

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

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General Project Information

Project Title

Innovative and Inclusive Approach to Sustainable Management of Biodiversity and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP&LCs) Resilient Livelihood in Boumba Bek National Parc of the TRIDOM landscape

Region	GEF Project ID
Africa	12362
Country(ies)	Type of Project
Cameroon	MSP
GEF Agency(ies):	GEF Agency ID
WWF-US	G0061
Executing Partner	Executing Partner Type
MINFOF	Government
MINEPDED	Government
GEF Focal Area (s)	Submission Date
Biodiversity	5/28/2026

Project Sector (CCM Only)

Taxonomy

Focal Areas, Biodiversity, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Community Based Natural Resource Mngt, Terrestrial Protected Areas, Mainstreaming, Agriculture and agrobiodiversity, Biomes, Tropical Rain Forests, Species, Threatened Species

Type of Trust Fund	Project Duration (Months)
GET	60
GEF Project Grant: (a)	GEF Project Non-Grant: (b)
3,519,725.00	0.00
Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c)	Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d)
316,775.00	0.00
Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)	Total Co-financing
3,836,500.00	29,922,367.00
PPG Amount: (e)	PPG Agency Fee(s): (f)
150,000.00	13,500.00
PPG total amount: (e+f)	Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f)
163,500.00	4,000,000.00

Project Tags

CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No Competitive Window: No

Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? (iii), how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, 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 project should be in section B “project description”. (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

This project will pilot and validate a scalable governance model for inclusive conservation in and around Boumba Bek National Park (BBNP), centered on IP&LC participation, rights operationalization, improved protected area management, and livelihood resilience. BBNP, part of the TRIDOM landscape, is a biodiversity hotspot known for elephants, pangolins, gorillas, and other threatened species. Yet wildlife populations are declining, and between 2011 and 2015 BBNP lost over 75% of its elephants due to poaching, unsustainable hunting, deforestation, and weak protected area management.

The project will apply an integrated and gender-responsive model that combines inclusive governance, biomonitoring, operationalization of access rights, and climate-informed livelihood support. IPLCs, including women, will be trained in biomonitoring of elephants, gorillas and other megafauna in BBNP’s forest clearings, and supported to participate in multi-stakeholder platforms and decision-making mechanisms. Governance institutions will be reinforced to secure community engagement, while training in low-impact agriculture will reduce deforestation from shifting cultivation and enable farmers to use weather data for climate-resilient practices.

Implemented by MINFOF, the project will improve management effectiveness of 238,255 ha of protected areas, enhance biodiversity-friendly practices on an estimated 23,826 ha of forest area situated in the north and southern peripheries of the national park, maintain viable megafauna populations through permanent monitoring by ecoguards and IPLC teams, and deliver 2.7 million tCO₂-e reductions over 20 years. The project is expected to benefit 3,000 people directly. As an MSP, its primary contribution is catalytic: to generate evidence, institutional learning, and a tested governance model that can be replicated within the TRIDOM landscape and inform larger-scale national investment and policy uptake beyond the project timeframe.

Indicative Project Overview

Project Objective

To improve the management effectiveness and conservation status of Boumba Bek National Park (238,255 ha) and its periphery by reducing key threats to wildlife — particularly the Critically Endangered forest elephant — through IP&LC-led inclusive governance, participatory biomonitoring, and climate-resilient livelihood support, directly benefiting at least 3,000 people (of whom at least 50% women) over the five-year project period.

Project Components

Component 1 Improved management effectiveness of BBNP and its periphery through inclusive conservation approaches, increased knowledge, and the participation of the private sector

Component Type	Trust Fund
Investment	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,755,385.00	14,888,391.00

Outcome:

- Outcome 1.1: Inclusive governance system is operational, strengthening the management effectiveness of BBNP and its periphery

- Outcome 1.2: Permanent presence at key forest clearings (wildlife hotspots) established, directly benefiting IP& LCs
- Outcome 1.3: The private sector is actively engaged in combating poaching and illegal bushmeat trade
- Outcome 1.4: Improved understanding and monitoring of conservation targets and threats inform adaptive management strategies in BBNP and its periphery

Output:

- Output 1.1.1: Functioning inclusive multi-stakeholder governance bodies and platforms
- Output 1.1.2: Functioning Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) covering BBNP and its periphery
- Output 1.2.1: BBNP data bank regularly updated with information collected by IP&LCs and ecoguards
- Output 1.2.2: Biomonitoring infrastructure and equipment in place to monitor wildlife and illegal activities
- Output 1.3.1: Strengthened collaboration between logging companies and IP&LCs to combat ivory poaching and illegal activities in logging concessions
- Output 1.4.1: Local elephant poaching networks identified and characterized

Component 2 Improved livelihoods and resilience of IP&LCs through access to resources, implementation of benefit sharing mechanisms, and promotion of low-impact agricultural practices

Component Type	Trust Fund
Investment	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,296,346.00	11,020,674.00

Outcome:

- Outcome 2.1 Indigenous people (IP) living around BBNP have improved access to natural resources
- Outcome 2.2 Sustainable, low-impact agriculture techniques are promoted, increasing resilience and reducing pressure on the forest

Output:

- Output 2.1.1 IP understand their access rights to BBNP and its periphery as outlined in the MoU signed between MINFOF and ASBABUK
- Output 2.1.2 Effective implementation and monitoring of the MoU between MINFOF and ASBABUK concerning IP access rights to BBNP and its surrounding logging concessions
- Output 2.1.3 Inclusive benefit-sharing systems operational in FMUs
- Output 2.2.1 Trained local authorities and communities have increased skills and knowledge on low-impact agricultural practices and the application of weather information
- Output 2.2.2 Weather data available to relevant authorities and IP&LCs around BBNP

Component 3 Communications and knowledge management

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET

GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
132,783.00	1,128,807.00

Outcome:

- Outcome 3.1 Communications and improved knowledge enable replication and scaling up of best practices in the TRIDOM landscape

Output:

- Output 3.1.1 Project results and lessons learned are documented, and knowledge management products communicated for replication and scaling up

M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
167,606.00	1,459,603.00

Outcome:

Outcome: Evidence-based adaptive management is operational, ensuring timely course corrections, safeguards compliance, and accountability throughout project implementation

Output:

Output M&E 1.1: M&E plan finalized with data collection, reflection and reporting to aid in adaptive management of project

Output M&E 1.2: Monitoring of the GAP, SEP and SEMP

Output M&E 1.3: Project reviews and evaluations

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
Component 1 Improved management effectiveness of BBNP and its periphery through inclusive conservation approaches, increased knowledge, and the participation of the private sector	1,755,385.00	14,888,391.00

Component 2 Improved livelihoods and resilience of IP&LCs through access to resources, implementation of benefit sharing mechanisms, and promotion of low-impact agricultural practices	1,296,346.00	11,020,674.00
Component 3 Communications and knowledge management	132,783.00	1,128,807.00
M&E	167,606.00	1,459,603.00
Subtotal	3,352,120.00	28,497,475.00
Project Management Cost	167,605.00	1,424,892.00
Total Project Cost (\$)	3,519,725.00	29,922,367.00

Please provide justification

PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Briefly describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

A. Project Rationale

Current Situation and Problem Definition

The Congo Basin is the world's second-largest contiguous tropical forest system and is globally important as a carbon sink and biodiversity reservoir. Cameroon contains 11% of this forest and includes the transboundary Tri-national Dja-Odzala-Minkebe (TRIDOM) landscape spanning Cameroon, Gabon, and the Republic of Congo. The Cameroonian segment includes several protected areas, notably Boumba Bek National Park (BBNP), which covers 238,255 hectares and has high global conservation value. The park contains diverse habitats and globally important fauna, including forest elephants (Critically Endangered), pangolins, lowland gorillas, western chimpanzees, bongo antelope, yellow-backed duiker, and more than 265 bird species. Forest elephant populations in Central Africa have declined by more than 90% to fewer than 150,000; in BBNP, they fell from more than 2,000 in 2012 to fewer than 200 today. Inventories confirm 34 large mammal species common to Boumba Bek and Nki. Forest elephants play a keystone role in maintaining forest health and carbon sequestration through seed dispersal, so their decline has major implications for ecosystem integrity.

Despite the relative ecological intactness of BBNP and its periphery, biodiversity is under increasing pressure. Wildlife populations have declined sharply, especially forest elephants, because of poaching, habitat degradation, and other human pressures. At the same time, forest loss in the surrounding landscape has increased, driven mainly by shifting agriculture and expanding extractive activities. These trends unfold in a socio-ecological system marked by heavy dependence on forest resources, weak institutional capacity, and limited economic alternatives.

About 64,000 people live in the BBNP landscape, mainly Bantu and Indigenous semi-nomadic Baka (Baka 21.51%; Bantu 45.43%; other groups 33.04%); women represent 52.11%. Livelihoods depend heavily on subsistence agriculture, bushmeat hunting, non-timber forest products, and limited cocoa production. The area is marked by poverty, isolation, and limited access to infrastructure and services, with daily incomes remaining extremely low. Women play a central role in food production and household welfare but remain underrepresented in decision-making and resource governance.

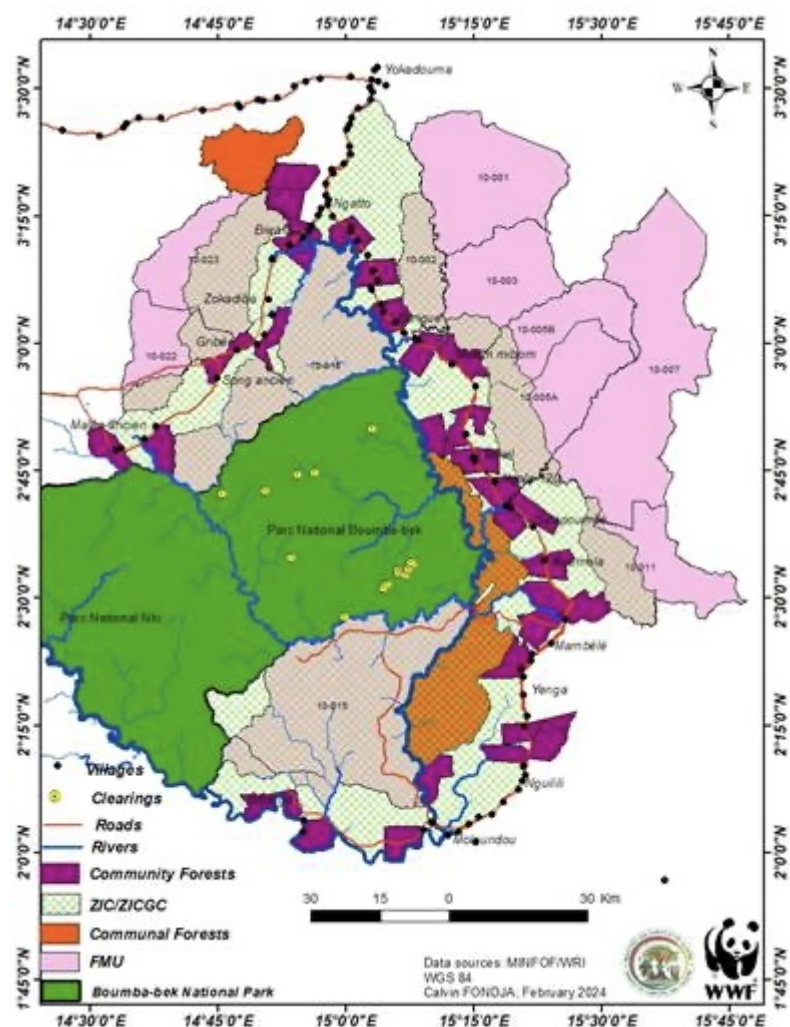
The primary environmental problems addressed by the project are: (i) continued wildlife decline, particularly forest elephants, caused by poaching and unsustainable hunting; and (ii) ongoing forest loss and degradation driven by unsustainable land-use practices,

especially shifting cultivation. These dynamics are reinforced by human-wildlife conflict, particularly elephant crop raiding, which causes food insecurity, economic losses, and retaliatory killings, thereby weakening local support for conservation. These problems are linked to a set of interdependent drivers.

Key system drivers of environmental change are interlinked. Economic drivers include poverty (households earn about 1,650 XAF/day, under USD 3), limited benefit sharing and weak recognition of customary rights, reliance on forest resources, and the absence of viable livelihood alternatives, all of which increase dependence on hunting and shifting agriculture. Social drivers include demographic growth (population exceeds 30 million, with a 2.58% growth rate), unemployment, in-migration linked to conflict and infrastructure development, and the marginalization of Indigenous peoples, which together increase resource pressure and limit participation in conservation. Governance drivers include weak enforcement capacity (annual PA support for BBNP is about USD 20,000; 30 ecoguards operate with one old 4WD, four old motorcycles, and insufficient equipment), inadequate protected area financing, and limited institutional coordination. Technical and climate-related drivers include limited access to biomonitoring technologies, lack of weather information, and increasing climate variability, which reduces agricultural productivity (81% decline in fruiting, 1986–2018, and 11% decline in forest elephant body condition, 2008–2018) and weakens ecosystem resilience.

Threats fall into three clusters: illegal wildlife trade and trafficking, driven by demand for ivory, pangolin scales, and bushmeat and enabled by logging roads and weak enforcement; unsustainable exploitation of wildlife and forest products through subsistence and commercial poaching and expatriate safari hunting, with bushmeat reaching markets including Bertoua, Yaoundé, and Ouessou in the Republic of Congo; and deforestation and forest degradation from illegal logging, artisanal mining, and shifting cultivation, with small-scale agriculture and cocoa expansion accounting for about 95% of forest clearings around BBNP and forest loss rising from about 1,100 ha/year (2001–2011) to over 9,200 ha/year (2011–2022).

Figure 1: Geographical location of BBNP



Assessment of alternatives

During project preparation, several strategic options were considered for addressing the decline of forest elephants and other wildlife, weak management effectiveness of Boumba Bek National Park (BBNP), and the livelihood pressures driving forest degradation in the park's periphery. The analysis focused on four broad alternatives: (i) a conventional enforcement-led approach centered primarily on anti-poaching and park protection, (ii) a carbon-finance or ecosystem-payment approach centered on REDD+ or payment for ecosystem services, (iii) a livelihoods-only rural development approach focused mainly on income generation and agricultural support, and (iv) an integrated, rights-based and inclusive conservation approach combining improved protected area management, community rights and participation, targeted livelihood support, private sector engagement, and knowledge generation. These alternatives were assessed against the project context in BBNP, including the severity of illegal wildlife trade, the dependence of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IP&LCs) on forest resources, weak local governance and benefit sharing, limited state capacity, and the need to secure both biodiversity and climate benefits.

Alternative 1: Enforcement-led conservation. This option would prioritize additional ecoguards, stronger patrol coverage, more equipment, and tighter law enforcement as the primary response to poaching and illegal wildlife trade. This approach addresses an important part of the problem, since weak surveillance and insufficient deterrence are major factors in the decline of elephants and other wildlife in BBNP. However, on its own, it was not considered sufficient because it does not address the underlying drivers of illegal hunting and forest degradation, including poverty, weak recognition of customary rights, exclusion of IP&LCs from decision-making, and limited livelihood alternatives. A predominantly enforcement-based model could also increase tensions between communities and park authorities, weaken local support for conservation, and create sustainability risks if recurrent operational financing remains low. For these reasons, stronger enforcement is retained in the project, but as one element of a broader strategy rather than the sole intervention model.

Alternative 2: Carbon-finance or ecosystem-payment approach. A second option considered was to structure the intervention primarily around REDD+, payment for ecosystem services, or other carbon-finance mechanisms, given the high carbon value of the Congo Basin forest landscape and the project's expected climate mitigation benefits. This option offers potentially significant long-term financing prospects and could strengthen incentives for forest conservation. However, it was not selected as the primary vehicle for this MSP because it would require conditions that are not yet sufficiently in place in the project area, including stronger tenure clarity, robust carbon accounting and benefit-sharing systems, sustained institutional capacity, and a higher degree of market and policy certainty. A carbon-centered design would also be less directly responsive to the urgent biodiversity crisis in BBNP, especially elephant poaching, and could risk overlooking the immediate governance, wildlife monitoring, and rights-based participation gaps that are central to the project rationale. The project therefore captures climate mitigation as a major co-benefit, while avoiding dependence on carbon finance as the principal implementation model.

Alternative 3: Livelihoods-only rural development approach. A third option would focus mainly on agricultural support, NTFP value chains, and income-generation activities for communities living in the park periphery, with limited direct investment in park management, wildlife monitoring, and anti-poaching systems. While this approach would help address poverty and reduce some pressure on forests, it was not considered adequate as a stand-alone response because it would not directly tackle the organized poaching and trafficking networks affecting elephants and other threatened species, nor the institutional weaknesses in BBNP governance and monitoring. Without parallel investments in protected area management effectiveness, grievance mechanisms, community participation in conservation, and private sector engagement, livelihood support alone would be unlikely to secure the globally significant biodiversity values of the landscape.

Selected option: Integrated, rights-based and inclusive conservation approach. The selected project approach was chosen because it provides the most appropriate and feasible response to the interlinked drivers of biodiversity loss and forest degradation in and around BBNP. It combines targeted strengthening of park management and anti-poaching capacity with meaningful participation of IP&LCs in governance and biomonitoring, implementation of access rights and benefit-sharing mechanisms, promotion of low-impact agriculture and climate resilience, and engagement with private sector actors operating in the landscape. This integrated model is better aligned with the project's dual biodiversity and climate objectives than any single-sector alternative. It is also more consistent with the legal and policy context in Cameroon, the lessons from ongoing GEF and non-GEF initiatives in the TRIDOM landscape, and the need to generate

durable local incentives for conservation. In short, the selected approach was preferred because it addresses both the immediate threats to wildlife and the structural causes of unsustainable resource use, while remaining realistic for an MSP in terms of implementation capacity, stakeholder ownership, and sustainability.

Future Narratives and Risk Context

The trajectory of the BBNP landscape is shaped by multiple uncertainties, including climate change, infrastructure development, and population movements. If infrastructure expansion remains limited and climate change progresses more slowly, pressure on forests and wildlife may stabilize, allowing conservation interventions to maintain ecological integrity and support livelihoods. Under a status quo trajectory, moderate climate impacts and continued resource dependence are likely to worsen biodiversity loss while maintaining existing structural pressures.

More adverse trajectories involve greater infrastructure development and higher influxes of non-local populations. These dynamics would accelerate deforestation, expand agricultural frontiers, and increase hunting pressure by improving access to previously remote forest areas. In a combined scenario of rapid climate change and intensive infrastructure expansion, the system could enter a crisis marked by widespread ecosystem degradation, local wildlife extinctions, increased food insecurity, and reduced resilience of Indigenous and local communities.

Across these scenarios, key risks include continued wildlife decline, increased human-wildlife conflict, expansion of illegal trade networks, further forest degradation, and rising poverty among local populations. Climate change adds uncertainty through altered rainfall patterns, more extreme weather events, and disruptions to ecosystem functioning. Without intervention, these converging risks are likely to push the system toward progressively degraded ecological and socio-economic conditions.

The project is designed to remain effective under changing future conditions by combining mutually reinforcing pathways for resilience, including improved protected area management, inclusive governance, rights operationalization, biomonitoring, low-impact agriculture, and adaptive learning. This reduces dependence on any single intervention or actor and helps sustain outcomes if drivers intensify or shift over time. The project also recognizes risks related to political and institutional discontinuity within MINFOF, weakening support for the MINFOF–ASBABUK MoU, uneven enforcement of the 2024 Forestry and Wildlife Law, increasing demographic pressure and urbanization, evolving illegal wildlife trade networks, and longer-term climate impacts. To address these uncertainties, implementation will be anchored not only in national policy commitments, but also in decentralized institutions, local councils, IPLC organizations, multi-stakeholder platforms, and community-based monitoring systems, thereby strengthening continuity, early warning, and adaptive response capacity.

Baseline and Without-Project Scenario

The baseline situation includes multiple investments and initiatives by government, conservation organizations, local authorities, and private sector actors operating in and around BBNP and across the wider TRIDOM landscape. These efforts provide important foundations but remain fragmented and under-resourced relative to the scale and intensity of threats to address the drivers of environmental decline.

Protected area management in BBNP is led by the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF), which holds technical responsibility for park operations, ecoguard supervision, patrol planning and enforcement. However, MINFOF's operational capacity is constrained by chronic under-financing: annual support for BBNP protected area management is about USD 20,000, far below what is required to sustain effective patrols, monitoring, and field logistics. Ecoguards (30 in BBNP) have limited mobility and equipment—one old and unreliable 4WD vehicle, four old motorcycles, and insufficient camping and monitoring equipment—reducing field presence and increasing incentives for collusion with poachers when staff are underpaid and poorly equipped.

Coordination with the justice sector remains weak, undermining deterrence. Under-resourced staff struggle to prepare cases and follow them through, and penalties under applicable laws are not consistently proportionate to offenses, reducing the expected cost of wildlife crime. At national level, financing for anti-poaching has been limited and irregular since 2009, and patrol intensity has declined to 2–3 patrols per month (about 6 man-days per month) in BBNP and Nki. PAMETT results indicate budgets of approximately USD 0.45/ha/year in BBNP and USD 0.34/ha/year in Nki, far below an international benchmark of around USD 6/ha/year, which helps explain persistent illegal wildlife trade despite periodic enforcement efforts.

The Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED) coordinates GEF-financed projects and provides policy oversight, while sectoral ministries influence enabling conditions for livelihoods and inclusion (including agriculture services and women's empowerment structures). However, baseline coordination across ministries is weak, limiting the translation of policy commitments into operational action in the landscape. Protected area management also requires specialized skills in ecological monitoring, community engagement and adaptive management; capacity constraints in government services often lead to reliance on external partnerships with NGOs, but partnerships alone cannot compensate for structural under-resourcing without a coherent system that links evidence, decisions and enforcement.

Climate information services are positioned to support resilience through the National Observatory on Climate Change (ONACC), with dissemination through local agricultural services. In practice, limited telecom coverage, low electrification and literacy barriers restrict access—especially for women—so usable forecasts and advisories rarely inform planting decisions. As a consequence, shifting cultivation remains dominant, driving forest clearing and recurrent conflict with park authorities.

Baseline governance and financing arrangements in the managed forest matrix also shape outcomes. Active Forest Management Units (FMUs) have operated around BBNP for over 30 years. Three logging companies (STBK, SIM and Vicwood Lokomo) hold concessions totaling 453,511 ha in the park's northern and southern periphery across FMUs 10015, 10018, 10020, 10021, 10022 and 10023. Management plans include protection zones, but operations have been scaling down (SIM has closed) due to high taxation, leading to job losses, increased forest pressure and suspension of company-financed ecoguard patrols. Around BBNP there are also two communal forests—Yokadouma (21,780 ha) and Salapombe (22,684 ha)—and 14 community forests totaling 68,848 ha managed by REGEFOC.

Law No. 2024/008 (Articles 6–7) reinforces participation of women and IP&LCs in forest governance and provides that 10% of forest royalties accrue to communities and 40% to municipalities, yet transparency and inclusion remain weak. Baseline benefit-sharing mechanisms are often not effectively monitored or disclosed, creating risks of elite capture and limiting incentives for conservation. Local councils (Yokadouma and Salapombe) are responsible for managing forest royalties and have ongoing community development investments, but governance and accountability gaps constrain their ability to translate royalties into equitable benefits for forest-dependent communities and to reinforce conservation incentives.

Baseline livelihood and rights initiatives exist but remain incomplete. An agreement between MINFOF and the Baka association ASBABUK grants Indigenous people controlled access to NTFPs (including wild mangoes, mushrooms and honey) and access to spiritual or sacred sites in BBNP and its periphery, but implementation has been weak due to limited engagement of local authorities and insufficient capacity of signatory parties. Without operational mechanisms, joint monitoring and dispute resolution, access restrictions continue to erode cultural ties and reduce local support for conservation. Baseline alternative livelihood initiatives and NTFP value chains have been promoted through ongoing programs with participation of women, but community forestry remains inefficient, benefit sharing inequitable and long-term sustainability weak relative to the scale of pressure from commercial bushmeat demand and shifting cultivation.

The landscape is also influenced by multiple multilateral and bilateral investments that provide lessons and partial coverage. Coordinated GEF initiatives include the GEF-6 UNEP project “Removing barriers to biodiversity conservation, land restoration and sustainable forest management through Community-Based Landscape Management – COBALAM” (ID 9604), and the GEF-7 national child project “Integrated management of Cameroon’s forest landscapes in the Congo Basin” (ID 10287), which covers other TRIDOM segments and offers relevant lessons on IP&LC livelihoods, wildlife monitoring, and knowledge management. The BBNP project is also positioned alongside the GEF-8 national child project on the Dja landscape and the GEF-8 Congo Basin Integrated Program, which support broader landscape governance and knowledge exchange. Other donor initiatives in TRIDOM include ECOFAC 6, Nature Africa and Nature Sud Est Cameroun, GIZ programs on TRIDOM biodiversity and sustainable development, and the UK Biodiverse Landscapes Fund Western Congo Basin program. These investments underscore strong interest and partial resourcing, but they do not yet provide a coherent, fully funded, site-specific package for permanent hotspot monitoring, inclusive governance systems, operational access rights, transparent benefit sharing and climate-resilient livelihood transformation around BBNP.

Without the proposed project, the baseline trajectory remains unfavorable. Flagship species such as elephants, gorillas, chimpanzees and pangolins are likely to continue declining under persistent poaching and hunting pressure, and major forest clearings risk becoming deserted. IP&LC exclusion from biomonitoring and inclusive governance would persist, innovative monitoring approaches would remain absent, and conflicts would intensify as multi-stakeholder dialogue remains weak and benefit sharing non-transparent. Wellbeing would decline as poverty deepens due to restricted access to NTFPs and weak value chains, while forest loss and degradation in the periphery would continue as shifting agriculture expands without usable weather information and low-impact alternatives.

Barriers

The persistence of environmental degradation in the BBNP landscape reflects multiple interrelated barriers. Institutional barriers include 1) weak opportunities/incentives for IP&LC participation and decision-making; co-management is absent/ineffective and benefit-sharing lacks equitable representation, and many Indigenous communities lack capacity/representation to engage institutions. (2) limited access rights in BBNP/periphery; weak tenure and non-transparent decisions restrict NTFP access (especially affecting women); the MINFOF–ASBABUK MoU provides controlled access (wild mangoes, mushrooms, honey; sacred sites) but implementation is weak. (3) weak biomonitoring technology, standardized protocols and analytical capacity; IP&LCs do not participate in inclusive biomonitoring. (4) limited weather information and familiarity with low-impact, climate-smart agriculture; shifting cultivation drives deforestation and conflict and information access is constrained by connectivity/literacy and few stations. Financial constraints reinforce barriers: very low PA budgets and inadequate equipment/logistics; underpaid enforcement; reduced private sector investment; and weak transparency/inclusion in royalty sharing (Law 2024/008: 10% to communities, 40% to municipalities).

Technical barriers include inadequate biomonitoring, lack of standardized protocols, insufficient equipment, and limited capacity among ecoguards and communities. Access to climate information is also limited, constraining adaptive agricultural practices.

Social barriers are closely linked to poverty, marginalization, and inequitable access to resources. Indigenous communities face restricted access to forest resources despite existing legal agreements, while benefit-sharing mechanisms are often ineffective or non-transparent. Gender inequalities further limit participation and access to benefits.

Enabling conditions include ongoing GEF/non-GEF initiatives in TRIDOM, evolving policy frameworks that recognize community participation, existing civil society platforms that can be reactivated, IP networks (RACOPY), CSOs (ROSE, AAFEBEN), but these remain underused because implementation capacity is weak.

The proposed project is designed to address these barriers through an integrated, inclusive conservation approach that aligns governance reform, evidence generation, deterrence and livelihood transformation. It strengthens management effectiveness of BBNP (238,255 ha) while promoting biodiversity-friendly practices in surrounding landscapes and addressing climate mitigation and resilience objectives through reduced deforestation and improved land-use practices. It embeds IP&LC rights and gender-responsive participation as system functions rather than standalone activities, ensuring that Indigenous Baka and other communities—including women and youth—participate in decision-making, monitoring, grievance management and benefit sharing. This approach targets root drivers by improving incentives (lawful access to NTFPs, transparent benefit-sharing and alternative incomes), strengthening institutions (functional platforms, grievance redress and capacity building across enforcement and judiciary) and improving the decision-evidence loop (standardized biomonitoring, data management and adaptive management).

Stakeholders and System Actors

The project operates within a multi-actor system involving government institutions, local communities, private sector actors, civil society organizations, and international partners.

National Government: MINFOF executes with technical responsibility; the Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas is National Director and the BBNP conservator coordinates field activities and MoU implementation with ASBABUK. MINEPDED coordinates GEF projects with MINFOF; sectoral ministries including MINADER and MINPROFF support enabling conditions.

IP&LCs and CSOs: (Baka and Bantu) participate in biomonitoring (including bai presence), consultative platforms, NTFP value chains, low-impact agriculture and collaboration with ecoguards; women's participation is emphasized.

ASBABUK is the MoU signatory; RACOPY supports MoU monitoring, awareness and GRM; CSOs including ROSE and AAFEBEN support capacity building, governance advocacy, GRM and livelihood/value-chain work.

Private Sector: Logging companies in FMUs 10015/10018/10020/10021/10022/10023 collaborate on combating hunting/IWT and enabling Indigenous NTFP access in concessions and are expected to apply SFM and protect HCV areas.

Local government: Yokadouma and Salapombe councils manage royalties and invest in community development and are central to transparency and inclusive benefit sharing; REGEFOC and community forest structures are relevant for governance. ONACC provides climate data; MINADER translates/disseminates and backstops adoption.

Alignment and Investment Context

The project aligns with Cameroon's national priorities for biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest management and sustainable development and with the 2024 forestry and wildlife law that strengthens participation and benefit sharing. It contributes to regional priorities under COMIFAC's Convergence Plan and is designed to build programmatic synergies with ongoing initiatives in the Congo Basin, including GEF-supported landscape programs and national child projects that promote inclusive governance, sustainable forest management and knowledge exchange. The project is structured to avoid duplication by building on existing investments while filling persistent gaps around BBNP—particularly permanent hotspot monitoring, functional multi-stakeholder governance and grievance systems, operational access rights, transparent benefit-sharing mechanisms and climate-informed low-impact agricultural practices.

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project description

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole. The project 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 PIF guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Project Objective is to improve the management effectiveness and conservation status of Boumba Bek National Park (238,255 ha) and its periphery by reducing key threats to wildlife — particularly the Critically Endangered forest elephant — through IP&LC-led inclusive governance, participatory biomonitoring, and

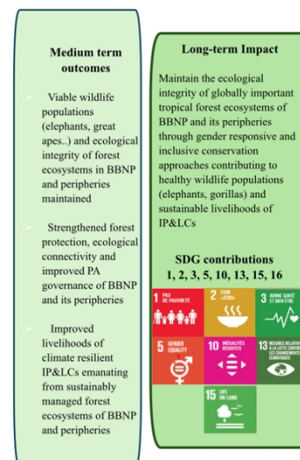
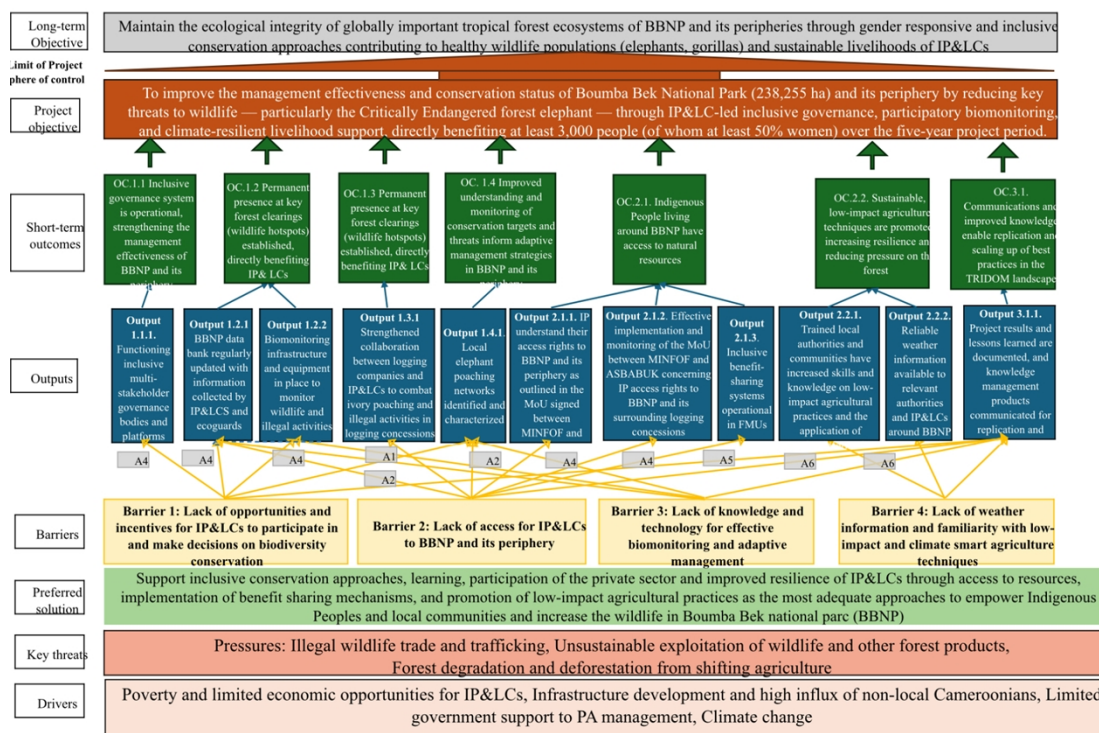
climate-resilient livelihood support, directly benefiting at least 3,000 people (of whom at least 50% women) over the five-year project period.

The project's **theory of change** is based on addressing two interlinked core problems: (i) decline of wildlife populations driven by poaching, illegal wildlife trade and weak protected area management, and (ii) degradation of forest ecosystems in the periphery driven by shifting cultivation, unsustainable resource use, and limited livelihood opportunities. These pressures are intensified by poverty and limited alternatives (households earning about 1,650 XAF/day), infrastructure-enabled access that facilitates trafficking and migration-driven expansion, and climate variability that undermines food security and resilience. Four binding barriers define why these trends persist: limited opportunities and incentives for IP&LCs (including women and youth) to participate in and influence conservation decisions; weak operationalization of Indigenous access rights under the MINFOF–ASBABUK agreement; insufficient standardized biomonitoring methodologies, equipment and analytical capacity to produce evidence for adaptive management; and limited access to usable weather information and familiarity with low-impact, climate-smart agriculture that would reduce encroachment and conflict.

Key risks and assumptions are embedded in this logic and are managed through project design. Climate variability and extreme events could disrupt farming seasons and increase pressure on forests; mitigation is built through climate-resilient practices and weather services, including installation of two automatic weather stations in Yokadouma and Salapombe that measure temperature, precipitation, humidity and wind and feed forecasting and advisory services, with gender-inclusive dissemination to address access barriers for women and marginalized groups. Social exclusion and competing land uses could generate conflict; mitigation is embedded through the grievance redress mechanism, strengthened consultative platforms, human rights training for park personnel, and structured implementation and joint monitoring of access agreements. Governance risks—weak coordination across ministries, potential corruption and limited judicial follow-through—could weaken deterrence; mitigation is embedded through capacity building, transparent protocols, strict procurement and fiduciary controls aligned with relevant standards, and escalation pathways where exclusion persists. Technology uptake risks (literacy and infrastructure constraints) are mitigated through context-appropriate training that valorizes traditional knowledge and adaptive management that adjusts approaches based on participation.

The intervention package is designed to remain robust across plausible futures. Under lower-pressure futures, permanent monitoring and inclusive governance accelerate wildlife stabilization and reduce conflict. Under faster climate change, livelihood resilience supported by climate information reduces the likelihood that shocks translate into increased encroachment. Under increased infrastructure and in-migration, strengthened deterrence through integrated monitoring, intelligence and judicial strengthening, combined with private-sector compliance and community incentives, reduces illegal resource use along access corridors. Under worst-case conditions combining higher development pressure and faster climate change, institutionalized governance and conflict-resolution mechanisms, evidence-driven adaptive management and diversified livelihoods maintain a viable pathway for conservation and wellbeing.

Figure 1: Conceptual model with major threats to wildlife in BBNP and its periphery (This image has also been uploaded separately in the ToC annex located in the Roadmap)



Project Components and Interventions

The project deploys three mutually reinforcing components.

Component 1 strengthens the governance and inclusion system required for effective protected area management. Although national frameworks reinforce participation of women and IP&LCs, implementation remains weak and platforms are under-resourced. The project therefore reviews and revitalizes existing governance bodies and consultative platforms, establishes clear roles, responsibilities and decision processes, and builds capacities of IP&LCs and authorities to participate effectively, improving coordination across conservation services, councils, civil society organizations and private-sector actors and reducing conflict that undermines conservation outcomes.

To make inclusion operational and credible, the project establishes a functioning grievance redress mechanism covering BBNP and its periphery, with accessible channels for IP&LCs (including women and youth) and transparent case handling. The mechanism is strengthened through assessment and lessons learning, sensitization and training of communities to access it, provision of communications and equipment for effective handling, and capacity building for conservation services on environmental and social management. This reduces grievances related to access, resource use, human–wildlife conflict and enforcement conduct, strengthening trust and enabling sustained co-management.

Component 1 improves management effectiveness through inclusive biomonitoring systems that support adaptive management. As baïs concentrate megafauna and are therefore highly targeted by poachers, the project establishes permanent mixed IP&LC–ecoguard monitoring at Pondo, Oboul, and Gbekoua. Monitoring follows standardized protocols that integrate traditional knowledge with scientific methods and incorporate regular feedback and review. Recruitment and training are conducted in accordance with FPIC and gender criteria, and a biomonitoring association is formalized. Monitoring infrastructure—including miradors, trails, and bridges—is rehabilitated or constructed as needed in line with safeguards requirements, and essential equipment is procured and maintained to ensure safety and operational continuity.

Routine data collection, entry, and analysis feed into the BBNP database, generating monitoring reports that inform management decisions and enable adaptive responses.

Deterrence is strengthened by linking monitoring to enforcement, intelligence and private-sector integration. Current constraints are severe: BBNP has 30 ecoguards with limited logistics, while annual support for protected area management is about USD 20,000; patrol intensity has declined to 2–3 patrols per month (about 6 man-days per month) and budgets are approximately USD 0.45/ha/year in BBNP. The project establishes an elephant poaching baseline, maps and characterizes poaching networks, trains IP&LC informants and ecoguards in safe intelligence gathering, and develops an information plan for analysis and reporting. It trains conservation services, law enforcement, magistrates/judges and logging company units on wildlife crime and human-rights-respecting practices, and supports logging-company-led communication and compliance actions to reduce hunting and illegal trade within concessions, thereby strengthening deterrence across the enforcement chain.

Component 2 transforms livelihood systems and incentives so that conservation becomes rational and feasible for forest-dependent households. Livelihoods rely on hunting and bushmeat trade, NTFP gathering and subsistence agriculture practiced through shifting cultivation; poverty is acute, with households averaging about 1,650 XAF/day. The project operationalizes Indigenous access rights under the MINFOF–ASBABUK agreement by building understanding of rights, strengthening the capacity of Indigenous organizations (with support from civil society partners), and implementing coordinated communication plans and public awareness campaigns via local radio. This enables lawful access to NTFPs (e.g., wild mangoes, mushrooms, honey) and sacred sites while maintaining conservation objectives.

Access rights are implemented as a regulated system that links livelihoods and conservation. The project supports joint planning and review sessions, participatory mapping of NTFP and forest-use areas, and creation of a joint monitoring protocol for periodic evaluation of access implementation and its impacts on livelihoods and biodiversity. Joint meetings among MINFOF, ASBABUK and logging companies strengthen transparency and compliance, while gender-inclusive approaches ensure women's participation and address barriers faced by marginalized groups. By reducing grievances and clarifying rules, the project lowers incentives for clandestine harvesting and conflict and reinforces the legitimacy of protected area management.

Component 2 also strengthens benefit-sharing and incentives in the wider managed forest matrix. Logging concessions around BBNP total 453,511 ha across FMUs 10015, 10018, 10020, 10021, 10022 and 10023, while communal forests (Yokadouma 21,780 ha; Salapombe 22,684 ha) and 14 community forests (68,848 ha) are key local governance units. Law No. 2024/008 allocates 10% of forest royalties to communities and 40% to municipalities and reinforces participation of women and IP&LCs, but baseline transparency is weak. The project reviews existing benefit-sharing mechanisms with a gender and inclusion lens, updates governance and monitoring protocols, establishes systems to track and disclose benefit flows, trains stakeholders to implement protocols, and provides technical assistance for micro-projects and NTFP value chain strengthening that generate alternative income and reduce reliance on hunting.

Climate-resilient agriculture reduces forest conversion by replacing shifting cultivation with low-impact practices. Around BBNP, agriculture expansion accounts for about 95% of forest clearings, and deforestation increased from $\approx 1,100$ ha/year (2001–2011) to over 9,200 ha/year (2011–2022). The project trains communities and local authorities in agroforestry, conservation agriculture, crop rotation, cover cropping and composting; supplies inputs and equipment as needed; and supports field backstopping through relevant services. Two automatic weather stations in Yokadouma and Salapombe provide localized data for forecasting, and forecasts are translated and disseminated in gender-inclusive ways so farmers can plan planting and harvesting and manage risk. By improving yields and resilience, the project reduces the need for slash-and-burn expansion and lowers conflict with park authorities.

Component 3 strengthens communications, learning and adaptive management so that gains can be sustained and replicated. Baseline information flows and coordination platforms are weak and often non-functional; the project therefore implements a Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy that combines in-person platforms with radio and other channels, documents results and lessons learned, and ensures monitoring data are shared with managers, councils, private-sector partners and communities for decision-making. Communities of practice and inter-sectoral exchanges—including with agriculture and climate services—support continuous improvement and practical uptake, with explicit inclusion of women and marginalized groups.

Knowledge management supports scaling and policy influence beyond BBNP by translating evidence and experience into improved governance and resource allocation. Regular reports, newsletters and technical briefs include lessons on inclusive governance, grievance redress operation, biomonitoring methods, intelligence and enforcement practices, and climate-informed livelihoods. This supports replication across the TRIDOM landscape and strengthens programmatic synergies with ongoing initiatives, helping avoid duplication while enabling broader system transformation.

Stakeholder ownership is embedded in the project's operating model. MINFOF executes the project and provides technical oversight through protected area leadership, while MINEPDED coordinates GEF project oversight and supports policy coherence; ONACC supports climate data services; and agricultural services translate forecasts and provide backstopping. Civil society partners deliver capacity building, biomonitoring support and value-chain strengthening, while Indigenous organizations including ASBABUK support rights implementation and participation. Local councils strengthen transparency in royalty and benefit management, and logging companies collaborate on compliance, controlled access arrangements and support to alternative incomes. IP&LCs participate directly in biomonitoring teams, governance platforms, NTFP value chains and adaptive management, ensuring local legitimacy and sustained engagement.

Co-benefits and sustainability arise from the same system transformation. By reducing poaching and illegal trade, stabilizing megafauna presence at key clearings and reducing forest conversion, the project strengthens biodiversity outcomes and ecosystem services. By improving access rights, benefit-sharing transparency, climate-resilient agriculture and alternative incomes, it improves wellbeing and resilience for forest-dependent households and reduces drivers of unsustainable use. The project expects to directly benefit 3,000 people, including 1,500 women and 500 Indigenous people, through capacity building, participation and livelihood improvements. By strengthening institutions, embedding learning and aligning incentives with legal frameworks, the project establishes durable conditions for continued conservation and sustainable development beyond the project life.

A gender-responsive M&E system will track indicators and produce timely financial, technical, and management reports. Implementation of the Gender Action Plan, SEP, IPP, and the Social & Environmental Management Plan will be monitored. Mid-term and final evaluations will inform course corrections and final learning. Results will be shared with managers and stakeholders (park service, FMUs, IP&LC) to adapt actions and strengthen outcomes via consultative platforms.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Outcome: Evidence-based adaptive management is operational, ensuring timely course corrections, safeguards compliance, and accountability throughout project implementation

Output 1.1: M&E plan finalized with data collection, reflection and reporting to aid in adaptive management of project

Output M&E 1.2: Monitoring of the GAP, SEP and SEMP

Output M&E 1.3: Project reviews and evaluations

Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?

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

WWF will **NOT** play an execution role on this project.

The GEF Agency is not expected to play an execution role on this project. WWF-US will serve as the GEF Agency, while MINFOF will act as the principal executing entity with technical support from WWF Cameroon and other partners. The project is designed to build on and coordinate closely with ongoing GEF and non-GEF initiatives in the TRIDOM landscape, including the GEF-7 Cameroon child project on integrated forest landscape management, the GEF-8 Dja landscape child project, the regional Congo Basin Impact Program, and complementary support from the WWF network, EU, GIZ, UK International Development, JICA and other actors. Cooperation will focus on regular information exchange, alignment of approaches to inclusive governance and community livelihoods, learning on NTFP value chains and biomonitoring, and maximizing synergies with existing staffing, field presence, and stakeholder platforms where feasible. This coordination will help avoid duplication, strengthen programmatic coherence, and improve the sustainability and scalability of project results.

Core Indicators

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)
238255	0	0	0

Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	0	0	0

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)
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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)
238255	0	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDP A ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
Boumba Bek	308624	National Park	238,255.00						

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)
273480	0	0	0

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)
273,480.00			

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 (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)	0	0	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)	2709992	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 CO₂e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)	2,709,992			
Anticipated start year of accounting	2027			
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 CO₂e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				
Duration of accounting				

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

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

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

Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)
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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	1,500			
Male	1,500			
Total	3,000	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)

The project will contribute to four GEF core indicators and related sub indicators described below. Core indicator 1 measures the extent to which terrestrial protected areas are under improved management for biodiversity conservation. Through activities such as systematic biomonitoring of elephants and other megafauna in bais (forest clearings), with the participation of IP&LC, and

strengthening local forest governance, the project will contribute to improved management of Boumba Bek national park (238,255 ha) as measured by the METT. Core indicator 4 measures improved management for biodiversity in the area outside of Boumba Bek NP, in its peripheries, including adjacent community-use areas and buffer zones. This will be measured under sub indicator 4.1: area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity. Core indicator 6, estimated at 2,709,992 tCO₂-e over 20 years, will be achieved through improved management practices of estimated 23,826 ha of surrounding forests to the national park, equivalent to 10% of the protected area, considered for EX-ACT calculations. Core indicator 11 covers direct beneficiaries from GEF investments disaggregated by gender; it is estimated that 3,000 people will directly benefit from project activities, with 1,500 being women and 500 Indigenous people.

Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Moderate	There is a risk that increasing climate variability and extreme weather events will impact farming seasons and the regular availability of water, reducing food security, and increasing pressure on forests through shifting agriculture. As temperatures rise, weather patterns become more unpredictable, leading to shifts in traditional farming cycles. This can result in shorter growing seasons, altered planting and harvesting times, and increased vulnerability to extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, and storms. Risk mitigation measure added to project design: IP&LC farmers will be trained in lowimpact agricultural techniques and in weather data collection and analysis to be used in climate predictions to adapt to changing farming periods to reduce deforestation effects from shifting agricultural practices. Climate change considerations have been integrated during project design and will be integrated throughout implementation. This comprehensive approach ensures that the project remains resilient and responsive to environmental changes, safeguarding both the ecosystem and the livelihoods of the communities involved. During sensitization and awareness raising on low impact agriculture, the project will also inform the beneficiary communities that there will be no compensations in case of a worst-case scenario whereby there is complete loss in food production due extreme weather conditions
Environmental and Social	Moderate	There is a risk that competing land and resource uses and social exclusion of women and IP&LC are sources of conflicts among stakeholders despite the existing legal framework which could escalate into conflict, undermine trust, and disrupt project activities. Environmental risks have been identified in Section 3.2 of the ESMF. Some of these risks include - potential adverse environmental impacts that may result from activities implemented by the project such as small infrastructure development that could disrupt ecosystems; the promotion of alternative livelihoods (small scale agriculture

		and NTFP) that might not be sustainable if not well managed; human-wildlife conflict that may lead to negative impacts resulting in long-term economic instability for local communities and exacerbating the unsustainable harvesting of natural resources and damage to ecosystems. Risk of elite capture within IP&LC governance structures and adverse livelihood impacts from conservation enforcement. There is a risk that benefits, representation, and decision-making authority intended for IP&LCs—particularly Baka communities—could be captured by local elites, better-connected intermediaries, or a narrow group of representatives, thereby undermining equitable participation, accountability, and the legitimacy of project-supported governance bodies and benefit-sharing arrangements. There is also a risk that strengthened conservation enforcement, including increased patrols and tighter regulation of access to forest resources, could have unintended adverse impacts on livelihoods, food security, and cultural practices if not implemented in a rights-based and carefully managed manner. Mitigation measures: The project will apply FPIC principles; establish transparent and inclusive representation criteria for community structures; ensure participation of women, youth, and marginalized Baka members; support independent facilitation by trusted civil society organizations such as RACOPY and ASBABUK; and support the establishment of a functioning Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) and train stakeholders on the GRM, how to manage and access grievances. The project will also deliver human rights training for park personnel; strengthen multi stakeholders' consultative platforms to foster collaboration and dialogue, reinforce local governance structures to ensure more inclusive decision-making, enhance the participation of IP&LC and women in decision making bodies, and implement signed MoU between ASBABUK and MINFOF granting greater access to IP to natural resources in protected area and surrounding forests. Detailed mitigation measures have been described for environmental risks in Section 4.2 and Table 2 and for social mitigation in Section 4.4 and table 3 of the ESMF.
Political and Governance	Substantial	Authoritarian Rule and Weak Political Pluralism which limits civic space, restriction on participation can constrain open dialogue and project legitimacy. Risk mitigation measures The project will ensure that project governance structures (steering committee, advisory groups) include all stakeholders (CSOs, communities, women, Indigenous Peoples) Succession risk and political uncertainty with the upcoming election. Risk mitigation measures Build strong partnerships with decentralized/local government and community-based organizations to buffer against national-level disruptions. Corruption, clientelism & nepotism leads to potential misuse of funds, favoritism in procurement, or elite capture of project benefits. Risk mitigation measures Safeguard project funds through use of a Financial administrator who adheres to strict procurement rules aligned with GEF/WWF standards in close cooperation with the government. This will disrupt the corruption cycle and capacitate the government in procurement procedures. Governance risks through weak public administrations, centralization, and poor service

		delivery reduce local buy-in or government support to the project. Risk mitigation measures The project has several components and activities which will strengthen local governance structures, and provide targeted capacity building to local partners. In addition it will use adaptive management to regularly adjust activities to reflect local institutional realities.
INNOVATION		
Institutional and Policy	Substantial	There is a risk that weak institutional environment and weak enforcement of PA laws will allow illegal hunting, bushmeat trade, and resource exploitation to continue, undermining conservation outcomes. Risk mitigation measures The project will strengthen local management bodies to ensure participation of women and Indigenous people in decision making bodies, reactivate and reinforce multi stakeholders' consultation platforms (component 1), facilitate knowledge and information sharing among stakeholders and ensure greater participation of BBNP in TRIDOM landscape initiatives. In extreme conditions where governance systems completely excludes IP&LC from decision making, the project will escalate the matter to the highest competent authorities, highlighting both the implications and potential international consequences of such actions.
Technological	Moderate	There is a risk that limited literacy, infrastructure, and motivation among IP&LC will reduce uptake of new technologies and weakening project outcomes even so technological know-how is not a high priority when compared with other immediate needs of IP&LC. Mitigating measures The project will train IP&LC to interpret and integrate weather data in farming and planting seasons. IP&LC will be trained in innovative biomonitoring techniques for monitoring wildlife in major forest clearings in BBNP. The project will valorize traditional know-how and adaptive management to avoid lack of motivation from IP&LC to learn and apply new technology in low impact agriculture and other related activities. (Linked to Assumption 4)
Financial and Business Model	Moderate	There is a risk that NTFP value chains and ecotourism models will fail due to weak governance, lack of transparency in benefit-sharing, or external market conditions, limiting livelihood benefits despite the economic potential from ecotourism and NTFP value chains. There are no successful business models in Boumba Bek to boost household economies and livelihoods. The IP&LC have limited access to NTFPs. The existing benefit sharing mechanism for sharing of forest royalties is weak and not transparent. The logging companies do not fully comply with social and environmental safeguard measures. Mitigating measures The project will support the implementation of MoU signed between ASBABUK and MINFOF to facilitate access to NTFPs in BBNP and its periphery. The project will reinforce local governance system to ensure representation and participation of IP&LC and women in decision making bodies. IP&LC will be trained by the project in low-impact agricultural techniques and agroforestry to reduce deforestation from shifting farming practices and enhance food production. Permanent presence and monitoring of megafauna in baïs will lead to an increase in wildlife populations in the baïs. This might contribute to increasing

		ecotourism activities in BBNP and creation of local jobs and revenues. In case of failure of different business models for example in NTFP value chains and ecotourism, the project will in identify root causes of the failure and provide corrective measures which include long term capacity building in the different business models. (Linked to Assumptions 3 and 5)
EXECUTION		
Capacity	Moderate	There is a risk that low technical capacity of IP&LC, ecoguards, and private sector stakeholders will reduce effectiveness of biodiversity monitoring, forest governance, and sustainable resource management. Mitigating measures IP&LC and ecoguards will be trained in innovative biomonitoring techniques, implementation of GRM and human rights protocol etc. The local women will be trained how to interpret weather data for use in planning farming seasons. The project will reinforce governance system such as national park management committee with representation and participation of women and IP&LC in these decision-making bodies. The project will work to improve benefit sharing mechanisms especially for forest royalties. Support ASBABUK to effectively implement MoU signed with MINFOF to enhance access to NTFPs. The knowledge and lessons learnt from the project will be shared with project stakeholders including IP&LC and women. During the project lifespan, there will be emphasis on greater participation of key local stakeholders such as councils and CSOs various capacity building programs supported by the project for ownership and sustainability. (Linked to Assumptions 3 and 4)
Fiduciary	Substantial	There is a risk that weak financial and technical capacity of executing partners or delays in fund disbursement will compromise timely project execution. The project will establish a strong management unit, build relationships with partners, create programmatic synergies with other projects in the Boumba Bek landscape, and reinforce inter-sectoral collaboration. The project will apply enhanced financial management and procurement controls consistent with WWF and GEF requirements. These will include a fiduciary capacity assessment of the executing entity and relevant partners prior to disbursement; dedicated PMU finance staff; segregation of duties; use of a separate project account; disbursement against approved workplans, budgets, and reporting milestones; and mandatory training on financial management and procurement procedures. The project will also maintain a procurement plan, contract register, and asset inventory; conduct periodic spot checks and field-level expenditure verification; and be subject to annual independent external audits with follow-up on audit findings. A confidential complaints and whistleblower channel will be available for reporting suspected fraud, corruption, or misuse of funds, and disbursements may be suspended or additional controls applied if material fiduciary weaknesses are identified during implementation.
Stakeholder	Moderate	There is a risk that weak or absent stakeholder platforms and lack of benefitsharing will cause conflicts, reduce participation, and foster illegal activities. Mitigation measures The project will facilitate intersectoral

		collaboration to create an enabling institutional environment to enhance project execution, improve multi stakeholders' consultations and local governance system. The local governance system will be reinforced to allow for participation and representation of IP&LC and women in decision making bodies. The MoU signed between ASBABUK and MINFOF will be implemented to increase access to NTFPs by Indigenous people. The capacities of IP&LC will be 5/13/2026 Page 41 of 75 Official Use Only reinforced in different domains, notably innovative biomonitoring techniques, low-impact agriculture, weather interpretation, and multi stakeholders' dialogues etc. This will enable IP&LC to participate in project implementation and derive direct and indirect benefits from project activities. The project will seek to comply with and apply relevant international guidelines and best practices regarding inclusive management and the use of globally recognized FPIC principles in consultations with IP&LC, women and other vulnerable groups. REPALEAC, ROSE, RACOPY and other local civil society networks were consulted during project design phase and will be fully involved in project implementation to ensure sustainability. (Linked to Assumptions 3 and 5)
Other	Low	
Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	The overall risk rating of the project is moderate because of the above listed factors; weak capacities of some stakeholders, financial sustainability, and weak intersectoral collaboration and insufficient application of government policies to combat hunting and bushmeat trade among others to ensure effective protection of BBNP. The project may not completely abate identified risks but they can be controlled through proposed mitigating actions.

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 if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The project is fully aligned with the main sectoral directives and policies of Cameroon, and contributes to national priorities for the environment, forest management, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development sectors, as presented in the 2030 National Strategy Development Document (SND30). The project themes align with the 2024 forestry and wildlife laws and support protection of megafauna species in BBNP. The project is also aligned with Cameroon's NBSAP and contributes to COMIFAC's Convergence Plan because BBNP is part of the Dja-Odzala-Minkebe TRIDOM transboundary landscape. In terms of GEF-8 programming directions, the project supports contributions and engagement of women and Indigenous Peoples in integrated management approaches and sustainable use of biodiversity. Component 2 addresses

improved livelihoods and resilience of IP&LC through access to resources, benefit sharing mechanisms, and increased yields from sustainable, low-impact agricultural practices to reduce pressure on the forest and avoid deforestation. The major project themes contribute to multiple targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including Targets 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 21, 22, and 23.

GEF-8 regional Congo Basin Integrated Program (Congo IP)'Congo IP project with UNEP as GEF Implementing Agency. The GEF-8 Congo Basin Impact Program (IP) has been designed to give continuity to transformative and innovative approaches to forest conservation that had been initiated in GEF-7 through a similar Impact Program concerning the Congo Basin forest biome. It covers Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe which are currently developing their own national child projects. The overarching objective of the Congo Basin IP is: To improve the conservation and effective governance of critical landscapes in the Congo Basin Forest Biome that contribute to sustaining the health of the planet, the flow of vital ecosystem services, supporting green recovery and inclusive sustainable development initiatives. The GEF8 BBNP project will capitalize on results and lessons from ongoing GEF7 Congo IP regional project and the Cameroon national Impact Project. The project's thematic priorities align with GEF8 Congo IP regional project, and the Dja landscape national child project titled 'Strengthening governance and ecosystem connectivity for biodiversity conservation and improved livelihoods in the Dja landscape'. The project will maintain regular communications with the regional project and national child projects to share knowledge and lessons learnt in project implementation.

The project is strongly aligned with the GEF-8 Inclusive Conservation Initiative (ICI), particularly through its focus on operationalizing the MINFOF-ASBABUK MoU to strengthen Indigenous Peoples' access rights to natural resources, its emphasis on inclusive governance and benefit sharing, and its targeted support to women, who play a central role in informal agriculture and NTFP-based livelihoods in the project area. This aligns closely with the ICI objective of strengthening land and resource rights, governance, and leadership of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including women, as a foundation for durable conservation outcomes. At the national level, the project will work closely with RACOPY, the principal Indigenous Peoples' network in Cameroon and a key partner for advocacy, grievance management, and support to ASBABUK. To strengthen alignment with the broader ICI programmatic architecture in Central Africa, the project will also seek linkages with REPALEAC as the regional Indigenous Peoples and local communities platform supported under the ICI, particularly for knowledge exchange, regional learning, and dissemination of lessons on rights-based conservation, women's leadership, and inclusive governance emerging from the Boumba Bek landscape.

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

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

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

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

Yes

Were the following stakeholders consulted during project identification 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

Stakeholder consultations and site visits informed project design. Indigenous Peoples and local communities, civil society organizations such as RACOPY, ROSE and AAFEBEN, government counterparts including MINFOF and MINEPDED, local councils, and private sector actors including logging companies were consulted during project preparation. Their roles and engagement are reflected throughout the project description, especially in governance, biomonitoring, benefit-sharing, grievance mechanisms, and livelihood activities.

Systematic Documentation of Stakeholder Consultations

Date	Description of Consultation	Venue	Objective of the Consultation	Summary of Meeting Outcomes	Participants
	Community Consultation Workshops	Salapoumbé, Yokadouma March 2024 and July 2024	To inform IP&LCs on project objectives and activities. Gauge their expectations and potential role(s) in project execution	IP&LCs raised concerns on access rights to NTFPs, income generation opportunities and suggestions on economically viable value chains that could be supported by the project	ASBABUK, local councils, COVAREF leaders, community members (men, women, youths)
	Stakeholder Consultation Meeting	Ngatto March 2024 and July 2024	To inform IP&LCs on project objectives and activities. Gauge their expectations and potential role(s) in project execution	Participants supported sustainable agriculture and ecotourism initiatives. Recommendations included specific gender-focused activities	Local representatives of MINFOF, MINADER, RAFASAL, REPALEAC, local community leaders
	Focus Group Discussion with Women	Salapoumbé July 2024	To address gender-specific challenges and identify livelihood needs for women	Women prioritized training in sustainable farming, access to markets for PFNLs, and financial support for alternative livelihoods	Women leaders from RAFASAL, female community members, and representatives from NGOs
	Private Sector Engagement Workshop	Yokadouma July 2024	To engage private sector actors in conservation and sustainable economic initiatives. The logging companies were concerned about high taxes paid which may force closure if no remedial actions are taken	Logging companies pledged to combat ivory poaching and other illegal activities in their concessions, livelihood projects in collaboration with IP&LCs, and committed to sustainable forest management practices	Representatives of STBK, CIBC, GVI, SFEES, and local business owners

			by forest administration to redress the situation		
	Project Steering Committee Inception Meeting	Yaoundé May 2024	Review of project document with inputs based on field realities and proper consideration of local stakeholders. Local stakeholders' with CSOs wanted more information about specific role(s) in project execution. Sectoral ministries looked into alignment of project activities with national priorities	Useful contributions to project's logical framework, updated list of stakeholders, clarity on roles of the different stakeholders and communications on potential conservation and economic benefits of the project	MINFOF, MINEPDED, MINAS, MINDDEVEL, ONACC, technical partners, and CSOs etc.
	Indigenous People Consultations	Malea Ancien July 2024	To discuss using FPIC principles, IP participation in project execution, their expectations and contributions to proposed project activities	The Baka communities approved proposed project activities. Requested better integration in project execution including training programs. The IP also requested project's technical and financial assistance to facilitate greater access to NTFPs and support to livelihood projects through NTFP value chains	ASBABUK leaders, REPALEAC, and Indigenous community representatives

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

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

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

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

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

Yes

<p>Please see ESS project documents attached. Included are the: Gender Analysis, Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Categorization Memo, and Environmental and Social Management Framework.</p>

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 Project 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	Grant / Non-Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total GEF Financing (\$)
WWF-US	GET	Cameroon	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: BD-1	Grant	3,519,725.00	316,775.00	3,836,500.00
Total GEF Resources (\$)						3,519,725.00	316,775.00	3,836,500.00

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount (\$)

150000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

13500

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non-Grant	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
WWF-US	GET	Cameroon	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: BD-1	Grant	150,000.00	13,500.00	163,500.00
Total PPG Amount (\$)						150,000.00	13,500.00	163,500.00

Please provide justification

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total(\$)
WWF-US	GET	Cameroon	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	4,000,000.00
Total GEF Resources					4,000,000.00

Indicative Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
BD-1-1	GET	3,519,725.00	29922367
Total Project Cost		3,519,725.00	29,922,367.00

Indicative Co-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Recipient Country Government	MINFOF	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	15000000
Recipient Country Government	MINEPDED	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	6000000
Recipient Country Government	ONAC	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1000000
Civil Society Organization	World Wide Fund for Nature Cameroon	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2500000
Civil Society Organization	World Wide Fund for Nature Cameroon	Grant	Investment mobilized	1500000
Civil Society Organization	Zoological Society of London	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1000000
Civil Society Organization	Global Conservation	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	700000
Others	Yokadouma (local municipality)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500000
Civil Society Organization	RACOPY	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500000

Civil Society Organization	AAFEBEN	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	300000
GEF Agency	World Wildlife Fund US	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	422367
Civil Society Organization	ROSE	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500000
Total Co-financing				29,922,367.00

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

World Wide Fund for Nature Cameroon is the main conservation organization partner providing technical and financial support for the effective management of BBNP. The investment mobilized comes from grant sources and will contribute to the activities described in the three project components and also ensure programmatic synergies with interventions of co-financing partners operating in BBNP and its periphery.

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Type	Name	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
	Dr. Renae Stenhouse	5/20/2026			renae.stenhouse@wwfus.org
		5/20/2026	Heike Lingertat		heike.lingertat@wwfus.org

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

Name	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Haman Unusa	Sub-Director for Environmental Planning Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED)	Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development	6/4/2024

ANNEX C: PROJECT LOCATION

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

Boumba Bek National Park	2.685256	15.008244	Project interventions will take place in Boumba Bek National Park and its surrounding peripheral landscape in southeast Cameroon within the TRIDOM transboundary landscape.
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ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

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

Title

Annex J1 _Gender Analysis_Final_15May2025 (2)

Annex J2 _GAP_Final for Submission_May 20 (1)

Annex H _ESMF_GEF 8 BBNP_Final Submission_May 20 (1)

Annex I _SEP_GEF 8 BBNP_Final_For Submission_May 20 (1)

ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
Significant Objective 1	Significant Objective 1	Principal Objective 2	No Contribution 0

ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET

ANNEX L: GEF 8 TAXONOMY

Please identify the taxonomic information required in Part I, by ticking the most relevant keywords/ topics/themes that best describe the project.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
☐ Focal Areas/Theme	☒ Biodiversity		
		☒ Protected Areas and Landscapes	
			☐ Productive Seascapes
			☐ Productive Landscapes
			☐ Coastal and Marine Protected Areas
			☒ Community Based Natural Resource Management
			☒ Terrestrial Protected Areas
		☒ Species	
			☐ Livestock Wild Relatives
			☒ Threatened Species
			☐ Plant Genetic Resources
			☒ Wildlife for Sustainable Development
			☐ Animal Genetic Resources
			☒ Illegal Wildlife Trade
			☐ Invasive Alien Species (IAS)
			☐ Crop Wild Relatives
		☐ Supplementary Protocol to the CBD	
			☐ Access to Genetic Resources Benefit Sharing
			☐ Biosafety
		☐ Financial and Accounting	
			☐ Payment for Ecosystem Services
			☐ Conservation Finance
			☐ Conservation Trust Funds
			☐ Natural Capital Assessment and Accounting
		☒ Mainstreaming	
			☒ Agriculture & agrobiodiversity
			☐ Certification (National Standards)
			☐ Tourism
			☐ Certification (International Standards)
			☐ Infrastructure
			☐ Fisheries
			☐ Extractive Industries (oil, gas, mining)
			☐ Forestry (Including HCVF and REDD+)
		☐ Biomes	
			☐ Mangroves
			☐ Sea Grasses
			☐ Tropical Dry Forests
			☐ Paramo
			☐ Rivers
			☐ Lakes
			☐ Coral Reefs
			☐ Temperate Forests
			☒ Tropical Rain Forests
			☐ Grasslands
			☐ Wetlands