

# Congo Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

11241

**Countries**

Regional (Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo DR, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe)

**Project Name**

Congo Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program

**Agencies**

UNEP, CI, IFAD, IUCN

**Date received by PM**

4/12/2023

**Review completed by PM**

5/17/2023

**Program Manager**

Jean-Marc Sinnassamy

**Focal Area**

Multi Focal Area

**Project Type**

PFD

# GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF) REVIEW SHEET

## 1. General Program Information

a) Is the Program Information table correctly filled, including specifying adequate executing partners?

Secretariat's Comments

May 17, 2023

Addressed.

April 26, 2023

### General information table

- The name can be misleading as it includes the name of other IP (Amazon) ? while this is not a reason to return the program, you may want to consider asking the Lead Agency to remove ?Amazon? from the title. Please, use **Congo Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program** (Congo IP in short) in view to be coherent with the other regions (MesoAmerica CFB IP, Indo-Malaya CFB IP).

- The Anticipated Program Executing Entities are bundled in one line, which leads to a mistake in the Type (not all can be classified as ?Government?) ? please ask the Lead Agency to fill out this information using individual rows so each executing entity can be correctly classified.

Program Title:	Amazon, Congo, Critical Forest Biomes: The Congo Basin 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:	
Other GEF Agenc(ies):	CJ IFAD IUCN	Submission Date :	4/12/2023
Type of Trust Fund:	GET		
Anticipated Program Executing Entity(s):	<p>Angola: Ministry of Environment (MINAMB); Cameroon: Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development (MINEPDDED) as the Lead Executing Agency, Central African Republic: The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development as the Lead Executing Agency; Democratic Republic of the Congo: Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Project Management Unit of the AVENIR project (Ministry of Agriculture); Equatorial Guinea: Ministry of Forestry and Environment (as the main Executing agency); Sao Tome and Principe: Directorate for Forest and Biodiversity, General Directorate for the Environment</p> <p>Rainforest Alliance (RA); Organisation Centrafricaine pour la Défense de la Nature (OCDN); National Institute for Forestry Development and Management of the Protected Areas System (INDEFOR-AP); Birdlife International</p>	<p>Anticipated Program Executing Partner Type(s):</p> <p>Government</p> <p>CSO</p>	

**May 17, 2023**

Addressed.

Agency's Comments

**16 May 2023**

1. UNEP has adopted the suggestion from the GEF Secretariat and changed the Program's title in the GEF's portal and in related documentation, as follows: "Congo Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program". UNEP has also adopted the short title for the Program as "Congo IP" in the documentation.
2. UNEP has also changed in the Portal the information provided on the "Anticipated Program Executing Entities" making entries for each entity separately.

**b) Are the Rio Markers for CCM, CCA, BD and LD correctly selected, if applicable?**

Secretariat's Comments OK

Agency's Comments

**2. Program Summary**

**a) Does the program summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the program objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected outcomes?**

**b) Is the program's geographical coverage explicit, as well as the covered sectors? Does the summary explain how the program is transformative or innovative?**

Secretariat's Comments

**May 17, 2023**

Addressed.

**April 26, 2023**

**Summary:** The summary needs to describe the problem and how the IP will address the problem and achieve results. There should be a clear demarcation between GEF-7 and 8 otherwise, very difficult to justify additionality. Please, revise.

General comment: we suggest following more accurately the PFD template, answering to all the sub-questions in the proposed logical order. It is actually difficult to follow the reasoning in the proposed PFD as the sections do not seem in a logical order. Please, revise.

## Agency's Comments

**16 May 2023**

The Program Summary section has been thoroughly edited for clarity strictly following the instructions in the PFD template.

Other sections of the PFD were also edited for clarity following the template guidelines.

In the Program Summary, the problem to be addressed by the Program is stated in a very brief manner in paragraph 2. The Program objective is stated shortly after. The Program Strategy is then briefly outlined. The updated GEB is also included.

Response to General comment:

The GEF requested to see a clear demarcation between GEF-7 and 8 in view of making the additionality brought by the GEF8 IP more explicit. This is addressed briefly in the Program Summary section with respect to the problem respectively addressed by each of the two Programs, but also in the PFD document, in particular through the addition of a new Box (#2) in the PFD section: B. Program Description > Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Programs > Cooperation mechanism with relevant initiatives (Box title below and content reproduced further down):

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

### **3 Indicative Program Overview**

- a) Is the program objective statement concise, clear and measurable?**
- b) Are the components and outcomes sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the program objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?**
- c) Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and M&E included within the program components and appropriately funded?**
- d) Are the GEF program Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?**
- e) Is the PMC equal to or below 5%? If above 5%, is the justification acceptable?**

## Secretariat's Comments

**May 18, 2023**

Addressed.

**May 17, 2023**

- Knowledge Management: While additional information has been provided on the proposed Knowledge Platform, there is still no reference to a Communication Plan/Strategy for the Program for awareness raising and dissemination of Program outputs/results, including outreach & dissemination to/from child projects. The agency is requested to include a brief description of a Communication Plan/Strategy for the Program. This could be added to Component 5.

**April 26, 2023**

General comments:

- please, follow the logics and the plan from the PFD template (there is a section 5 "project objectives and barriers to achieve it "coming relatively late). On the barriers, you need a more specific language. Some language is unclear and can be misleading (misleading barriers and solutions for instance; this is the case for barriers 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7).

- The table 2 on the incremental reasoning matrix provided good information - suggestion: maybe try to reference it in this section.

**Program objective:**

- It may help to qualify more specifically what the program will sustain??Health of the planet? is somewhat vague. Since the Program objective will need to be measured at completion, the Program results framework will need to include outcome indicators for each of the dimensions covered: health of the planet, ecosystem services, green recovery, development initiatives. Another option is to simply not include these elements in the program objective.

- We can agree on the first part of the objective, with: "To improve the conservation and effective governance of critical landscapes in the Congo Basin Forest Biome". However, is the second part of the objective fully needed? "sustaining the health of the planet, the flow of vital ecosystem services, supporting green recovery and inclusive sustainable development initiatives". Please, justify or correct.

**Result Framework**

- Please, include in the narrative the notion of Forest Climate Investment Packages in application to the Libreville Roadmap. The regional coordination project should have a role both in supporting the concerned countries and interacting with external stakeholders.

- In the Component 5 "Capacity building, knowledge management, and regional cooperation", please, anticipate the potential for actions beyond the Congo IP, in collaboration with the other PFD under the CFB IP: inter-regional or global actions.

#### **Monitoring & Evaluation section.**

- The section does not include a description of 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. Please add as appropriate.

#### **Agency's Comments**

**May 18, 2023**

The Knowledge Management section both in the PFD and Regional Coordination Child project is now amended to include the communication and awareness-raising elements as per the guidance.

**16 May 2023**

Responses to ?General comments? - GC:

*GC 1: Please, follow the logic and the plan from the PFD template (there is a section 5 "project objectives and barriers to achieving it "coming relatively late).*

RC-GC1: Efforts have been made to ensure that the PFD template has been applied, answering all the sub-questions in the proposed order and ensuring completeness.

*GC2: On the barriers, you need a more specific language. Some language is unclear and can be misleading (misleading barriers and solutions for instance; this is the case for barriers 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7).*

? The barriers have been edited, in particular, those pointed out by the GEF as requiring revisions.

GC 2 ? On Table 2

? The content from the incremental reasoning matrix is no longer in a table format, but rather in the narrative. Content has been thoroughly edited for clarity.

Responses to comments on the ?Program Objective?:

? On the Program objective ? it has been revised to read as follows: ?OBJECTIVE: To improve the conservation and effective governance of critical landscapes in the Congo Basin Forest Biome.?

? The objective for the Regional Child Project was amended accordingly.

Responses to comments on the ?Result Framework?:

? In the Baseline section, it is indicated that the Libreville Summit generated a Roadmap, which includes the notion of ?Forest Climate Investment Packages? and that, under the Program, UNEP will assist countries developing these packages. This work is now reflected in the strategy for the Regional Child Project. Refer to Component 5 descriptions in both the PFD and the updated Regional Child Project.

? The coordination for the regional child project will have a role both in supporting the concerned countries and interacting with external stakeholders. This is briefly described in indicative activities for the Child Project.

? Along the same lines, it is also anticipated that synergies and potential collaboration activities that go ?beyond the Congo IP? (e.g. with the other PFD under the Critical Forest Biomes IPs) have been envisaged under Component 5 of the PFD and Regional Child Project. Examples mentioned include inter-regional or global level activities to be defined during the PPG phase. These may include e.g. global workshops, developing a pool of technical consultants, etc.

Responses to comments on the ?Monitoring & Evaluation Section?

It is mentioned in the Program-level Monitoring and Evaluation that the coordination for the Regional Child Project will ensure coherence across Child Projects and to allow for adapting to changing conditions, consistent with GEF policies.

#### 4 Program Outline

##### A. Program Rationale

**a) Is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective and adequately addressed by the program design?**

**b) Has the role of stakeholders, incl. the private sector and local actors in the system been described and how they will contribute to GEBs and/or adaptation benefits and other program outcomes? Is the private sector seen mainly as a stakeholder or as financier?**

**c) Is the baseline situation and baseline projects and initiatives well laid out and how the program will build on these?**

**d) Have lessons learned from previous efforts been considered in the program design?**

**e) For NGI, is there a brief description of the financial barriers and how the program ? and the proposed financial structure- responds to these financial barriers.**

## Secretariat's Comments

**May 17, 2023**

Addressed.

**April 26, 2023**

- Description of problems: The description of the problems is very severe and of course it reflects many issues facing the region ? some languages such as failed governance, failed policies might need to tune down (if you use for example ? weak governance or inadequate policies might sound appropriate).

- Some sections include unclear language and a mix of issues ? Barriers seem more generic than the barriers elaborated on in the GEF-7 Congo IP PFD. There is a need to be specific and to categorize them while also separate what is barrier to potential solutions for clarity. This is also true when reading the ?program description? section ? the justification on limits scope, long-term perspective and global level goals, extant drivers, etc. all reads as if the program is trying to justify what it can't do. Part of this is because the diagnostic was too broad and very severe that it goes beyond the scope of the GEF programmatic approach.

- How will the 4 levers of system transformation be leveraged by the program? A narrative is needed. It takes some time to realize how they will play a role and at which scale ? child projects and/or GCP. Please, revise.

- The value added from GEF-7 remains limited, as well as how the GEF-8 will maximize the results from GEF-7 to create a critical mass or knowledge and community of practices in tackling barriers and challenges to conservation. Please, clarify.

- It does not help that Figures 1-7 are not in the document that is uploaded in the GEF portal, or not readable, and some of the links to the reference documents and/or maps cannot be reached. We can clearly see Fig 8-10. Please, correct.

### **Baseline situation**

The baseline is mainly limited to finance estimate. However, we would expect to see how enabling and on-going activities in the region could be highlighted (for instance: the lessons from USAID/CARPE, IKI, REDD+, CAFI, REPALEAC, etc) and leveraged to remove barriers.

### **Lessons learned**

Which lessons are used from past and on-going initiatives and programs, including the GEF7 Congo IP.

### **On Stakeholder engagement:**



- The PFD indicates that it has consulted Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and Civil Society Organizations but does not provide any information on these consultations. Please ask agency to provide additional details and summary of names and dates of consultation with these stakeholders.

## Agency's Comments

16 May 2023

Responses to comment on "Description of problems?"

? The barriers have been edited, in particular those pointed out by the GEF and requiring revisions.

? Languages in the title of a barrier that started with "failed policies" has been changed to "inadequate policies". Else, the use of the term "failed governance" was not found in the PDF nor Regional Child Project.

? Barriers that had "unclear language" or a "mix of issues" have been adequately edited.

? All sections under A (Program Rationale) that describe "the problem?", as well as subsections under B (Program Description) until the "TOC's main Diagram" have been thoroughly edited for logic, content, coherence and clarity. TOC figures (those tagged as "TOC element" and the main TOC diagram) were also updated. The updated sections include:

### A. PROGRAM RATIONALE

Justification of Global Environmental Significance

Social-ecological system's description

Key system drivers

The core problem [TOC element]

Baseline

Program objective and barriers to achieving it

The long-term solution [TOC element]

Barriers [TOC element]

### B. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

## Program Description

### Theory of Change: Main Diagram and Description (Reference to TOC Figure)

? The content from the incremental reasoning matrix is no longer in a table format, but rather in the narrative. Content has been thoroughly edited for clarity.

? The value added of the GEF8 Program is discussed in Section B in Box and complemented by another Box containing the Barriers? comparison.

? The Core Indicators have also been revised/updated in consultation with Agencies. Although all the targets currently informed for Core Indicators are preliminary and should be interpreted in this light, UNEP invites the GEF Secretariat to note that contributions towards GEBs are significant. Refer to the separate file ?Congo\_Basin\_IP\_PFD\_CORE\_INDICATORS\_Preliminary breakdown.pdf? and note, in particular, the updated target for Core Indicator 6 (Carbon). GHG emissions mitigated were 78,149,836 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e in the previous iteration. The target figure is now 111,719,431 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e (a 42% increase).

? As for the Core Indicators that are area-based (1, 2, 3, and 4), comparing the level of ambition between the GEF7 CBSL IP and GEF8 Congo IP is not totally appropriate, because of the inclusion in GEF8 of countries with a small area, such as S?o Tom? and Pr?ncipe, but incidentally with high conservation ambition. The country has almost 30% terrestrial protected coverage and is proposing an expansion of the PA estate through the establishment of 11 new PAs in forests of high conservation value (12,383.96ha) that were identified by BirdLife and government authorities in 2019. They are being declared Special Reserves (the process started in March 2023).

? Still, all Core Indicator targets remain preliminary and should be interpreted with caution. Core indicator 6 is estimated through a series of multipliers and assumptions. It is therefore quite sensitive to changes in those (especially the size of the area reported, the type of habitat, the use of fire or not, etc.). Without accurate data from the landscapes, Core Indicator cannot be properly estimated. Currently, this data is not available but will be researched and validated during the PPG.

### Responses relating to the ?Baseline situation?

? The Baseline section has been thoroughly edited. Information on lessons relating to USAID/CARPE, IKI, REDD+, CAFI, and REPALEAC have been included in the description of these baseline interventions.

? The section on Baseline is not only about baseline finance interventions anymore. The structure of the section follows now the instructions in the PFD Template. It starts by briefly mentioning the relationship between the GEF7 CBSL IP and the GE8 Congo IP

(demarcation and additionality). It states the advantages of a programmatic approach as opposed to disparate separate projects and provides an example in a footnote. Then, the section mentions the "favorable policy environment at the global and regional levels", within which the GEF9 Congo IP is being designed. On this, the content makes specific reference to the Libreville Summit, the Glasgow COP and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. It also mentions the support provided by the GEF7 CBSL IP to COMIFAC's Convergence Plan (2015-2025), something that the GEF8 Congo IP will add to and build upon.

? Lessons are mentioned in the Baseline section, but only briefly. Describing a few crucial lessons at more length has been included in Section B under "Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Programs" through an additional box. This is because content from GEF Agencies participating in the Congo IP has been gracefully provided to UNEP in response to GEF Secretariat's comment. The content is substantive and it was assessed that it would be better to place it under Section B of the current template.

? Else, the sections before "Baseline" (namely "Social-ecological system" description; "Key system drivers" and "The core problem") already described in sufficient detail the "baseline/status quo". It would be repetitive if the content on status quo should again be included under "Baseline". UNEP trusts that, with the editing of these sections, the logic will flow well without repetition of content.

Responses relating to "Lessons Learned"

? New content on "Lessons Learned" has been added to PFD, but under Section B under "Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Programs" through an additional Box (#3). It relates to past and ongoing initiatives and programs, including the GEF7 Congo IP. The content that highlights the additionality of GEF7 CBSL IP with the GEF8 Congo IP is in Box 2, where some lessons are also drawn.

? UNEP consulted COMIFAC on 05-May-2025. The Commission share a number of lessons from the mid-term evaluation of the Implementation of COMIFAC's Convergence Plan for Central African Forests (2015-2025). These are now summarized in a new Box (#3).

? Cross-reference to the above-mentioned Boxes is included in the section Baseline.

? A specific lesson shared by COMIFAC in connection with an evaluation has also been directly shared by COMIFAC's Secretariat when recently prompted to comment on the PFD.

Responses relating to "Stakeholder engagement"

? At the regional level, a key entity that legitimately represents for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and Civil Society Organizations in Central Africa is the Network of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities for the Sustainable Management of the Forest Ecosystems of Central Africa (REPALEAC). They were consulted more than once. In particular, a representative of the REPALEAC was present in a regional consultation workshop in connection with the GEF8 Congo IP design, which took place in Douala, Cameroon, between 14 and 16 March 2023 ? an event to which the GEF Secretariat also participated. Evidence of REPALEAC and presentation made in person follows here:



? Additionally, GEF Agencies participating in the Congo IP also collected evidence of consultations with IPLCs at country level. This is now compiled in an ad hoc report also being sent to the GEF Secretariat ("Ad hoc Report on Country Level Consultations\_10May2023.pdf").

## **5 B. Program Description**

**5.1 a) Is there a concise theory of change (narrative and an optional schematic) that describes the program logic, including how the program design elements are contributing to the objective, a set of identified key causal pathways, the thrust and basis (including scientific) of the proposed solutions, how they provide a robust solution and listing the key assumptions underlying these?**

**b) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences?**

**c) Are the program components described and proposed solutions and critical assumptions and risks properly justified? Is there an indication of why the program approach has been selected over other potential options?**

**d) Incremental/additional cost reasoning: Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12? Have the baseline**

**scenario and/or associated baseline programs been described? Is the program incremental reasoning provisioned (including the role of the GEF)?**

**e) Are the relevant levers of transformation identified and described?**

**f) Is there an adequate description on how relevant stakeholders (including women, private sector, CSO, e.g.) will contribute to the design and implementation of the program and its components?**

**g) Gender: Does the description on gender issues identify any differences, gaps or opportunities linked to program objectives and have these been taken up in component description/s?**

**h) Are the proposed elements to capture, exchange and disseminate knowledge and lessons learned adequate in order to benefit future programs? Are efforts for strategic communication adequately described?**

**i) Policy Coherence: How will the program support participating countries to improve, develop and align policies, regulations or subsidies to not counteract the intended program outcomes?**

Secretariat's Comments

**May 17, 2023**

Addressed.

**April 26, 2023**

**Theory of Change:**

- A narrative is missing, not to merely repeat the logframe, but explain the pathways through which the outputs will produce the intended outcomes. Please, revise.

In GEF-7, barriers read: Barrier 1: Conflicting and isolated sectoral developments increase competition between different land uses and accelerate pressures on natural resources leading to habitat loss, forest fragmentation, and human-wildlife conflict; Barrier 3: Lack of engagement of communities, forest dependent people, and private sector in conservation and sustainable use; Barrier 4: Cross-border implementation of conservation actions and learning is weak ? now they are in the narrative.

- All barriers are national/local. It is difficult to see a justification for an intervention at regional level. Please, revise.

- About transboundary issues, there is an output 2.1 "transfrontier conservation agreements are developed in selected sites". this is the only mention of transboundary

issues, without a clear justification or a connection with the map at the end of the PFD. Please, clarify and revise.

**Knowledge Management :**

- An overall approach to Knowledge Management and Learning (KM&L) has been described in the Program Description; but it is rudimentary when compared to other PDFs received. There is mention of a Global Congo Basin IP Platform; but not many details have been provided. The PFD mentions plans for KM&L deliverables associated with knowledge exchange and learning across child projects, including trainings and workshops, on-line learning and field visits. However, there is no reference to an overall Communications Strategy/Plan for the Program.

Thus, the agency is requested to include some details on the proposed Knowledge Platform and a brief description of a Communications Strategy/Plan for awareness raising and dissemination of Program outputs/results, including outreach & dissemination to/from child projects. These should also be properly budgeted into the Program.

**Agency's Comments**

**16 May 2023**

Responses to comments on the TOC:

? The TOC narrative is now included. It explain the pathways through the Program will produce its intended outcomes. There is a clear linkage between the four ?Elements in the Desired System?s Transformation in GEF8 for ?Nature IPs?, the Transformation Levers, the Program Objective, its Barriers and the general Strategy.

? The inclusion of Outputs in the PFD is though not required. The Regional Child Project however now includes description of the Strategy and the incremental reasoning.

? The ?transboundary issues? relating to output 2.1 are actually more about cross country collaboration. There are thorough descriptions in Box 1. Note that Output 2.1 in the Regional Coordination Child Project has been revised to actually mention: ?Transfrontier and/or multi-country conservation agreements and collaboration arrangements are developed in selected sites through national projects with technical guidelines and tools developed at regional level?. There is also new content on it in the Regional Child Project.

? Refer to the Regional Coordination Child Project, where all the Outputs proposed are listed and described. The content now includes ?Pathways of Change? under each Component, relating to the TOCs and Barriers.

Responses to comments on KM

? Component 5 now includes full descriptions.

**5.2 Program coherence and consistency**

**a) How will the program design ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and allow for adaptive management needs and options?**

**b) Is the potential for achieving transformative change through the integrated approach adequately described? How is the program going to be transformative or innovative? Does it explain scaling up opportunities?**

**c) Are the countries or themes selected as child projects under the program appropriate for achieving the overall program objective?**

**d) Are the descriptions of child projects adequately reflective of the program objective and priorities as described in the ToC?**

**e) Is the financing presented in the annexed financing table adequate to meet the program objectives?**

Secretariat's Comments

May 17, 2023

Addressed.

April 26, 2023

- Financing information: Child project ID11246- Central African Republic, 11247- Equatorial Guinea, 11243- Sao Tome and Principe: please change the GEF financing table and PPG table so that country STAR allocation by BD, CC, and LD match with Sources of funds table:

IP childs list		Sources of funds					GEF financing table and PPG table					Differences		
Child ID	Country	Parent IP ID	Parent IP Name	BD STAR Allocation	CC STAR Allocation	LD STAR Allocation	Grand Total	Child ID	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	Grand Total	Child ID	BD STAR Allocation: IPs
11246	Central African Republic	11241	Amazon, Congo,	4,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	6,000,000	11246	4,000,001	1,000,000	999,999	6,000,000	11246	
11247	Equatorial Guinea	11241	Amazon, Congo,	2,000,000	500,000	1,000,000	3,500,000	11247	2,000,001	500,000	999,999	3,500,000	11247	
11243	Sao Tome and Principe	11241	Amazon, Congo,	2,777,875	500,000	2,187,125	5,465,000	11243	3,149,999	500,000	1,815,001	5,465,000	11243	

## Agency's Comments

16 May 2023

1. Financing information in the GEF financing tables has been updated to align the sources of funds table with the BD, LD, and CC child project STAR allocation for Central Africa Republic, Equatorial Guinea, and Sao Tome and Principe.

### **5.3 Program Governance, Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Programs**

**a) Are the program level institutional arrangements for governance and coordination, including potential executing partners, outlined on regional, national/local levels and a rationale provided? Has a program level organogram / diagram been included, with description of roles and responsibilities, and decision-making processes?**

**b) Is there a description of coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF and non-GEF financed initiatives, projects/programs (such as government, private sector and/or other bilateral/multilateral supported initiatives in the program area, e.g.).**

## Secretariat's Comments

May 17, 2023

Addressed.

**April 26, 2023**

- The governance aspects should be better explained. It is not just about the Steering Committee and attracting new partners, it is about creating the space that allows the engagement and partnership to attract the private sector and other actors and contribute to systems transformation and achieve impacts at scale.

- We are not fully seeing how key stakeholders in the region (COMIFAC for instance), funds and announcements (Glasgow) will be leveraged i support to the IP.

## Agency's Comments

16 May 2023

It is mentioned now under the Section ?Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Programs.?

- ? An expanded role to the Project Steering Committee that includes
  - o attracting new partners,
  - o creating the space that allows the engagement and partnership



- o attract the private sector and other actors
  - o contribute to systems transformation and achieve impacts at scale.
- ? Added text: ?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.

#### **5.4 Program-level Results, Monitoring and Reporting**

**a) Are the global environmental benefits and/or adaptation benefits identified? Does the PFD describe how it will support the generation of multiple environmental benefits which would not have accrued without the GEF program?**

**b) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology and adhering to the overarching principles included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01/GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)?**

**c) Are the program?s targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators and additional listed outcome indicators) / adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable? Are the GEF Climate Change adaptation indicators and sub-indicators for LDCF and SCCF properly documented?**

**d) Other Benefits: Are the socioeconomic benefits resulting from the program at the global, national and local levels sufficiently described?**

**e) Is the described approach to program level M&E aiming to achieve coherence across child projects and to allow for adaptative management?**

Secretariat's Comments

**May 17, 2023**

Addressed.

**April 26, 2023**

**- Core Indicators.**

General comment: the ambition of targets is very low in comparison with GEF7, with a potential concern of Return on Investments (12 million ha and 120 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e in GEF7 versus around 3 million ha and 27 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e at PFD level. Some explanations may rely in the adjustment of countries: with the inclusion of a SIDS as Sao Tome and Principe, obviously with a limited number of ha and Angola, with degraded landscapes, while Republic of Congo and Gabon prioritized other IPs. Another explanation is that the

targeted landscapes in GEF7 were the highest in carbon and to avoid duplication other sites have been selected. Please, revise the targets and/or develop a reasoning to justify these low targets.

- Did you include in the targets the results from GEF + cofinancing? We may expect bigger numbers of ha related to the implementation of land-use planning instruments around primary forests. Please, clarify and/or revise.

#### Indicators

- o 1.2 and 2.2 Please consider listing the Name of the PAs, WDPA ID, IUCN Category of the PAs covered, as available.

- o 4.5 Please include any OECM covered by the Program. As relevant and available, please indicate the hectares of OECMs to be supported and any other information: Name, WDPA ID.

- o Please consider adding a justification to the level of targets and methodology applied, or cross-reference where the information is available in uploaded program documents.

#### Agency's Comments

16 May 2023

#### **Comment on Core Indicators**

? The ambition of targets is actually not that low. Core indicators have been updated and there is a more accurate and ambitious target for Core Indicator 6. However, the targets remain indicative and will need to be refined during the PPG. For Core Indicator 6 this is particularly important because the application of the Ex-Act tool is based on a series of multipliers and therefore very sensitive to changes in those.

? The table further down provides perspective on how Core Indicator 6 is tied to the size of the landscape from where carbon benefits are derived but also to the CCM investment. Comparing carbon benefits to the entire GEF amount would not be appropriate, as several other benefits besides carbon are expected to be delivered with the GEF grant.

? Perhaps Cost Effectiveness would be a more appropriate measure of Return on investment. The numbers for all Core Indicators do show this additionality. Refer also to Box 2 in Section B.

? Regarding Core Indicators that are area-based (1, 2, 3 and 4), comparing the level of ambition between the GEF7 CBSL IP and GEF8 Congo IP is not totally appropriate, because of the inclusion in GEF8 of countries with small area, such as São Tomé and Príncipe, but which incidentally has high conservation ambitions (almost 30% terrestrial PA coverage and expanding).

? Core indicator targets are those that can be delivered with GEF funds, and not with co-financing amounts or there would be an issue of attribution.

	[A] Landscapes managed + PAs (ha)*	[B] Number of ha reported in the EXACT tool	[C] mtCO2-e reported through the child projects	<b>Ratio [C/B]: mtCO2-e / ha reported in the EXACT tool</b>	GEF grant (USD)	GEF grant (USD) for Focal Area CCM only
Angola	193,000.00	UA	4,000,000	UA	4,152,752	4,152,752
Cameroun	1,728,676.00	UA	33,450,272	UA	10,709,177	594,955
Central African Republic	418,200.00	56,333	30,152,941	535.26	8,176,147	1,194,034
Democratic Republic of the Congo	638,000	66,404	8,181,951	123.21	15,415,596	0
Equatorial Guinea	165,000.00	154,050	11,746,388	76.25	4,131,301	590,193
Sao Tome and Principe	69,449	69,540	24,638,151	354.30	7,139,451	2,379,817

#### Concerning the sub-indicators to core indicators

? UNEP is including, as part of the resubmission, a break-down of GEF Indicators per country in Excel, but with the caveat that all the numbers are preliminary indicative. They will likely change during the PPG. The mentioned sheet includes the WDPA data for those areas that have the ID. Refer to separate file:

?CORE INDICATOR Congo IP 150523.XLS?

? In the mentioned document, the PAs that could be classified as OECMs still do not have names or WDPA IDs. Some may be new PAs (in the case of Equatorial Guinea), although it is too early to tell. The Agency responsible exercised caution in reporting them as new PAs because of possible overlap with existing ones. The details will be sorted during the PPG.

#### **5.5 Risks to Achieving Program Outcomes**

**a) Are climate and other main risks relevant to the program identified and adequately described? Are mitigation measures outlined and realistic? Is there any omission?**

**b) Are the key risks and mitigation measures that might affect implementation and the achievement of outcomes adequately rated?**

**c) Are environmental and social risks and impacts adequately screened and rated and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?**

Secretariat's Comments Addressed.

#### Agency's Comments

### **6 C. Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies and Country/Regional Priorities**

**6.1 a) Is the program adequately aligned with Focal Area and IP Elements, and/or LDCF/SCCF strategy?**

**\*For IPs: is the program adequately aligned with the Integrated Program goals and objectives as outlined in the GEF 8 programming directions?**

#### Secretariat's Comments

**May 17, 2023**

Addressed.

**April 26, 2023**

- Detailed comments on how this IP contribute to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework were sent by email. The main focus of comments related to the information related to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework is that if we are not measuring something in the program at the output or outcome level through the Program Level Indicators and Results Framework or through the Core Indicators that is directly related to a target then we cannot claim the IP is making a contribution to the target.

- In the revised PFD, please present the contributions of the measured outcomes of the program both through the GEF TF Core Indicators and through the Program Level outcomes and outputs to the GBF targets.

#### Agency's Comments

16 May 2023

Updates to Table ?How the Congo IP is aligned with the 2030 Targets of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework? now reflect this comment and observation. Thanks.

**b) Child project selection criteria: Are the criteria for child project selection sound and transparently laid out?**

Secretariat's Comments

**May 17, 2023**

Addressed.

**April 26, 2023**

- The child projects were selected based on a participatory evaluation of the Expressions of Interest.

- In the text summarizing the interventions in the child projects, please include the transboundary approaches for DRC and CAR.

Agency's Comments

16 May 2023

Update to text in the section: ?Differences and Commonalities between the GEF7 Program for Congo Basin region titled ?The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP)? and the current GEF8 Program titled ?Congo Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program? (Congo IP, in short)?.

**6.2 Is the program alignment/coherent with country / regional / global priorities, policies, strategies and plans (including those related to the MEAs and to relevant sectors)?**

Secretariat's Comments

**May 17, 2023**

Addressed.

**April 26, 2023**

- See the comment on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Agency's Comments

16 May 2023

Updates to Table ?How the Congo IP is aligned with the 2030 Targets of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework? now reflect this comment and observation. Thanks.

**7 D. Policy Requirements**

**7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?**

Secretariat's Comments OK

Agency's Comments

**7.2 Environmental and Social Safeguards**

**Have safeguard screening document and/or other ESS document(s) attached and been uploaded to the GEF Portal? (annex D)**

Secretariat's Comments OK

Agency's Comments

**8 Other Requirements**

**Knowledge Management**

**8.1 Has the agency confirmed that a project level approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been included in the PFD?**

Secretariat's Comments

**May 17, 2023**

We are taking note of the mention of the UNEP's Green Growth KM platform, as a host of the GEF7 Congo IP website.

We wonder if this solution is sustainable and if it is reasonable to put a website on the conservation of tropical primary forests (GEF8) under a "Green Growth" initiative. To be addressed during the PPG.

Addressed.

**April 26, 2023**

- See the comments on KM above.

## Agency's Comments

16 May 2023:

Component 5 now includes full descriptions.

Response to Comment #15A on how the platforms for GEF-7 and GEF-8 be aligned and integrated for efficiency and effectiveness:

In terms of 'platforms', the website for the 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.

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.

New content on this topic has been added to both the PFD and the Regional Coordination Child Project under the section 'Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Programs' in the former, and under the section 'Engagement with the Global / Regional Framework' in the latter. It reads as follows:

?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.?

## 9 Annexes

### Financing Tables (Annex A and Annex H)

#### 9.1 GEF Financing Table:

**a) Is the proposed GEF financing (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):**

**Country STAR allocation?**

Secretariat's Comments Yes.

Agency's Comments

**Non-STAR Focal Area allocation?**

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments

**LDCF under the principle of equitable access?**

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments

**SCCF A (SIDS)?**

Secretariat's Comments NA



Agency's Comments  
SCCF B (Tech Transfer, Innovation, Private Sector)?

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments  
Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments  
IP Set Aside

Secretariat's Comments Yes.

Agency's Comments  
IP Contribution

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

**For Child Project Financing information (Annex H)**

**b) Are the IP Matching Incentives amounts correctly calculated according to the country STAR focal areas? allocated amounts? Are the IP contributions aligned with the Program? The allocated amounts (including Agency Fee) match those in LoE?**

**c) Project Preparation Grant Table: Are the IP Matching Incentives amounts correctly calculated according to the country STAR focal areas? allocated amounts? The allocated amounts (including PPG Fee) match those in LoE? Is the requested PPG within the authorized limits set in Guidelines? (pop up information?) If above the limits, has an exception been sufficiently substantiated?**

**d) Sources of Funds Table: Are the allocated sources of funds for each and every one of the three STAR Focal Areas within the Country's STAR envelope by the time of the last review?**

**e) Indicative Focal Area Elements Table: (For IPs) The selected Indicative Focal Area element**

corresponds to the respective IP?

f) (For non-IPs) The selected Indicative Focal Area Elements are aligned with the respective Program?

g) Co-financing Table: Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing provided and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

## Secretariat's Comments

May 17, 2023

Addressed.

April 26, 2023

### Cofinancing

- Please, explore the possibility to include cofinancing from the PCP fund managed by CI.

- In-kind is normally classified as 'recurrent expenditure'. Please request the agency to revise the below which are classified as 'investment mobilized?', and change them to 'recurrent expenditures'.

Recipient Country Government	Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development,	In-kind	Investment mobilized	59,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture	In-kind	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization		In-kind	Investment mobilized	8,000,000.00
GEF Agency	IFAD	In-kind	Investment mobilized	40,000,000.00
GEF Agency	IUCN	In-kind	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization	AFD	In-kind	Investment mobilized	53,500,000.00
Civil Society Organization	ICCN	In-kind	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00

- Public investment is normally classified as 'investment mobilized'. Please request the agency to revise the below which is classified as 'recurrent expenditures?', and change it to 'investment mobilized'.

Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Forests and Environment	Public Investment	Recurrent expenditures	1,000,000.00
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- The IFAD is co-implementing agency for this project. Please revise the 'Donor Agency?' and change it to 'GEF Agency'.

Donor Agency	IFAD	Grant	Investment mobilized	9,999,999.00
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## Agency's Comments

16 May 2023

When consulted, CI indicated that it is still too early to confirm if the PCP fund can provide co-financing to the Project/Program. This will be confirmed during the PPG.

In-kind Cofinancing classification has been updated to reflect 'recurrent expenditure' in the relevant sections of the portal and Child project documents.

Public investment is now classified as investment mobilized in the portal and Child project.

IFAD has been designated as a GEF Agency in the cofinancing designation of the child project.

**9.2 Project Preparation Grant (PPG): if PPG for child projects has been requested: has the PPG table been included and properly filled out adding up to the correct PPG and PPG fee totals as per the sum of the child projects?**

Secretariat's Comments Addressed.

Agency's Comments

**9.3 Sources of Funds for Country STAR Allocation**

**Does the table represent the sum of STAR allocations sources utilized for this program?**

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

**9.4 Indicative Focal Area Elements**

**For non-IP Programs**

**Does the table contain the sum of focal area elements and amounts as per the sum of the child projects?**

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

**9.5 Indicative Co-financing**

**Are the indicative amounts, sources, and types of co-financing adequate and reflect the ambition of the program? Has the subset of co-finance which are expected to be investment mobilized been identified and defined (FI/GN/01)?**

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

**Annex B: Endorsements**

**9.6 Has the program and its respective child project been endorsed by the GEF OFP/s of all GEF eligible participating countries and has the OFP name and position been checked against the GEF database at the time of submission?**

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

**Compilation of Letters of Endorsement Are the OFP endorsement letters uploaded to the GEF Portal (compiled as a single document, if applicable)?**

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

**Do the letters follow the correct format and are the endorsed amounts consistent with the amounts included in the Portal?**

Secretariat's Comments

**May 18, 2023**

Addressed, with thanks.

**May 17, 2023**

- LOE from Congo DR has sources from BD, LD, CC STAR while in Portal this child is sourced only from BD STAR. A revised LOE is required to match with Portal's Sources of funds table because that was the only way the submission went through.

- LOE from Sao Tome and Principe allocate less LD STAR money than in Portal, while more BD money than in Portal's Sources of Funds table, a revised LOE to match with Portal's Sources of funds is required (same explanation as above).

- Please also make sure the executing entities entered in Portal's child project are the same as in the LOE for Sao Tome and Principe.

**April 26, 2023**

- The table below was created with the information we found in the Letters of Endorsement (LoEs) *vis-?-vis* the information in Portal. In red color you will find the fields that are inconsistent. As you know, the figures in Portal can be lower than those in LoE, so there is no need to do anything on these ? but it can't be higher (some cases are higher ? this needs to be amended). Some fields are easier to be changed in Portal (i.e. Title or Executing Entity). However, the financial information needs to be carefully reviewed considering the guidance provided by the IP Coordination Team *as well as* the figures that allow the submission to go through ?

Child Project ID	Country	Title of Child Project in LoE	Title of Child Project in Portal	OFF name in LoE	OFF name in database	Ex Ent in LoE	Ex Ent in Portal	BD STAR Allocation Requested \$ in LOE	BD STAR Allocation Requested \$ in Portal's Source of fund table	CC STAR Allocation Requested \$ in LOE	CC STAR Allocation Requested \$ in Portal's Source of fund table	LD STAR Allocation Requested \$ in LOE	LD STAR Allocation Requested \$ in Portal's Source of fund table	Total GEF Project Financing requested \$ in LOE	Total GEF Project Financing requested \$ in Portal's Financing table	Total Agency fee requested \$ in LOE	Total Agency fee requested \$ in Portal's Financing table	Total PPG requested \$ in LOE	Total PPG requested \$ in Portal's PPG table	Total PPG fee requested \$ in LOE	Total PPG fee requested \$ in Portal's PPG table
11242	Cameroon	Strengthened	Strengthened	Unusa Har	Unusa Har	Ministry of	Ministry of	8,000,000.00	8,000,000.00	500,000.00	500,000.00	500,000.00	500,000.00	10,658,904.00	10,709,177.00	1,012,600.00	963,823.00	300,000.00	299,998.00	28,496.00	27,000.00
11243	Sao Tome	Sao Tome	Sao Tome	Darnel He	Darnel He	Directorate	Ministry of	3,149,999.00	2,777,875.00	500,000.00	500,000.00	1,815,001.00	2,187,125.00	6,485,016.00	6,533,090.00	583,651.00	587,978.00	200,000.00	168,072.00	18,000.00	13,350.00
11244	Angola	Integrated	Integrated	Julio Ingle	Julio Ingle	Ministry of	Ministry of Environment	3,520,000.00	3,517,500.00	2,100,000.00	2,100,000.00	900,000.00	900,000.00	4,152,752.00	4,152,752.00	373,748.00	373,748.00	150,000.00	150,000.00	13,500.00	13,500.00
11245	Congo DR	Sustainable	Sustainable	Benjamin	Benjamin	Ministry of	The Minis	9,000,000.00	12,000,000.00	2,100,000.00	2,100,000.00	900,000.00	900,000.00	15,395,805.00	15,415,986.00	1,385,622.00	1,387,404.00	300,000.00	299,999.00	27,000.00	27,000.00
11246	Central Africa	Integrated	Integrated	Lambert G	Lambert G	pour la De	The Minis	4,000,000.00	4,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	8,176,147.00	8,176,147.00	735,853.00	735,853.00	200,000.00	199,999.00	18,000.00	17,999.00
11247	Equatorial	Developin	Developin	Antonio M	Antonio M	Ministry of	Ministry of	2,000,000.00	2,000,000.00	500,000.00	500,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	4,131,346.00	4,131,301.00	371,821.00	371,955.00	150,000.00	149,526.00	13,500.00	13,415.00

## Agency's Comments

18 May 2023

1. Updated LoE from DRC has been provided
2. Updated LoE from Sao Tome and Principe has been provided
3. The executing agency for STP has been updated to align with the LoE. i.e. the executing agency listed is:

Directorate for Forest and Biodiversity, Directorate for the Environment

16 May 2023

Relevant sections of the portal are updated accordingly. In the case of DRC, Sao Tome and Principe, and Cameroon, revised LoEs have been requested.

## Annex C: Program Locations

9.7 a) Are geo-referenced information and maps provided indicating where the program interventions will take place?

Secretariat's Comments Yes

Agency's Comments

**Annex G: NGI Relevant Annexes\* (\*only for non IP programs)**

**9.9 a) Does the program provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments.**

**b) Does the program provide a detailed reflow table to assess the program capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments.**

**c) Is the Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.**

Secretariat's Comments NA

Agency's Comments

**Additional Annexes**

**10 GEFSEC Decision**

**10.1 GEFSEC Recommendation**

**Is the program recommended for clearance?**

Secretariat's Comments

**May 18, 2023**

All points addressed. Obtaining the revised letters in such short time is really appreciated and we thank the GEF Agencies and partners for this outcome. We take note of the adjustment related to the executing partner for Sao Tome and Principe and the amendments to the KM section. Further improvements will be discussed during PPG.

The PFD is recommended for clearance.

**May 17, 2023**

The technical comments are addressed. The PFD is recommended for clearance, but please address the four comments from the Quality Control (see the item on LoE about DRC and STP, the executing agency for STP, and the item related to KM).

**April 26, 2023**

Not yet. Please, address the comments above.

### Agency's Comments 18 May 2023

The executing agency for STP has been updated to align with the LoE. i.e. the executing agency listed is:

#### **?Directorate for Forest and Biodiversity, Directorate for the Environment?**

- Revised LoE now provided
- The KM section and related items in both PFD and Regional Child Coordination Project are amended to include communication and awareness-raising elements

UNEP would like to thank the reviewers for the quick reviews, feedback and guidance. Very well appreciated. UNEP is committed in collaboration with other agencies in the program to address any pending issue during the PPG phase if the Program is cleared and approved for June WP.

### 16 May 2023

Response to Comment #15A on how the platforms for GEF-7 and GEF-8 be aligned and integrated for efficiency and effectiveness: the bellow content is added in the PFD document under Knowledge Management Section.

In terms of ?platforms?, 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.

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 S?o Tom? and Pr?ncipe). 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.

New content on this topic has been added to both the PFD and the Regional Coordination Child Project under the section "Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Programs" in the former, and under the section "Engagement with the Global / Regional Framework" in the latter. It reads as follows:

"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 managed by UNEP."

Response to Comment #15B on Core Indicator relating to OECM:

Concerning the comment with this heading "In the core indicator, please inform the CI4.4 on OECM", UNEP is assuming that the GEF Secretariat is actually referring to Core Sub-Indicator 4.5 ("Terrestrial OECMs supported"); given that Core Sub-Indicator 4.4 reads as follows "Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) or other forest loss avoided (please select the drop-down menu)".

All participating countries propose to manage landscapes through their respective national Child Projects, but the exact boundaries and composition of these landscapes and their actual hectareage will be provided at CEO endorsement.

The different land uses and the different categories of protection within these landscapes (including hereunder OECM) will be worked out adequately in GIS applications including the potential changes to those categories that project may bring about "changes that are expected to strengthen the areas" conservation effectiveness during the PPG phase. . This will give opportunity to elaborate more on sub-indicator 4.5 relating to "Terrestrial OECMs supported", and on 4.4 (on HCVF).

UNEP takes note of the fact 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.

An indicative break-down of sub-indicators under the GEF Core Indicators was indeed provided by UNEP in connection with the resubmission of 15 May for information purposes, but UNEP stresses that the figures reported are still very much indicative.

During the PPG, UNEP will discuss with the other Agencies under the IP the technical details of how to standardize their reporting for the several area-based Core Indicators -- namely Core Indicators 1, 4 and 3, as well as 2 (under which a small marine is reported), and more specifically the sub-indicators under those.. A more accurate reporting under



Core Indicator 6 was e.g. prioritized, as opposed to the area-based Core Indicators, where the aggregate numbers seemed more solid but were still indicative.

Note that for sub-indicator 4.3\*, UNEP followed the GEF Secretariat's guidance in the Core Indicators sheet, which reads as follow:

\* This indicator is placed here for ease of reference, while it is formally located under the grouping of indicators named 'Sustainably managing and restoring land' for public reporting on the GEF-8 RMF.

Therefore, the area reported under sub-indicator 4.3 actually contributes to Core Indicator 3, rather than 4.

UNEP takes note of propositions coming from Asia IP case of assigning a number of ha corresponding to a proportion of the areas under productive landscapes under 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 3 to OECMs. It is possible that this may also work well in the Congo Basin, this work will be done during the PPGs to discuss these propositions with Agencies.

For now, the reporting under Core Indicators are maintained (no changes to documentation performed), although UNEP would not exclude that other participating countries, besides Equatorial Guinea, will report also significant area under OECM through sub-indicator 4.5.

Response to Comment from GEF Secretariat #15C on the co-financing to the Regional Coordination Child Project:

The co-financing amounts remain indicative and will be confirmed during the PPG. Consultations with co-financiers are on-going (USAID, EC, CAFI and IUCN, FAO, as well as internally within UNEP).

UNEP confirms that there is no double counting between the co-financing that is tied to the GEF7 CBSL IP and the GEF8 Congo IP. UNEP would also like to point out that co-financing from IKI has not necessarily been proposed for the GEF8 Congo IP.

Suggestions to edits were addressed directly in the text of the PFD.

Please find the minor typos and observations on the clean PFD:

- Search GEF9 and replace by GEF8; I guess the mention of GEF9 is a mistake.  
> UNEP searched for 'GEF9?', 'GEF 9?' and 'GEF-9?' and could not find the text string referred to herein. No corrections were made.

- About the correction on financing: remove/correct the message addressed to Eric.  
> Correction made in this file.

- ?Plan for the Congo Basin forests, which is a token of the engagement of COMIFAC?s position on the conservation priorities for the region. Lessons learned from IP countries and COMIFAC?.

> Correction made in the PFD.

- ?There are is a number of 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??

> Substituted by

?There are several initiatives??.

- ?As for the proposed ?Barriers? and ?Transformational Levers?, the former is are simply a more elaborated way of indicating which hurdles need to be overcome to achieving goals?

> Substituted by:

?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 [?]?

- The analysis of the GEF 8 IP are is as follows.

> Substituted by:

?The barrier analysis for the GEF8 Congo IP follows.?

- I did not understand the following sentence p31 : ?Through the federative power of COMIFAC, stakeholders in these two new program countries will work together those in in Cameroon, Central African Republic, The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Equatorial Guinea, as well as the remainder one that were part of the GEF-7 CBSL (Gabon and Republic of the Congo) towards achieving ambitious goals of protecting one of the world?s most important centers of biodiversity?the Congo Basin forests?which also provides home and livelihood to countless forest-dependent people, many of them indigenous and among women who do not sufficiently enjoy the benefits of gender equality and women?s empowerment.? Please, correct.

> Indeed the sentence was too long and lacked coherence. The two first paragraphs of the PFD's section B (Program Description) were edited and they now reads as follows:

?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) 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.

- P42: 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.

> Correction made in the PFD. UNEP thanks the GEF Secretariat for the review.

## **10.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency(ies) during the child project development.**

### Secretariat's Comments

- Confirm cofinancing;
- Define sustainable solutions to host the website (not sure that the UNEP's Green Growth initiative is acceptable on the long run).
- Develop the risk analysis for child projects, as well as mitigation measures.
- Develop transboundary aspects in the child projects, when appropriate.
- Confirm (increase?) the targets under the different core indicators.
- Pay attention to the synergy and transition from the GEF7 IP to the GEF8 IP.

### Agency's Comments

UNEP in collaboration with other agencies of the Program are committed to address all the pending issues during the CEO endorsement Request development.

## **10.3 Review Dates**

	<b>PIF Review</b>	<b>Agency Response</b>
<b>First Review</b>	<b>4/26/2023</b>	<b>5/16/2023</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>5/17/2023</b>	<b>5/18/2023</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>	<b>5/18/2023</b>	
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		