

Sustainable Forest Management and Conservation Project in Central and South Benin

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

9383

Countries

Benin

Project Name

Sustainable Forest Management and Conservation Project in Central and South Benin

Agencies

AfDB

Date received by PM

11/24/2018

Review completed by PM

2/19/2020

Program Manager

Jean-Marc Sinnassamy

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

FSP

PIF ☐

CEO Endorsement ☐

Project Design and Financing

1. If there are any changes from that presented in the PIF, have justifications been provided?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

Yes. The simplifications in the result framework are a response to STAP comments.

Cleared.

JM

Response to Secretariat comments

2. Is the project structure/ design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

Yes, two questions, though:

- Please, clarify the activity 1.1.1 of 150,000 ha of forests plantations in two protected areas: will these areas be fully protected? or will these plantations be exploited for logging at one point?
- Please, confirm the use of native/local species for these plantations in protected areas.

August 29, 2019

Addressed.

Response to Secretariat comments

- These areas will be fully protected.
- Yes, similarly to PAGEFCOM I the project will support the use of native and local species that are suitable for the enrichment of forests plantations in protected areas.

3. Is the financing adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objective?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Yes.

Response to Secretariat comments

4. Does the project take into account potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, and describes sufficient risk response measures? (e.g., measures to enhance climate resilience)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

- The difficulties encountered by the PAMF are highlighted (including corruption allegations in the BADEA component). There are high and serious reputational risks: Please, explain how lessons were taken from this project, and what the measures are to mitigate these risks.

Other reputational risks and problems:

- 1) one of the issues we noted from the PAMF was the perception by local communities that the project was not investing enough on the ground, and
- 2) there were no, or not enough inclusion of local and traditional authorities in the project governance.

Did you address these two issues?

August 29, 2019

Addressed.

Response to Secretariat comments

The project builds upon the lessons learned from the PAMF. The second AfDB project (PAGEFCOM1) has been completed without any fiduciary issues. To prevent any future fiduciary risk or issue, it is proposed to strengthen the M&E component of the proposed project. Moreover, the Bank will supervise the project 3 times minimum a year compared to standard AfDB, 2 supervision missions. In addition, the steering committee will meet a minimum of 4 times a year compared to 2 previously.

With regards to the participation of local communities, this will be a central aspect of the project, through the design and implementation of participatory forest management plans, and their participatory monitoring and evaluation.

Moreover, this second phase will focus on supporting framework structures (including local and traditional authorities) put in place under PAGEFCOM to strengthen their capacity and ensure they are fully operational to ensure the successful implementation of PMPs.

5. Is co-financing confirmed and evidence provided?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

Cofinancing is the same than at PIF level.

However, please clarify the evidences of cofinancing:

- We did not find a letter of cofinancing from the government to justify \$1 million in grants;
- We took note of the approval memorandum of the PAFEMCOM II. However, the cofinancing amounts announced at PIF level do not match with the numbers included in this approval memorandum (PIF: \$14,720,000 from AfDB; CEO endorsement: loan of 5 MILLION UC, FAD, and FAD grant of \$631 927,47 UC).

August 29, 2019

Proofs of cofinancing are needed for all contributions, even in-kind. For the contributions from local communities, either you can identify a credible partner, as an "Association des Communes", or you can emit such a letter. Because the amounts are relatively low, we will understand if you remove this in-kind cofinancing.

Response to Secretariat comments

Relevant documents evidencing the cofinancing are attached.

Septembre 23, 2019

Thank you for the comment. Although important and very relevant, the in-kind contributions from the “Association des Communes” (local communities) is relatively low. In addition, substantial delays were incurred in the processing of this project and it would take additional time to obtain proof of co-financing from local communities. Given this situation, it was decided to remove this co-financing source as suggested by GEFSEC to proceed to next steps for final approval of the project in a timely fashion.

6. Are relevant tracking tools completed?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

NA.

Three GEF7 core indicators are included: 150,000 of ha under BD management, 41,000 ha under SLM, and 8.5 million tons of CO2.

September 25, 2019

1) For the carbon calculations, we would need a note (annex) explaining the carbon reasoning, and if you used EXACT, we would like to consult the original excel tables to check the assumptions and the criteria selection.

2) We would need some clarifications to better figure out the coherence between the indicators in the result framework, the values mentioned in the portal, and the annex with the core indicators. Please, clarify or correct the following values:

- - In the result framework, the target is 150,000 ha of forest plantations (in new protected areas); and 8,000 ha of protected area under improved management; In the portal the following metrics are entered: 128,000 ha of new protected areas (3,000 ha in Djidja and 125,000 ha in Zogbodomey-Savalou), indicator 1.1); Please, note that in core indicator sheet, 3,000 ha is indeed mentioned for Djida, but the value for Zogbodomey-Savalou is 5,000 ha (1.1). Please, correct and make the numbers coherent.
- - In the result framework, there is no number of ha for the implementation of the management plans for the Wari-Marou and Monts Kouffe reserves; while in the portal, 75,000 ha are mentioned for Wari-Marou and 125,000 ha for the Monts Kouffe (indicator 1.2: terrestrial protected areas under improved management);
- - In the result framework, the following metrics are mentioned: 5,500 ha of agroforestry, 300 ha of nurseries, 8,000 ha of protected under improved management, and 20,000-25,000 ha of forest plantation (more information would be needed on this point, see below *). In the portal, the following metrics are entered: 3.1: 10,800 ha of degraded lands restored, 3.2. 25,000 ha of forest restored; 4.1: 20,000 ha under improved management for Biodiversity, and 4.3: 41,000 ha under SLM. Please, clarify and/or correct.

*: We already have technical exchanges on forest/tree plantations within the GEF. It is important to remind that the GEF cannot support tree plantations of exotic species. Thanks to confirm.

Thanks.

Response to Secretariat comments

1) We used the EX-ACT Tool from FAO, which is aligned with the GEF guidelines for GHG accounting. We have revised the assumption in the process of reviewing and revising the core indicators and targets of the project. The revised excel sheet is attached for this resubmission.

2) The results framework indicators (Table B) stay unchanged. However, the Table has been revised for clarity.

The information in the portal and the core indicator sheet have been revised to reflect the correct information, contained in Table B.

Additional adjustments were undertaken to avoid the double counting of global environmental benefits for BD and SLM.

- Output 1.1.2 in Table B was revised to indicate that the output will cover an area of 200,000 ha (as initially stated in Table 2: Complementarity between projects in targeted areas, of the CEO Endorsement document). During the PPG, it was determined that implementation plans would cover 125,000 ha for the Monts Kouffe and 75,000 ha for Wari-Marou. This is also reflected in the attached Core Indicator Worksheet.

- We have revised and corrected the information in Table B, the GEF Portal indicator section and the attached core indicator sheet.

- For Indicator 3.1: 5,500 ha (Agro forestry, Output 1.2.1) + 5,300 ha (Enhanced community forestry, Output 1.2.2) = 10,800 ha

For Indicator 3.2: For the rehabilitation of forest plantations, the average of 22,500 was considered since the precise area for rehabilitation has not yet been determined/decided at this stage.

For Indicator 4.1 and Indicator 4.3: To avoid double counting of the environmental benefits and further clarify the areas under improved management for Biodiversity and those under sustainable land management, the values for these two indicators have now been revised in the resubmission. Instead 20,000 ha, it is 8,000 ha that will be under improved management for Biodiversity. In addition, the proposed activities are not relevant enough for indicator 4.3 therefore the 41,000 ha figure under SLM has been removed.

- We can confirm that the project is not addressing exotic species. The species of concern are indigenous.

7. Only for Non-Grant Instrument: Has a reflow calendar been presented?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement NA

Response to Secretariat comments

8. Is the project coordinated with other related initiatives and national/regional plans in the country or in the region?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Yes

Response to Secretariat comments

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

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Yes

Response to Secretariat comments

10. Does the project have descriptions of a knowledge management plan?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

Addressed

Response to Secretariat comments

Agency Responses

11. Has the Agency adequately responded to comments at the PIF stage from:

GEFSEC

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Yes.

Response to Secretariat comments

STAP

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Addressed.

Response to Secretariat comments

GEF Council

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Addressed.

Response to Secretariat comments

Convention Secretariat

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement NA

Response to Secretariat comments

Recommendation

12. Is CEO endorsement recommended?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

Not yet. Please address the comments above.

August 29, 2019

All comments have not been addressed. See above.

In the portal, as well as in the request for CEO endorsement, please correct the Focal Area Objectives:

BD 1 Program 1: Improving Financial Sustainability and Effective Management of the National Ecological Infrastructure

LD2 Program 3: Program 3: Landscape Management and Restoration

CCM2 Program 4: Promote conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks in forest, and other land use, and support climate smart agriculture.

SFM1: Maintained Forest Resources: Reduce the pressures on high conservation value forests by addressing the drivers of deforestation.

SFM2: Enhanced Forest Management: Maintain flows of forest ecosystem services and improve resilience to climate change through SFM.

Please, confirm that you well understand that the GEF Trust fund does not finance adaptation. Please correct the request for CEO endorsement and project related documents.

September 25, 2019

We found some discrepancies in the indicators: Please, check the item 6.

February 19, 2019

The project is recommended for CEO endorsement.

February 19, 2019

The project is recommended for CEO endorsement.

Please, address PPO's comments:

1. On Core Indicators:

- For the sub-indicator 1.2: METT scores are missing for the two PAs included in the project. The Agency has submitted hectare values in the METT score fields and this needs to be corrected.
- For the sub-indicator 6.2. The estimate submitted through the portal is for the duration of the project (4years) but as per the GEF guidance (https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Results_Guidelines.pdf) the estimate should be for the full 20-year period. In addition, the current estimate seems to be quite high compared to the size (cost) of the investment. Some of the assumption on the previous land use (under land use change) and the level of degradation could be revised to provide more reasonable estimate.

2. On Core indicator 11: The project indicates a number of output areas that would indicate that the project will have direct beneficiaries. As such, please ask the Agency to provide information on indicator 11.

April 22, 2020

Thanks for the modifications. However, checking the METT, we found out that the first pages of each METT were not filled in. Please, correct.

May 4, 2020

Addressed. The project is recommended for CEO endorsement.

Response to Secretariat comments

September 23, 2019

Thank you for the comment. The Focal Area Objectives have been corrected. In addition, we understand that the GEF Trust fund does not finance adaptation activities although there can be adaptation co-benefits through the implementation of land degradation and biodiversity related activities.

27 January 2020

The discrepancies identified under item 6 have been reviewed and were corrected.

17 April 2020

Thank you for the comments. Core indicators 1.2 and 6.2 have been revised accordingly. In light of the cost of the project, the assumptions have been revised and the land degradation rate was applied over 20 years as well as the quantity of CO₂ emissions avoided over 20 years in the EX-ACT Tool*. As indicated in the CEO Endorsement Request, the quantity of CO₂eq Emissions avoided per year is now projected to be 716,984 and 17,207,622 over 20 years. Additional information was also added for indicator 11.

*Please note that we were not able to delete the previous EXACT tool assumptions file, the EXACT tool results file and core indicator worksheet. Therefore, the revised Indicator Worksheet and the EX-ACT Tool Assumptions Excel file both dated 2020.04.22 have been also attached in the section "Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)" as no other suitable location in the portal was identified. Kindly also note that we were not able to attach the revised EX-ACT Tool Excel file dated 2020.04.22 in that section. Should you require it, we can send it to you by email.

28 April 2020

Thank you for the comment. We have checked the METT Excel files and have completed the first pages for both Wari-Maró and Mont Kouffé. The revised GEF7 Biodiversity METT score sheets for Monts Kouffé et Wari-Maró both dated 2020.04.28 have also been added and uploaded in the "Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)" section. Please note again that we were unable to find a way to delete the previous versions of these Excel sheets.

Review Dates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement

Response to Secretariat comments

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		

CEO Recommendation

Brief Reasoning for CEO Recommendations

Context

Agriculture is the primary economic activity in Benin, contributing 33.2% to the national GDP in 2009 and employing 70% of the workforce. The contribution of the forest sector to the socio-economic development of the country is estimated at nearly 7% of the national GDP (ProCGRN, 2009), only taking into account the fuel-wood and cashew nut sectors. The wood energy sector, the leading source of domestic fuel, employs 200,000 people in the country and has a turnover of nearly seven billion FCFA per year (DGFRN, 2010). However, according to FAO figures and despite the measures mentioned above, the country has lost 29 percent of its forest cover since 1990. At 2.5 percent, Benin has one of the highest annual deforestation rates in the world.

The main constraints behind the unsustainable tapping of forest resources are: (i) poor knowledge and uneven distribution of forest resources over the territory; (ii) weak intervention capacity of the Forestry and Natural Resources Directorate (lack of human, material and financial resources) and lack of coordination in development and environmental policy making; and (iii) pauperization and weak ability of the rural population to sustainably manage natural resources.

The conjunction of all these factors has the following consequences: (i) the acceleration of erosion phenomena; (ii) a decrease in soil fertility, leading in turn to new clearings; (iii) drying up of rivers and a decline in water quality; (iv) the disappearance of the natural habitats of many species, with a decrease in biodiversity potential and (v) a decrease in plant biomass, the main source of energy and natural rangelands for livestock farming.

The project

The project objective is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable forest management in Central and South Benin by improving forest and land management to preserve forest cover, prevent biodiversity loss, and monitor carbon stocks and emissions. The project is designed following three components: 1) Support for

natural resource management; 2) Development of green economy value chains; and 3) Project Coordination and Knowledge. The proposed project intervention sites are the Key-Biodiversity Areas and forest reserves of Monts Kouffé and Wari Maro localized in the centre of Benin. The project is building on results and outcomes of several AfDB and WB projects (PAGEFCOM I, PGFTR).

Global Environment Benefits

The project will contribute to 150,000 ha under SFM in the vicinity of Monts Kouffé and Wari Maro forest reserves, 41,000 ha under SLM, 8.5 million of tons of CO₂ mitigated.

The project will directly benefit over 180,000 people, 50.86% of them women, and indirectly 427,000 people living in the target area.

Country priorities

There is a strong ownership from the government, as this project is well aligned with the Benin 2025 vision, the government action plan, and other sector strategies and national action plans: environment, climate, climate smart agriculture...

GEF6 Strategies

The project is aligned with GEF6 Strategies and especially BD1.1, LD2.3, CCM2.4, SFM1, and SFM2.

Innovation, Scaling up & Sustainability

The proposed project is innovative with its integrated approach, combining land use planning, income generating activities development and sustainable forest management. The role of the private sector and the design of PES schemes will also be innovative. The purpose of the project approach is to be sustainable, maintaining the participatory and inclusive approach adopted during preparation. Technical and institutional support are provisioned to create an institutional memory. This framework is completed by the establishment of financing mechanisms. Several results of this project are demonstration or pilot actions. A KM strategy will help to replicate and scale up the best practices.