

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

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

12362

Countries

Cameroon

Project Name

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

Agencies

WWF-US

Date received by PM

5/28/2026

Review completed by PM

Program Manager

Tasila Banda
Focal Area
Biodiversity
Project Type
MSP

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF) REVIEW SHEET

1. General Project Information / Eligibility

a) Does the project meet the criteria for eligibility for GEF funding?

b) Is the General Project Information table correctly populated?

Secretariat's Comments

05/28/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

2. Project Summary

Does the project summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the project objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected results?

Secretariat's Comments

05/28/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

3 Indicative Project Overview

3.1 a) Is the project objective presented as a concise statement and clear?

b) Are the components, outcomes and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?

Secretariat's Comments

05/28/2026 TMB

The Agency submitted 2 documents for review: A Portal version of the PIF and a Word Document. We note that there is an important discrepancy to flag at the outset: the PIF and the CER do not state the same project objective. The PIF states the objective as: "To protect the key wildlife species of Boumba Bek National Park (BBNP) through IP&LC-led conservation and improving local livelihoods." The CER Word Document states it as: "To empower Indigenous peoples and local communities (IP&LCs) to participate in the conservation of Boumba Bek National Park (BBNP) and its surroundings ? thereby improving their livelihoods and increasing wildlife." These are meaningfully different in their framing. The PIF objective centres on wildlife

protection as the primary goal, with IP&LC engagement and livelihoods as the means. The CER Word Document objective reframes the project as fundamentally about IP&LC empowerment, with conservation and livelihoods as outcomes. This shift in emphasis matters because it affects how reviewers read the logic of the results chain and the Theory of Change. We expect perfect consistency between the two documents.

Indicative Project Overview

Project Objective

To protect the key wildlife species of Boumba Bek National Park (BBNP) through IP&LC-led conservation and improving local livelihoods

Project Components

1B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

B.1. Project Objective and Theory of Change (TOC)

The **project objective** is to empower Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IP&LCs) to actively participate in the inclusive conservation of Boumba Bek National Park (BBNP) and its surrounding areas - thereby improving their livelihoods while contributing to the recovery of wildlife, specifically the number of critically endangered forest elephants.

06/11/2026 TMB

We take note of the clarification on the documents. However, the project objective: **"to protect the key wildlife species of Boumba Bek National Park through IP&LC-led conservation and improving local livelihoods"** is clear and directionally sound. However, it is not fully measurable as stated. A well-formed objective should be SMART.

06/15/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.12.2026):

We note that the project objective has been cleared previously.

We change the objective to "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."

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.10.2026):

An outdated CERDoc was attached by mistake. Our apologies for this. We will upload the correct, most current version, which maintains the same objective already cleared in a previous review and reflected in the PIF: "To protect the key wildlife species of Boumba Bek National Park (BBNP) through IP&LC-led conservation and improved local livelihoods."

3.2 Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation included within the project components and appropriately funded?

Secretariat's Comments

05/28/2026 TMB

1) On Gender: We request the Agency to reference the correct Annex for the Gender Action Plan in both the PIF portal version and in the Project Document.

2) The M&E Budget also has 2 different values. The PIF has USD 257,610 (7.3% of the GEF grant), the Word Project Document has USD 167,607 (4.8% of the GEF grant).

M&E	257,610.00
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M&E (3-5% of the project financing. 3% is 105,592)	GEF TF	167,607	1,424,
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3. Additionally, the M&E component is missing the Project Outcomes and Outputs details. Please amend.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)					
M&E	Technical Assistance			GET	257,610.00
					2,190,004.00
				Sub Total (\$)	3,352,120.00
					28,497,475.00

06/12/2026 TMB

1. Still Monitoring and Evaluation component lacks outcomes and outputs.

2. Also, resources allocated to M&E are 5.1% while the threshold for projects up to \$5 million is 5.0%.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)					
M&E	Technical Assistance			GET	171,691.00
					1,459,603.00
				Sub Total (\$)	3,352,120.00
					28,497,475.00
Project Management Cost (PMC)					
				GET	167,605.00
					1,424,892.00
				Sub Total(\$)	167,605.00
					1,424,892.00
				Total Project Cost(\$)	3,519,725.00
					29,922,367.00

06/15/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.12.2026):

We note that the M&E component has been cleared previously.
We added the outcomes and outputs from the CERDoc into the PIF.
According to GEF guidelines the for M&E are 7.5% of the GEF-funded part of project financing for projects up to USD 5 million which would be the amount we provided (4.88% of project financing of \$3,519,725. We have further reduced the M&E budget to \$167,606 which is contrary to the feedback of project evaluations.

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.10.2026):

Thanks for noticing. We have added the M&E component as reflected in the CERDoc.

An outdated CERDoc was attached by mistake. We will upload the correct, most current version, which reflects now a reduced budget in line with your comment on the reduced budget of 5%, which is now \$1,459,603.

3.3 a) Are the components adequately funded?

b) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?

c) Is the PMC equal to or below 5% of the total GEF grant for FSPs or 10% for MSPs? If the requested PMC is above the caps, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?

Secretariat's Comments
06/08/2026 TMB

1. The average budget amount of the GEF funded part for the M&E component for projects up to USD 5 million is around 5% but for this project it is 7.7%. Please revise downwards.

06/11/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments
4 Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

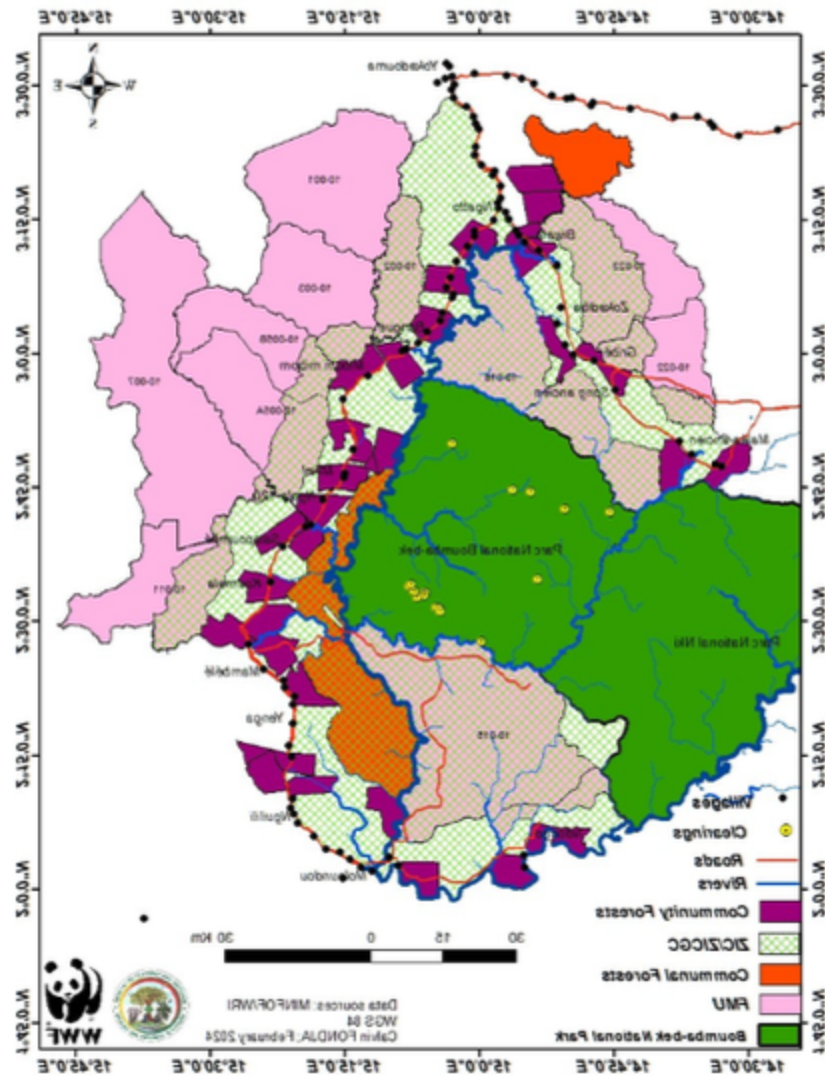
a) is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key contextual drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective?

b) Are the key barriers and enablers identified?

Secretariat's Comments
05/28/2026 TMB

We request the Agency to reload Figure 1 of the Portal version of the PIF called to face the readers.

Figure 1: Geographical location of BBNP



Future Narratives and Risk Context

06/11/2026 TMB

The map is still facing the wrong direction in the portal version of the PIF.

06/15/2026 TMB

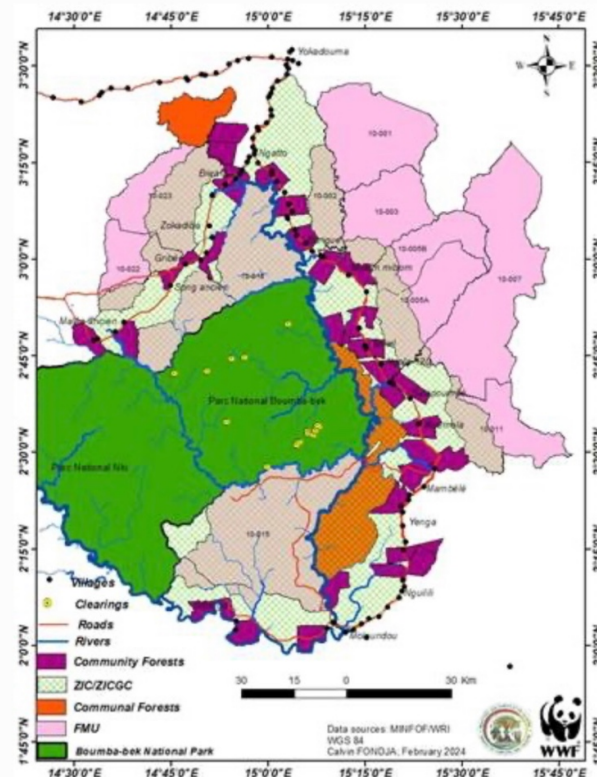
Cleared.

Agency's Comments

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.12.2026):

Apologies for this. We have reversed this image and from our side, it loads correctly when we generate the final review screen of the document in our end of the

Figure 1: Geographical location of BBNP



WWF GEF Agency Response (06.10.2026):

Thank you for noting. We will reupload this map image.

4.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT

- a) Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?
- b) Does it ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers?
- c) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region?
- d) are the relevant stakeholders and their roles adequately described?

Secretariat's Comments
05/26/2026 TMB

1) In terms of indication of why this project approach has been selected over other potential options, both documents articulate a clear and persuasive case for the chosen project approach which is an integrated, rights-based, inclusive conservation model. The approach feels assumed rather than selected through a deliberate alternatives assessment. Neither one presents a structured options analysis that weighs alternative approaches and demonstrates why this one was

selected over others. There is no clear explanation why, for example, a purely enforcement-led approach (more eco-guards, better equipment, stronger law enforcement) was not pursued instead of the livelihood-integrated approach. Nor do they address why an ecosystem payment scheme or REDD+ mechanism was not considered as the primary vehicle, given the enormous carbon stock value of the landscape.

2) In terms of ensuring that resilience to future changes in the drivers is built into the project design, the project demonstrates some awareness of resilience by design. The combination of livelihood strengthening, governance reform, rights operationalization, and bio-monitoring creates multiple reinforcing pathways which means that if one driver intensifies, others are designed to compensate. These are meaningful resilience features. However, several dimensions of future driver change are not addressed such as, political risk with MINFOF institutional continuity, the MINFOF/ASBABUK MoU remaining politically supported, and the 2024 Forestry and Wildlife Law being enforced. If any of these change, let's say, through policy reversal, ministerial turnover, or enforcement failure, the project has no articulated fallback strategy; Demographic pressure and urbanization in Southern Cameroon; IWT network evolution and climate trajectory beyond the project cycle.

- Demographic pressure and urbanization are not addressed as future drivers. Southern Cameroon is experiencing population growth and expanding agricultural frontiers, yet neither document models what the forest frontier will look like in 10 or 20 years and how project outcomes will hold under increased land pressure.

06/11/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.10.2026):

We have added the following to the PIF:

1) 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.

2) The project incorporates several resilience-by-design features through diversified livelihood support, stronger local governance, rights operationalization, biomonitoring, and climate-informed agriculture, but we agree that resilience to future changes in key drivers should be articulated more explicitly. In response, the project will strengthen its adaptive management and risk mitigation framing by clarifying how implementation is anchored not only in national policy commitments, but also in decentralized institutions, community organizations, and multi-stakeholder platforms, thereby reducing dependence on any single policy or political actor. This will help manage risks related to MINFOF institutional continuity, sustained support for the MINFOF-ASBABUK MoU, and enforcement of the 2024 Forestry and Wildlife Law, while also improving the project's ability to respond to evolving demographic pressures, IWT dynamics, and longer-term climate change beyond the project cycle.

To meet the GEF page limit suggestions, we prioritized brevity over full detail. The PIF's future scenario includes infrastructure development, and population movements?.

5 B. Project Description

5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

a) Is there a concise theory of change that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements will contribute to the objective, the expected causal pathways, and the key assumptions underlying these?

b) Are the key outputs of each component defined (where possible)?

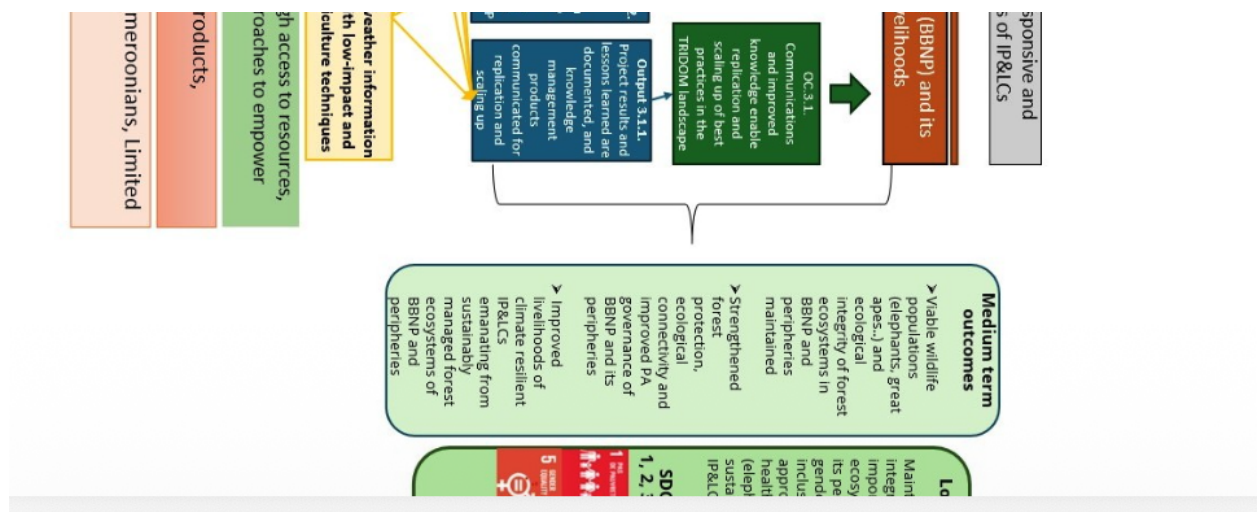
Secretariat's Comments

05/26/2026 TMB

1) We request the Agency to upload a high resolution ToC diagram like the one in the Word Document. ITS remains available to support the Agency with uploading maps and diagrams of good quality for approval.

06/11/2026 TMB

The resolution is now clear, thank you. However, the outcomes are completely cut off and the orientation of the ToC is sideways. GEF ITS Team is ready to support a better upload of this.



06/15/2026 TMB

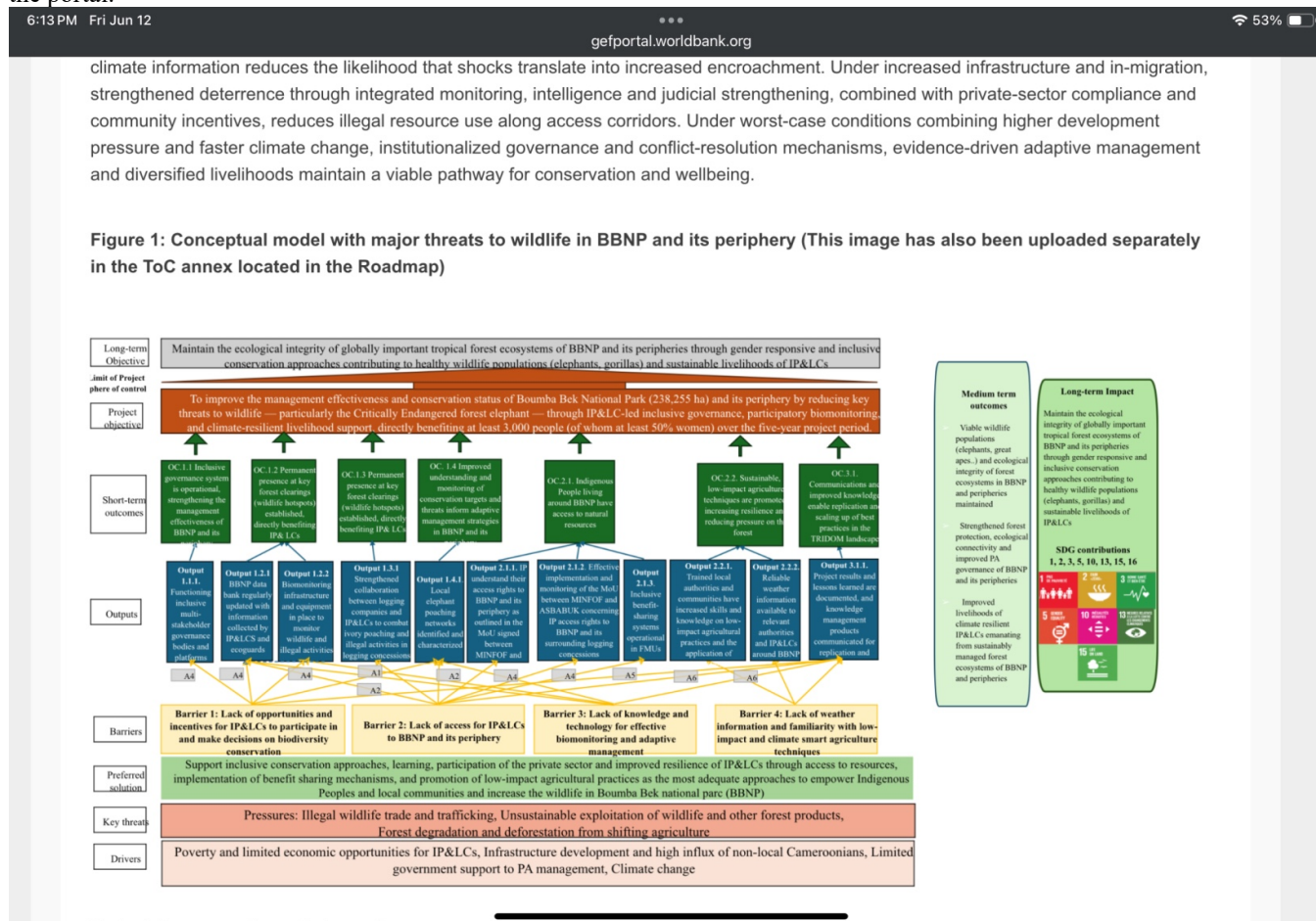
Cleared.

Agency's Comments

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.12.2026):

Apologies for this. We rotated the image in hopes of improving the resolution and readability of the ToC, based on suggestions we received from the GEF on other projects to improve the image quality in the portal. We have now re-uploaded and rotated it back as requested. From our side, it

seems to load correctly when we generate the final review screen of the document in our end of the portal.



WWF GEF Agency Response (06.10.2026):

We will make another attempt to upload our high resolution version and rotate the image to hopefully allow for easier viewing. However, due to portal limitations, our ability to control the final display quality remains limited.

When we previously reached out to ITS for support, they were unfortunately unable to resolve the issue.

We will additionally attach the image of the ToC as an annex in the Roadmap section, for ease of viewing.

5.2 INCREMENTAL/ADDITIONAL COST REASONING

Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12?

Secretariat's Comments
05/26/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

a) Is the institutional setting, including potential executing partners, outlined and a rationale provided?

b) Comments to proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception).

c) is there a description of potential coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area

d) are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?

Secretariat's Comments

05/26/2026 TMB

1) The Word Project Document is still mentioning self-execution while the portal version of the PIF says NO to self-execution.

1. 0.0.0.

Limited self-execution is requested for **WWF Cameroon** to act as the **Financial Administrator** for this project. World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF-Cameroon, as part of Word Wide Fund for Nature-International, an independent legal organization from the accredited GEF Agency WWF-US) will provide its financial and operational infrastructure in support of the project. This includes financial systems, policies and procedures, and risk assessment and monitoring. Project funding will flow to the Financial Administrator through a grant agreement from WWF-US (GEF Agency), and be used to (a) recruit PMU staff including a project manager, conservation biologist, safeguards and gender officer, a communications, KM& M&E officer, and a driver and (b) hire consultants as required for the project. The financial administrator will quarterly submit financial reports to the GEF Agency.

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.

2. There is a budgetary inconsistency between the two documents: the portal version of the PIF allocates USD 132,780 to Component 3, while the Project Document version allocates USD 157,550.

06/10/2026 TMB

The implementation structure is described: WWF-US as GEF Agency (non-executing), with MINFOF/MINEPDED as formal executing partners, a National Director (Director of Wildlife), a BBNP Conservator for field activities, and a Project Management Unit. CSOs (RACOPY, ROSE, AAFEBEN, Global Conservation, ZSL, WWF Cameroon) are engaged as sub-contractors under the PMU. However, a formal organogram or funds flow diagram is not included in the PIF. This should be included before CEO Approval.

06/15/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.12.2026):

A formal organogram will be provided in a forthcoming version of the CEO Endorsement Request.

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.10.2026):

An outdated CERDoc was attached by mistake. We will upload the correct, most current version, which maintains the already cleared institutional arrangements with no financed activities by the WWF-international and as laid out in the PIF.

5.4 a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)?

b) Are the project's indicative targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators)/adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable?

Secretariat's Comments

05/28/2026 TMB

For Core Indicator 6: The correct tool (EX-ACT (v.9.4.2 in the Project Document) is identified and used, however,

- the outputs produced are irreconcilably different between the two documents (Portal PIF and Project Document). The PIF presents 2,709,992 tCO₂e (indirect) over 20 years, based on the 23,826 ha intervention area, the Project Document presents 27,133,811 tCO₂e over 20 years, based on a different calculation that references a full landscape mitigation potential of 91,341,732 tCO₂e for all 238,255 ha, of which the project's attributable share is stated as 27.1 million tonnes.
- The Ex-ACT tool is not uploaded. We request the Agency to upload.

06/10/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.10.2026):

An outdated CERDoc was attached by mistake. We have uploaded the correct, most recent version, which maintains the correct and already cleared net carbon sequestration and is reflected in the PIF.

We have additionally attached the Ex-ACT Tool in the Roadmap as a separate annex.

5.5 NGI Only: Is there a justification of financial structure and use of financial instrument with concessionality levels?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

5.6 RISKS

a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category?

b) Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?

c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately screened and rated at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat's Comments

05/28/2026 TMB

1) There is discussion of the specific risk of armed-conflict or civil unrest, which is a material concern in the Sud-Est region given its proximity to the Central African Republic and the broader regional fragility context. The absence of any discussion of conflict-related risk, security implications for eco-guards and project staff, or contingency protocols for operating in a potentially deteriorating security environment is a notable omission in both documents.

2) Institutional and Policy Risk: The PIF rates this as Substantial, while the CER rates it as Moderate a downward revision that is not explained.

3) ESS Risk: Two specific risks are either absent or insufficiently treated, namely, the risk of elite capture within IP&LC governance structures which is a well-documented phenomenon in community-based conservation. The documents acknowledge the risk of elite capture at the municipal and government levels but do not address the equivalent risk within Baka community governance bodies. Second, the risk of adverse impacts on livelihoods from conservation enforcement, for instance, increased patrolling restricting community access to forest resources, is also not discussed in the ESS risk section, even though it is a recognized tension in community-based conservation which FPIC processes should specifically address.

4) Fiduciary Risk (Low): To rate fiduciary risk at Low in this context when the project document's own institutional analysis acknowledges that executing partners (MINFOF and local civil society) have weak financial management capacities is difficult to justify.

06/10/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.10.2026):

We note that this is a new risk comment which was not mentioned in previous reviews.

- We have added the following to the risk section:

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;

- We note this is a new review comment on risk mentioned.

The risk for BBNP of direct armed conflict or large-scale civil unrest remains relatively low at present, while localized insecurity, spillover risks, and criminality linked to the CAR border are a material concern. This have been addressed in the ESMF as required for the location.

Mitigation measures will prioritize a risk-informed, conflict-sensitive approach tailored to the Eastern Cameroon context, where insecurity is driven primarily by cross-border instability linked to the Central African Republic rather than active armed conflict. The project will implement a comprehensive security management system, including dynamic risk assessments, staff safety protocols, and close coordination with local authorities. Conservation activities will be adapted to minimize exposure in high-risk zones through intelligence-led patrols and increased use of remote monitoring. A strong emphasis will be placed on community engagement, livelihood support, and inclusive programming to address underlying drivers of resource conflict and reduce vulnerability to recruitment or participation in illegal activities. Cross-border cooperation and landscape-level coordination will further strengthen responses to transboundary threats. Flexible implementation and contingency planning will enable the project to adapt rapidly to evolving security conditions while maintaining continuity of key interventions.

- We agree with the reviewer's comment and have increased the risk rating to substantial and have added the following:

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.

5.7 Qualitative assessment

a) Does the project intend to be well integrated, durable, and transformative?

b) Is there potential for innovation and scaling-up?

c) Will the project contribute to an improved alignment of national policies (policy coherence)?

Secretariat's Comments

05/28/2026 TMB

1. Integration is one of the most convincing aspects of both documents and is genuinely multi-dimensional. The Project Document is more explicit than the Portal version of the PIF in demonstrating how the integration points (thematically, institutionally and methodically) are operationalized through specific outputs and activities rather than simply stated as principles. However, we request the Agency to elaborate on what will happen to the automatic cameras, CyberTrackers, GPS units, and weather stations, after project closure. Hardware maintenance

costs, software licensing, and replacement cycles are real recurrent costs that cannot be assumed to be absorbed by MINFOF's existing budget without explicit commitment.

2. The Transformative potential of this project is articulated explicitly and convincingly, particularly in the Project Document. The shift from a fortress conservation model, where the park is managed as an exclusion zone enforced against the surrounding population, to an inclusive rights-based model where IP&LCs are co-managers and beneficiaries represents a genuine paradigm shift in the BBNP management context. The strength of this transformative framing is, unfortunately partially undermined by the relatively modest scale of the project. A 60-month MSP with a USD 3.5 million GEF grant addressing a landscape that has experienced a 75% megafauna collapse over decades cannot realistically claim to deliver systemic transformation by project end. The more honest framing which the Project Document occasionally adopts but does not consistently maintain, is that the project will demonstrate a proof of concept for inclusive conservation governance at BBNP scale, which can then influence broader TRIDOM and national management approaches over a longer horizon. This distinction between demonstrating a model and achieving transformation matters for a small scale project like this one.

3) Policy Coherence: We have observed an absence of any discussion of perverse subsidies or harmful fiscal incentives in the Cameroon context. Projects are expected to demonstrate that the government is taking steps to eliminate policy incentives that contradict conservation goals. In Cameroon's context, this would include logging concession fiscal arrangements, agricultural subsidies for crops associated with forest clearance, and any fiscal advantages that make forest conversion more economically rational than conservation for landholders and local councils. Neither document addresses whether the 2024 Forestry and Wildlife Law or any related fiscal reforms are creating the necessary policy environment to prevent perverse incentives from undermining project gains.

4. Transboundary policy coherence with the Republic of Congo and Gabon is mentioned through the COMIFAC framework and the TRIDOM Tri-national Coordination Committee but is not developed into specific cross-border policy harmonization commitments. Given that elephant populations move across borders and poaching networks operate transnationally, the absence of any commitment to transboundary law enforcement coordination as a policy outcome needs to be explained.

06/10/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.10.2026):

1) The project will ensure post-project sustainability of biomonitoring and climate information equipment through early institutionalization, handover arrangements, and maintenance planning. Automatic cameras, CyberTrackers, GPS units, and related biomonitoring equipment procured under Component 1 will be integrated into BBNP's routine monitoring system and formally handed over to MINFOF's local office of the Department of Wildlife and PAs for continued use by trained ecoguards and community biomonitoring teams, with inventories, user protocols, and basic maintenance responsibilities established during implementation. Weather stations installed under Component 2 will be integrated into the operational systems of ONACC and local MINADER services, which will continue to use and disseminate the data for seasonal forecasting and climate information services beyond the life of the project. To support continuity, the project will build local technical capacity for operation and first-line maintenance, include recurrent equipment needs in annual work planning where feasible, and ensure that data generated remain

embedded in the BBNP databank and local advisory systems. These measures are intended to reduce the risk that project-financed equipment becomes non-operational after closure and to ensure that key monitoring and weather-information functions continue to support conservation and livelihoods beyond the GEF financing period.

2) At the same time, the project retains a transformative ambition in terms of approach, specifically through:

- - Establishing co-management structures with IP&LCs,
 - Embedding rights-based governance principles in park management,
 - Demonstrating viable linkages between conservation and local livelihoods.
- These are intended as foundational changes in governance systems and incentive structures, which are preconditions for longer-term ecological recovery and broader landscape transformation.
- We will revise the framing in the Project Document to more consistently reflect that:
- - The project's primary contribution is to pilot and validate a scalable governance model,
 - Transformation is expected to occur progressively beyond the project timeframe, through replication within TRIDOM and uptake at national level,
 - The project therefore serves as a catalytic investment, designed to influence larger, follow-on financing and policy alignment.

3) The 2024 Forestry and Wildlife Law strengthens the regulatory environment for forest and wildlife management in Cameroon through improved enforcement, recognition of customary rights, and greater reinvestment of resource revenues. However, the project explicitly acknowledges that the broader fiscal regime continues to generate perverse incentives that risk undermining conservation gains.

Three specific fiscal gaps remain unresolved. First, logging concession fiscal arrangements ? including area fees and timber taxes ? continue to make forest extraction more financially attractive than conservation, and the 2024 law does not restructure these terms. Second, agricultural subsidies and support mechanisms for forest-clearing crops such as cocoa and oil palm have not been subject to cross-sectoral reform aligning them with forest conservation objectives. Third, existing fiscal transfer arrangements incentivize local councils to favour extractive land uses over conservation, as revenues from logging and mining form a significant share of local government income, while no equivalent fiscal mechanism rewards forest retention.

The government has not yet advanced comprehensive reforms across these three areas, and this represents a known policy gap. The project therefore adopts a complementary strategy: piloting conservation-compatible livelihoods and community benefit-sharing mechanisms to directly counter perverse incentives at the local level, while actively contributing to national policy dialogue on ecological fiscal reform, including concession fiscal restructuring, deforestation conditionalities in agricultural support programs, and conservation-linked fiscal transfers to local councils.

4) We agree that transboundary dynamics?particularly elephant movements and transnational poaching networks?are critical in the TRIDOM landscape and require coordinated responses across Cameroon, the Republic of Congo, and Gabon.

The project design references existing regional frameworks, notably COMIFAC and the TRIDOM Tri-national Coordination Committee, which already provide the institutional platform for cross-border collaboration. However, the project does not articulate specific outputs related to

transboundary law enforcement harmonization as a primary policy objective. This reflects a deliberate scoping choice.

Given its scale (MSP) and national implementation modality, the project is designed to operate within and strengthen existing coordination mechanisms rather than create or negotiate new transboundary enforcement agreements, which are typically addressed through larger regional programs (e.g., COMIFAC-led initiatives),

Bilateral or tri-national diplomatic processes,

Specialized law enforcement platforms targeting wildlife crime networks.

The project will support operational-level coordination with TRIDOM structures (e.g., information sharing on wildlife movements and poaching risks) and enhance compatibility of monitoring systems (e.g., SMART data use) to facilitate cross-border exchange.

Importantly, the project's primary contribution will be to demonstrate a functional model of inclusive and effective conservation governance at site level, which is a prerequisite for meaningful transboundary cooperation. Without effective governance and enforcement capacity at the national and site levels, transboundary coordination frameworks are unlikely to be operationalized effectively.

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

6.1 Is the project adequately aligned with focal area and integrated program strategies and objectives, and/or adaptation priorities?

Secretariat's Comments

05/28/2026 TMB

Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies is genuinely strong across most dimensions, and represents one of the project's greatest strengths. However, we request the Agency to clarify why:

1) There is no mention of the Nagoya Protocol alignment on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) from genetic resources which is potentially relevant given the project's engagement with NTFPs derived from biodiversity-rich forest ecosystems and the operationalization of community access rights? While it may not be a primary project focus, a brief statement on ABS implications would be expected.

2) Alignment with the ICI is the project's strongest and most convincingly documented programmatic link. The operationalization of the MINFOR?ASBABUK MoU squarely addresses the ICI's focus on securing land tenure and natural resource rights as a prerequisite for conservation effectiveness. The explicit targeting of women as 50% of direct beneficiaries, and the recognition of women's dominance in the informal agricultural and NTFP sectors, reflects the ICI's emphasis on IPLC women's leadership. ICI in GEF-8 is described as working through REPALEAC (the regional IPLC network in Central Africa) as a key delivery platform. Neither document references REPALEAC, despite it being the designated ICI partner network for the Congo Basin region. The project works with RACOPY (the national IP network in Cameroon), which is the appropriate national-level counterpart, but the absence of any connection to REPALEAC at the regional level is a gap against the ICI's programmatic architecture as described in the Programming Directions.

3) Other potential alignments include GEF's the Congo and Critical Forest Biomes Integrated Programs, the Wildlife Conservation for Development Integrated Program - given that elephant populations move across the Cameroon-Congo-Gabon tri-border area and poaching networks operate transnationally. A stronger connection to the tri-national IP coordination mechanism would improve alignment. Additionally, given that IWT is a central threat driver in this project, a more deliberate engagement with the GWP frameworks, tools, and learning networks would strengthen the project's alignment.

06/10/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.10.2026):

We note that 6.1 had been cleared in a previous review.

1) The collection of NTFPs in BBNP is not expected to be relevant to the Nagoya Protocol since the NTFPs are being used mainly for local subsistence harvesting and small-scale community-based commercialization (local markets).

2) We have added the following to the PIF and CERDoc but note that the WWF implemented project has not yet received CEO endorsement.
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.

3) We note that section 6 had been cleared.

The following is captured in the CERDoc which we will also include in the PIF. ?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.?

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

Secretariat's Comments

05/28/2026 TMB

On country-level alignment, Cameroon's Poverty Reduction Strategy and social protection frameworks are not referenced in the documents despite the project's direct engagement with poverty as a driver of forest encroachment.

06/10/2026 TMB

We request the Agency to confirm that the Poverty Reduction Strategy and or the NDP are not relevant to be referenced for this proposal.

06/15/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.12.2026):

We confirm that due to the nature of the project, these items are not relevant to the proposal.

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.10.2026):

We note that 6.2 had been cleared in a previous review.

We have not included reference to the Poverty Reduction Strategy of 2003 since the National Development Strategy of 2020-2030 (SND30) is the successor document and explicitly includes poverty reduction and improved social well-being as part of its core development objectives. The strategy is framed around structural transformation and inclusive development, and it places emphasis on improving living conditions, reducing poverty and underemployment, strengthening human capital, and supporting vulnerable populations.

6.3 For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e. BD, CC or LD), does the project clearly identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and how it contributes to the identified target(s)?

Secretariat's Comments

05/28/2026 TMB

The Project Document states contribution to 12 of 21 targets, notably differing from the portal version of the PIF's reference to 12 of 23 targets. This discrepancy reflects the difference between the 21 action targets of the GBF and the 23 targets including the four headline goals. This is a minor but documentable inconsistency that would be helpful to correct.

06/10/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.10.2026):

An outdated CERDoc was attached by mistake. Our apologies for this. We will upload the correct, most current version.

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?

Secretariat's Comments
05/68/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

7.2 Is a list of stakeholders consulted during PIF development, including dates of these consultations, provided?

Secretariat's Comments
05/28/2026 TMB

The List of stakeholders consulted during PIF development needs to include dates of these consultations.

06/10/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.10.2026):

The attached Annex I-SEP includes appendix 2: Systematic Documentation of Stakeholder Consultations. We have copied this table and included it in the stakeholder section in the portal.

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

8.1 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):

STAR allocation?

Secretariat's Comments
05/28/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat's Comments
05/28/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

SCCF B (Tech Transfer, Innovation, Private Sector)?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

8.2 Is the PPG requested within the allowable cap (per size of project)? If requested, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?

Secretariat's Comments

05/28/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

8.3 Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat's Comments

05/28/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments
Annex B: Endorsements

8.4 Has the project been endorsed by the country's(ies) GEF OFP and has the OFP at the time of PIF submission name and position been checked against the GEF database?

Secretariat's Comments
06/8/2026 TMB

1. The project title does not match the Letter of Endorsement. Please update the title in the portal to align with the LOE, or provide a revised LOE.

THE GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT

To: Dr. Renae Stenhouse
Executive Coordinator, WWF GEF Agency
1250 24th St NW, Washington DC, 20037

Subject: Endorsement for "Innovative and Inclusive Approach to Sustainable Management of Biodiversity and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP&LC) Resilient Livelihood in Boumba Bek National Park of the TRIDOM Landscape"

In my capacity as GEF Operational Focal Point for Cameroon, I confirm that the above project proposal (a) is in accordance with my government's national policies and strategies.

General Project Information 			
Project Title:	Empowering IP&LCs for Conservation: Enhancing Livelihoods and Protecting Forest Elephants in and around Boumba Bek National Park		
Region:	Africa	GEF Project ID:	12362
Country(ies):	Cameroon	Type of Project:	MSP
GEF Agency(ies):	WWF-US	GEF Agency ID:	G0061
Executing Partner:	MINFOF	Executing Partner Type:	Government

2. The LOE identifies both MINFOF and MINEPDED as executing partners; however, only MINFOF is listed in the project information. Please update the portal accordingly.

Project Title:	Empowering IP&LCs for Conservation: Enhancing Livelihoods and Protecting Forest Elephants in and around Boumba Bek National Park		
Region:	Africa	GEF Project ID:	12362
Country(ies):	Cameroon	Type of Project:	MSP
GEF Agency(ies):	WWF-US	GEF Agency ID:	G0061
Executing Partner:	MINFOF	Executing Partner Type:	Government
GEF Focal Area (s):	Biodiversity	Submission Date :	5/28/2026

I am pleased to endorse the preparation of the above project proposal with the support of the GEF Implementing Agency(ies) listed below. If approved, the preparation of the proposal will be supported by and the project executed by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED). I request the GEF Implementing Agency(ies) to provide a copy of the project document before it is submitted to the GEF Secretariat for CEO endorsement / Approval.

06/10/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.10.2026):

We note this had been cleared in a previous review.

1. We have changed the title as requested.
2. We had revised the information table according to GEF comments of May 11, 2026 and have changed it back to include MINFOF and MINEPDED.

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

Secretariat's Comments

05/28/2026 TMB

Cleared.

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

06/8/2026 TMB

Agency's Comments

8.5 For NGI projects (which may not require LoEs), has the Agency informed the OFP(s) of the project to be submitted?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

Annex C: Project Location

8.6 Is there preliminary georeferenced information and a map of the project's intended location?

Secretariat's Comments

05/68/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

Annex D: Safeguards Screen and Rating

8.7 If there are safeguard screening documents or other ESS documents prepared, have these been uploaded to the GEF Portal?

Secretariat's Comments
06/08/2026 TMB

We note that WWF-US has attached Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary. An overall ESS risk is classified as Moderate.

1. There were long-standing human rights issues in the areas and distrust between Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF) and eco-guards and the Baka Indigenous Peoples. Please provide information on what are key lessons learned from projects in the areas, and how these learnings are integrated into the project concept. Particularly, learning and coordination with ?Integrated and Transboundary Conservation of Biodiversity in the Basins of the Republic of Cameroon? (GEF ID 9155, UNDP), which will be reformulated focusing on Indigenous Peoples and local communities? concerns/priorities, traditions, and livelihoods, is critical. For example, the project?s PIR 2025 emphasized ?[t]he new project setup should therefore not rely solely on MINFOF as the executing partner (Responsible Partner). Involving more neutral actors, including civil society organizations (i.e., stakeholders without uniforms and weapons), would be highly beneficial (page 35).? Depending on the situation, please revisit social risks of the project.
2. Please provide further background information and assessment of 1) history of creating the National Parks and 2) identify historical and ongoing tensions and conflicts, and 3) assessment of enforcement agencies, and 4) social assessment to identify existing users of the National Park, particularly related to relationship with the Baka Indigenous Peoples. Please refer to existing guidance, such as World Bank (2026), Good Practice Note, Environment & Social Framework for IPF Operations, Managing the Risks of Projects Involving Protected and Conserved Areas Annexes I-III, available here (<chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/52a1422ea99b44a9469a38127c1182e1-0290012026/original/PCA-GPN-DEC-29-with-annexes-I-III.pdf>). Annexes IV-XII, available here (<chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/82b29d2ef5499b260a01fcc1af35b610-0290012026/original/PCA-GPN-DEC-29-Annexes-IV-XII.pdf>).
3. Considering historical tensions and conflicts in and around the Boumba Bek National Park, it is vital to be further building trust between MONFOF and Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the areas to achieve inclusive conservation approaches. Please ensure project concept to be focused on Indigenous Peoples and local communities? concerns/priorities, traditions, and livelihoods, including strengthening access rights and community participation and preventing abuse by patrols.
4. Please ensure respecting priorities, governance mechanisms, access rights, customary land tenure, cultural practices and traditional and local knowledge (including traditional medicine and hunting) of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the project design based on thorough consultations with Indigenous Peoples and local communities in and around the Boumba Bek National Park during the PPG phase.
5. We fully agree with PM?s comments. Please ensure obtaining Free, Prior and Informed Consent from Indigenous Peoples about the project design to ensure their priorities are reflected in the project design during the PPG phase, and throughout project implementation. Depending on the priorities and needs of Indigenous Peoples, project design should be revised during the PPG.
6. Please ensure security management of park rangers/eco-guards is taking place, particularly related to respecting human rights and preventing abuse by patrols. Please ensure: 1)

discussing security related issues with executing agencies, 2) requiring information about security-related incidents from the project area to be received and reviewed by the implementing agencies regularly to allow confirmation that the safeguard systems put in place are working, and 3) requiring additional institutional assessments of the executing agencies, focusing on security risks during the PPG phase. Please include some of these requirements /activities and mitigation measures as a part of project activities.

7. Please provide further assessment of existing human-wildlife conflicts (HWC) (including key stakeholders, their socio-economic baseline and root causes) and mitigation measures based on in-depth consultations with local communities and Indigenous Peoples during the PPG. Potential mitigation measures should be integrated into the project design as much as possible with clear budget, timeline and responsibility. Please refer to existing guidance for HWC, such as: IUCN Species Survival Commission human-wildlife conflict and coexistence specialist group (2023), IUCN SSC guidelines on human-wildlife conflict and coexistence: first edition, available here: <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/50756>

8. Cameroon is a country listed on the WBG FY26 List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations (chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/5c7e4e268baafa6ef38d924be9279be-0090082025/original/FCSListFY26.pdf). Please ensure that the project will conduct conflict and fragility assessment/analysis, and integrate mitigation measures including capacity building activities, local level of conflict management committees, and collaboration with local partners into the project design during the PPG.

9. We understand that Indigenous Peoples' role is not just as beneficiaries, but as strategic partners of the project. Please consider Indigenous Peoples and local communities as a part of governance mechanism of the project throughout the project implementation, especially on Component 1 and 2.

10. Please consider incorporating monitoring indicators related to a) integration of traditional and local governance, and traditional and local knowledge, b) capacity building for local communities in the project, c) securing land tenure and access rights, and d) human-wildlife conflict (HWC) and coexistence, such as ?Communities with a positive shift in perception toward human-wildlife coexistence? (percentage) and e) socio-economic benefits for local communities and Indigenous Peoples, particularly vulnerable groups during the PPG.

06/12/2026 TMB

PIF cleared. Please see ESS comments in Section 9.2 for PPG stage.

Agency's Comments

WWF GEF Agency Response (06.10.2026):

We agree with this statement, but the page limitation forces us to be selective. The document:

- acknowledges poor relations between IP&LCs and law enforcement in the problem analysis.
- refers to human rights training for park personnel.
- includes a RACOPY-managed GRM.
- identifies CSOs such as RACOPY, ROSE, and AAFEBEN as implementation partners.
- mentions GEF ID 9155 in the table of other GEF projects and now
- includes some social risk language around exclusion, elite capture, and enforcement impacts.

We added now the following lessons learned section.

A key lesson from past and ongoing conservation efforts in southeast Cameroon, including interventions in the TRIDOM landscape and the project ?Integrated and Transboundary Conservation of Biodiversity in the Basins of the Republic of Cameroon? (GEF ID 9155) and the

WWF supported project Integrated management of Cameroon's forest landscapes in the Congo Basin (GEF ID 10287) is that conservation approaches in areas with a history of human rights concerns and distrust between Baka communities and park authorities cannot rely on enforcement alone or on government structures acting in isolation. Experience has shown that project effectiveness and legitimacy are stronger when implementation combines protected area management with rights-based engagement, trusted grievance mechanisms, culturally appropriate consultation, and the active involvement of neutral civil society actors that can accompany Indigenous Peoples and local communities in dialogue, representation, and conflict resolution. These lessons are reflected in the present project concept through the operationalization of the MINFOF/ASBABUK MoU, the use of a RACOPY-supported grievance redress mechanism, the strengthened role of CSOs such as RACOPY, ROSE and AAFEBEN in community-facing activities, and the emphasis on inclusive governance, FPIC-based processes, and livelihood support alongside conservation measures. The project will also maintain coordination and knowledge exchange with GEF ID 9155 and GEF ID 10287, including on lessons emerging from its reformulation toward Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' concerns, traditions, and livelihoods, so as to strengthen coherence in approaches to rights-based conservation, stakeholder trust, and social risk management in the broader TRIDOM landscape.

Most of the information was originally included in earlier CERDoc versions which had to be fully redrafted to meet the page limit requested by GEF review.

A complete ESSF document has already been prepared and is attached which covers the requested information as applicable to the project history of creating the National Parks

Boumba Bek and Nki National Parks were created by Prime Ministerial decrees on 6 October 2005, and the Ngoyla Faunal Reserve was established in 2014. The area had initially been considered for logging before being reassigned to conservation in the late 1990s.

- Historical and ongoing tensions and conflicts
- The landscape has long-standing and ongoing tensions related to restricted access to land and forest resources, conflicts between Baka and Bantu communities, human-wildlife conflict, and conflictual relations with ecoguards, including reported harassment, abuse of authority, and violence.

- Assessment of enforcement agencies

Enforcement weaknesses include limited equipment and resources, weak legal follow-up, poor community relations, and reported abuses by ecoguards. The role of MINFOF, ecoguards, and site-level enforcement actors is recognized, but institutional capacity and accountability remain key concerns.

Social assessment of existing users of the National Park, especially in relation to the Baka Indigenous Peoples

The Baka are identified as Indigenous forest-dependent communities with strong cultural, livelihood, and spiritual ties to forest areas, including through hunting, fishing, gathering of NTFPs, and rituals. The assessment also highlights their marginalization, dependence on forest access, and unequal relations with Bantu communities, making them particularly affected by conservation restrictions

Annex E: Rio Markers

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

Secretariat's Comments
05/68/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet

8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?

Secretariat's Comments
05/68/2026 TMB

Cleared.

Agency's Comments

Annex G: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.10 Does the project 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. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. Is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

9 GEFSEC Decision

9.1 Is the PIF and PPG (if requested) recommended for technical clearance?

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency at the time of CEO Endorsement/ Approval

Secretariat's Comments

1. Please ensure respecting priorities, governance mechanisms, access rights, customary land tenure, cultural practices and traditional and local knowledge (including traditional medicine and hunting) of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the project design based on thorough consultations with Indigenous Peoples and local communities in and around the Boumba Bek National Park during the PPG phase.

2. Please ensure obtaining Free, Prior and Informed Consent from Indigenous Peoples about the project design to ensure their priorities are reflected in the project design during the PPG phase, and throughout project implementation. Depending on the priorities and needs of Indigenous Peoples, project design should be revised during the PPG.

3. Please ensure security management of park rangers/eco-guards is taking place, particularly related to respecting human rights and preventing abuse by patrols. Please ensure: 1) discussing security related issues with executing agencies, 2) requiring information about security-related incidents from the project area to be received and reviewed by the implementing agencies regularly to allow confirmation that the safeguard systems put in place are working, and 3) requiring additional institutional assessments of the executing agencies, focusing on security risks during the PPG phase. Please include some of these requirements /activities and mitigation measures as a part of project activities.

4. Please provide further assessment of existing human-wildlife conflicts (HWC) (including key stakeholders, their socio-economic baseline and root causes) and mitigation measures based on in-depth consultations with local communities and Indigenous Peoples during the PPG. Potential mitigation measures should be integrated into the project design as much as possible with clear budget, timeline and responsibility. Please refer to existing guidance for HWC, such as: IUCN Species Survival Commission human-wildlife conflict and coexistence specialist group (2023), IUCN SSC guidelines on human-wildlife conflict and coexistence: first edition, available here: <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/50756>

5. Cameroon is a country listed on the WBG FY26 List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations (chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpgclefindmkaj/<https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/5c7e4e268baaafa6ef38d924be9279be-0090082025/original/FCSListFY26.pdf>). Please ensure that the project will conduct conflict and fragility assessment/analysis, and integrate mitigation measures including capacity building activities, local level of conflict management committees, and collaboration with local partners into the project design during the PPG.

6. Please consider incorporating monitoring indicators related to a) integration of traditional and local governance, and traditional and local knowledge, b) capacity building for local communities in the project, c) securing land tenure and access rights, and d) human-wildlife conflict (HWC) and coexistence, such as ?Communities with a positive shift in perception toward human-wildlife coexistence? (percentage) and e) socio-economic benefits for local communities and Indigenous Peoples, particularly vulnerable groups during the PPG.

Agency's Comments

- Thank you. This has been fully addressed during the PPG phase. The PPG has been finalized and extensive consultations were conducted with IPLCs, as detailed in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). The project design explicitly reflects their priorities, governance systems, access and customary rights, cultural practices, and traditional knowledge, including livelihoods such as hunting and traditional medicine

- Thank you, we fully agree. Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) has been applied throughout the PPG phase, with consultations informing the project design as reflected in the SEP. The project commits to continuing FPIC processes during implementation, ensuring that Indigenous Peoples' priorities remain central and that the design can be adapted where needed in response to their evolving needs and feedback.

- We fully agree and confirm that security and human rights considerations are integrated into the project design.

Specifically:

Security issues have been and will continue to be systematically discussed with executing agencies, including clear expectations on human rights compliance and prevention of abuse by eco-guards.

The project will operationalize regular monitoring and reporting of security-related incidents, supported by a new incident tracking and reporting tool, which will be formalized in the Grant Agreement (GA) and reviewed by the GEF Agency to ensure safeguard systems are functioning effectively.

The GEF Agency will carry out an institutional assessment of the executing agencies, including a specific focus on security risks and management capacities, building on the PPG process.

In addition, the project will build on and strengthen the existing TRIDOM Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) to ensure accessible, transparent, and responsive handling of complaints, including those related to ranger conduct and human rights concerns.

- This was comprehensively addressed during the PPG phase through targeted consultations with IPLCs. Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) is recognized as a key issue in the landscape, with existing platforms (including the TRIDOM GRM) already actively addressing grievances and supporting resolution efforts.

The project design integrates community-driven mitigation measures aligned with IUCN guidance, including strengthened GRM mechanisms, participatory monitoring, and locally appropriate prevention approaches. These measures are reflected in project components with defined responsibilities and resources, and build on ongoing efforts by all actors in the landscape (including awareness initiatives such as the WWF HWC work).

For interest please see the WWF documentary *Au c?ur de la [Jungle](#)* which further amplified awareness of the Congo Basin's beauty, challenges (including HWC) and global importance.

- Conflict and fragility aspects have been addressed during the PPG phase and are reflected in the ESMF. The project design integrates corresponding mitigation measures, including capacity building, support to local conflict management mechanisms, and collaboration with local partners, ensuring alignment with Cameroon's FCV context.

- We fully agree. This is the core of the project, as reflected in its title and Project Objective. IPLCs are positioned as strategic partners and co-managers, with a central role in governance structures, particularly under Components 1 and 2, ensuring their sustained involvement in decision-making throughout implementation.

- We agree and will integrate additional monitoring indicators as possible accordingly which address the different points. The project also supports securing access and use rights, although it does not address formal land tenure.

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review	5/28/2026	6/10/2026
Additional Review (as necessary)	6/8/2026	
Additional Review (as necessary)	6/12/2026	
Additional Review (as necessary)	6/15/2026	
Additional Review (as necessary)		