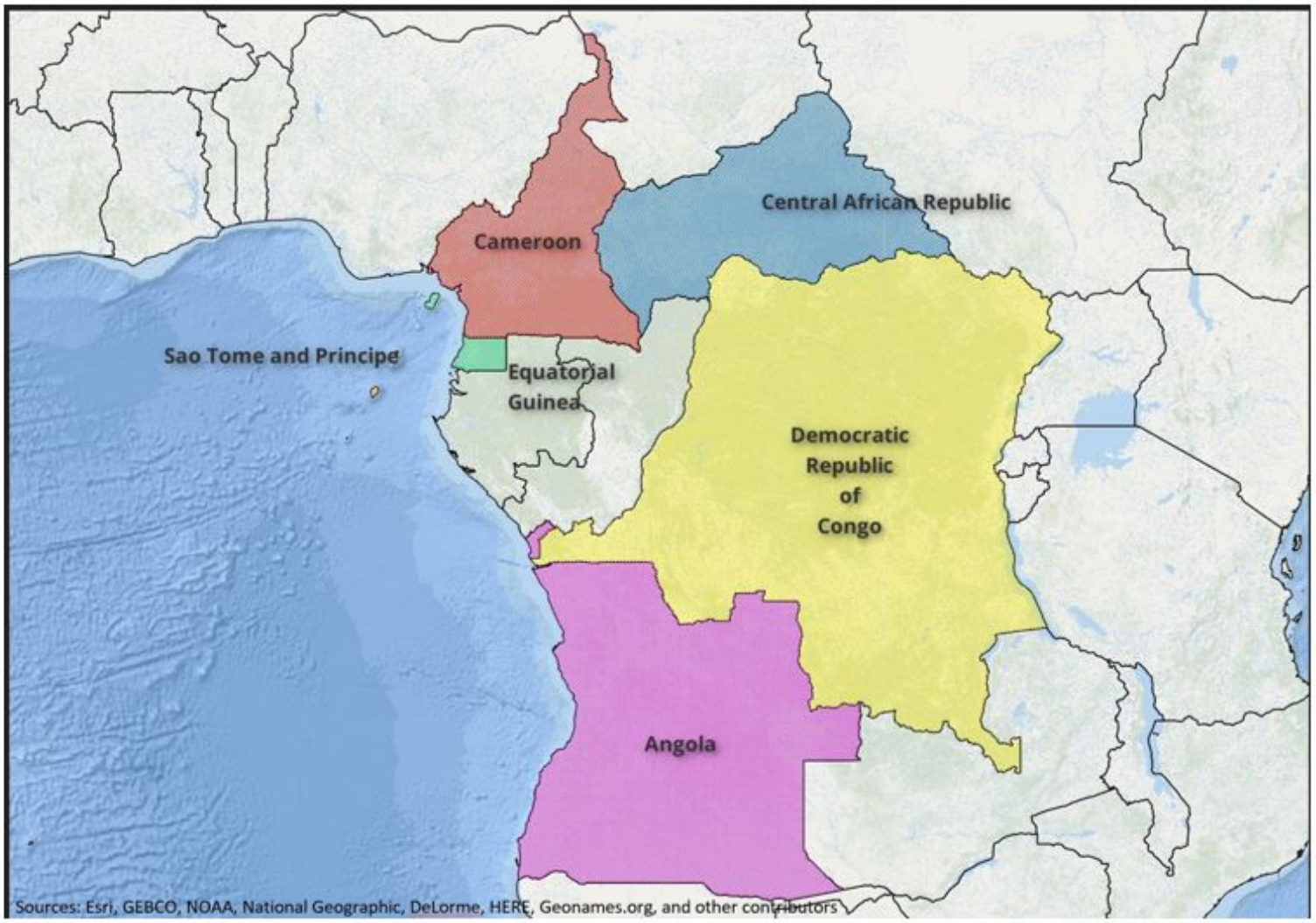
Name	Position	Ministry	Date
Mr. Julio Ingles Joao Ferreira	Angola Operational Focal Point	Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Environment	4/12/2023
Dr. Haman Unusa	Cameroon OFP	Ministry of Environment Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development	3/30/2023
Lambert GNAPELET	Central African Republic OFP	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	4/9/2023
Antonio Micha Ondo Angue	Equatorial Guinea OFP	Ministry of Forests and Environment	4/4/2023
Daniel Helio De Sousa Baia	Sao Tome et Principe OFP	Ministry of Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Environment	5/18/2023
Benjamin Toirambe Bamoninga	DRC OFP	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	5/18/2023

ANNEX C: PROGRAM LOCATION

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

A detailed map is attached to the project package.

Figure 10. Program countries



#	Country	Site Name	Area (ha)	Notes
1	Angola	Mayombe National Park	260,000	
2	Cameroon	NA - "the proposed project site around Dja, Ngoyla, Mengame, Odzala Kokoua PAs"	2,000,000	TOTAL landscape has 4M ha
3	Central African Republic	The Basse-Lobaye Forest Landscape	421,920	
4	Democratic Republic of Congo	Luki-Mayombe (LML)	1,377,435	
5	Democratic Republic of Congo	Mai-Ndombe (MNL)	5,203,879	
6	Democratic Republic of Congo	South Oubangui (SOL)	12,847,689	
7	Equatorioal Guinea	Bata	NA	point location
8	Equatorioal Guinea	Luba	NA	point location
9	Equatorioal Guinea	Evinayong	NA	point location
10	Equatorioal Guinea	Nsork	NA	point location
11	Equatorioal Guinea	Acurenam	NA	point location
12	Equatorioal Guinea	Anganchi	NA	point location
13	Equatorioal Guinea	Basile	NA	point location
14	Sao Tome and Principe	Sao Tome Obo Natural park and Buffer Zone	20,475	
15	Sao Tome and Principe	Principe Obo Natural Park and Buffer Zone	7,128	
		TOTAL	22,138,526	

ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

(Program level) Attach agency safeguard screen form including rating of risk types and overall risk rating.

Title

SRIF - Amazon, Congo, Forest Biomes The congo IP

ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Desertification
Significant Objective 1	Significant Objective 1	Significant Objective 1	Principal Objective 2

ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Influencing Models	Transform policy and regulatory environments Strengthen institutional capacity/decision-making Convene multi-stakeholder alliances Demonstrate innovative approaches		
Stakeholders	Indigenous peoples Beneficiaries Private sector Local communities Civil society		
Capacity, Knowledge and Research	Knowledge Generation and Exchange		
Gender Equality	Gender results areas		
Focal Area/Theme	Integrated programs		

ANNEX H: CHILD PROJECT INFORMATION

Title	
Resubmitted Congo IP Concept Notes Compendium_180523	
Resubmitted Congo IP Concept Notes Compendium_160523	
Combined Congo IP Concept Notes	

Child Projects under the Program						
Country	Project Title	GEF Agency	GEF Amount($) PROJECT FINANCING	Agency Fee($)	Total($)	
	FSPs					
Cameroon	Strengthening governance and ecosystem connectivity for biodiversity conservation and improved livelihoods in the Dja landscape	UNEP	10,709,177.00	963,823.00	11,673,000.00	
Sao Tome and Principe	São Tomé e Príncipe's intact forests - the Obô Natural Parks and their buffer zones: a treasure to conserve and restore.	IUCN	6,535,015.00	588,151.00	7,123,166.00	
Angola	Integrated conservation of the Maiombe forest ecosystem in Cabinda Province Angola	CI	4,152,752.00	373,748.00	4,526,500.00	
Congo DR	Sustainable Management of the Mayombe, Oubangui and Maï Ndombe tropical forest Landscapes to facilitate conservation of natural resources, local development, food security and climate change mitigation in DRC	IUCN	15,415,596.00	1,387,404.00	16,803,000.00	
Central African Republic	Integrated Community-based Management of High Value Forest Ecosystems in Southwestern Central African Republic, to safeguard globally outstanding biodiversity, carbon stock and ecosystem services from key threats, particularly unsustainable land use practices	UNEP	8,176,147.00	735,853.00	8,912,000.00	

Equatorial Guinea	Developing biodiversity and biocarbon finance financing instruments for conserving forests in Equatorial Guinea through improved livelihoods for Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs)	UNEP	4,131,301.00	371,955.00	4,503,256.00	
Regional	Amazon Congo Critical Forest Biomes: UNEP's Regional Coordination Project for The Congo Basin Integrated Program (IP)	UNEP	7,139,451.00	642,415.00	7,781,866.00	
	Subtotal ($)		56,259,439.00	5,063,349.00		
	MSPs					
	Subtotal ($)		0.00	0.00		
	Grant Total ($)		56,259,439.00	5,063,349.00	61,322,788.00	