Strengthening the adaptive capacity of communities by up-scaling integrated landscape management and restoration in south-west region of Central African Republic

Part I: Project Information

GEF ID
10771

Project Type
FSP

Type of Trust Fund
LDCF

CBIT/NGI
  CBIT **No**
  NGI **No**

Project Title
Strengthening the adaptive capacity of communities by up-scaling integrated landscape management and restoration in south-west region of Central African Republic

Countries
Central African Republic

Agency(ies)
FAO

Other Executing Partner(s)
Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development

Executing Partner Type
Government

GEF Focal Area
Climate Change

Taxonomy
Climate Change Adaptation, Climate Change, Focal Areas, Livelihoods, Ecosystem-based Adaptation, Mainstreaming adaptation, Climate resilience, Community-based adaptation, Least Developed Countries, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Influencing models, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Demonstrate innovative approache, Beneficiaries, Stakeholders, Local Communities, Communications, Education, Awareness Raising, Private Sector, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, SMEs, Type of Engagement, Partnership, Participation, Consultation, Civil Society, Non-Governmental Organization, Community Based Organization, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender Equality, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender results areas, Participation and leadership, Access to benefits and services, Access and control over natural resources, Capacity Development, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Knowledge Exchange, Peer-to-Peer, Knowledge Generation, Training, Indigenous Peoples

Rio Markers
Climate Change Mitigation
Climate Change Mitigation 0

Climate Change Adaptation
Climate Change Adaptation 2

Duration
60 In Months

Agency Fee($)
848,580.00

Submission Date
3/18/2021

A. Indicative Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Amount($)	Co-Fin Amount($)
CCA-1	LDCF	6,932,420.00	20,350,000.00
CCA-2	LDCF	2,000,000.00	10,250,000.00
Total Project Cost ($)		8,932,420.00	30,600,000.00

B. Indicative Project description summary

Project Objective

Enhanced resilience of rural communities through the valuation of productive and forest landscapes and inclusive governance mechanisms Indicator: Hectares of land under climate-resilient, agro-ecological management Target: 125,000 ha of productive lands and forests

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount($)	Co-Fin Amount($)

1. Reducing vulnerability to climate change through inclusive integrated land-use planning	Technical Assistance	1.1. Enhanced resilience through sustainable integrated landscape management	1.1.1. Capacity building programs implemented for national and decentralized entities or jurisdictions (prefectures and communes) to integrate climate change adaptation into development planning processes through a landscape restoration approach	LDCF	1,057,067.00	4,800,000.00
		Indicators	1.1.2. Community structures (Forest and Farm producer groups, Community Forest Associations, …) strengthened/established to promote climate change adaptation thanks to access to tools/data that adopt nature-based solutions (including FLR)			
		(i) # regional/local planning tools established/revised integrating CCA concerns				
		(ii) # of community structures (FPO, CFA, PO…) with increased capacity to plan for CCA	1.1.3. Intersectoral and multi-stakeholder platforms set-up/strengthened at all levels (national, regional and local) to promote coordination across the sectors for effective climate change adaptation integration			
		(iii) # of coordination mechanisms established and functional both at national, prefectural, and local/communal level				

| 2. Promotion of ecosystem-based approaches for enhanced resilience of both the landscapes and the local communities | Investment | 2.1. Sustainable natural resources management mechanisms established for enhanced resilience of natural ecosystems and local communities

Indicators:

(i) # of ha of land under climate-resilient management

Target:

- At least 75,000 ha of Series for Agriculture and Human Settlement (SAOH) and buffer zones of Protected Areas

- At least 50,000 ha of community forests under improved adaptive management | Output 2.1.1. Sustainable management plans integrating climate change adaptation, developed and implemented for at least 6 Series of Agriculture and Human Settlements (SAOHs) in SW and in buffer zone of Bangassou Forest

Output 2.1.2. Forests in at least 5 communes sustainably managed and restored by local communities for enhanced ecological functionality and climate change resilience. | LDCF | 3,400,000.00 | 10,150,000.00 |

| 3. Promotion of climate-smart nature-based livelihood interventions to decrease the risk of human/nature conflicts | Investment | 3.1. Diversified and resilient livelihood strategies promoted based on climate-smart nature-based approaches for increased community resilience

Indicators:

(i) # of people with new employment opportunities (m/f)

(ii) # of nature-based micro-enterprises developed with sustainable business plans and access to finance

(iii) # of micro-projects supported at local/communal levels | 3.1.1. Forest and farm producer groups/cooperatives established and empowered to ensure efficient and inclusive management and governance

3.1.2. Sustainable NTFP/agriculture value chains identified and selected by forest and farm producer groups/cooperatives and bankable business plans developed for investments in climate change adaptation

3.1.3. Capacities of research institutions and extension services strengthened to provide up-to-date adaptive support to forest and farm producer groups/cooperatives

3.1.4. Climate-resilient agroforestry production systems identified by producer groups (supported by research institutions and extension services) and developed with support of extension services to reduce climate change vulnerability | LDCF | 3,300,000.00 | 12,500,000.00 |

| 4. Knowledge, learning and M&E | Technical Assistance | 4.1. Lessons and knowledge from the project are captured through a robust M&E system

Indicator:

(i) M&E system is successfully supporting/steering the implementation of the project

4.2. Enhanced knowledge and learning at national and regional levels through a robust knowledge development and dissemination strategy

Indicator:

(ii) a knowledge management strategy and plan support sustainable dissemination and outscaling of lessons learnt | Output 4.1.1. A sound results-based project M&E framework developed

Output 4.1.2. Participatory monitoring approaches for adaptation interventions developed and implemented at decentralized level

Output 4.2.1. Exchange visits for key stakeholders (community groups, Forest Farm groups, cooperatives) organized to share best practices and increase knowledge on community-managed landscape planning and resilient nature-based value chain development

4.2.2. Knowledge generated by the project shared and communicated with broader stakeholder group in-country and with existing regional platforms (COMIFAC, Congo Basin countries) and initiatives to promote efficient exchange of knowledge and information | LDCF | 750,000.00 | 1,650,000.00 |
| | | | Sub Total ($) | 8,507,067.00 | 29,100,000.00 |

Project Management Cost (PMC)

			LDCF	425,353.00	1,500,000.00
			Sub Total($)	425,353.00	1,500,000.00
			Total Project Cost($)	8,932,420.00	30,600,000.00

C. Indicative sources of Co-financing for the Project by name and by type

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount($)
Donor Agency	IFAD	Grant	Investment mobilized	10,000,000.00
Donor Agency	World Bank	Grant	Investment mobilized	10,000,000.00
Donor Agency	European Union	Grant	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Donor Agency	USAID	Grant	Investment mobilized	3,000,000.00
Donor Agency	PBF	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	MEDD	Public Investment	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
Recipient Country Government	MADR	Public Investment	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
GEF Agency	FAO	Grant	Investment mobilized	600,000.00
			Total Project Cost($)	**30,600,000.00**

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

The project has identified investments through incrementally leveraging synergies and complementarities with existing initiatives and programs for an estimated associated co-financing of US$ 29 million. This figure does not include the recurrent investments (amounting to USD1M) from the MEDD (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development) and MADR (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development). Instead, the mobilized investment includes the Development of Agricultural Value Chains in the Savannas (PADECAS) project funded by IFAD (US$ 30,9 million, 2018-2023). Mainly the components 1 and 2 on development of agriculture and livestock value chains and institutional support to the agriculture sector are leveraged (USD$ 10 million as co-financing). The Agriculture Recovery and Agribusiness Development Support Project (PRADAC) funded by the World Bank (US$ 25 million, 2019-2024; US$ 10 million as co-financing) which aims to increase agriculture productivity of small-scale farmers and strengthen capacity of micro, small and medium agribusiness enterprises; the National component of the Regional Programme ECOFAC VI ($US 5 million) focusing on sustainable management of protected areas and buffer zone in north and SE CAR; the Community Resilience in Central Africa project (US$25.1 million, 2017-2022; US$ 1 million s co-financing) and the Community-Based Countering Wildlife Trafficking (CBCWT) (US$ 9,9 million, 2018-2023; US$2 million as co-financing), the Women, agriculture and climate change for peace project funded by the Peacebuilding fund and jointly implemented by FAO and UN Woman (US$ 1,5 million, 2019-2021; US$ 1 million as co-financing). FAOs co-finance represents the investments made in 2 Technical Cooperation Projects for a total of USD600,000. Recurrent expenditures of both MEDD and MADR have been identified as co-financing for US$ 1 million as part of public investment. During the PPG phase, additional co-financing opportunities will be identified, including from the private sector.

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

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount($)	Fee($)	Total($)
FAO	LDCF	Central African Republic	Climate Change	NA	8,932,420	848,580	9,781,000.00
				Total GEF Resources($)	8,932,420.00	848,580.00	9,781,000.00

E. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

PPG Required   **true**

PPG Amount ($)

200,000

PPG Agency Fee ($)

19,000

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount($)	Fee($)	Total($)
FAO	LDCF	Central African Republic	Climate Change	NA	200,000	19,000	**219,000.00**
				Total Project Costs($)	**200,000.00**	**19,000.00**	**219,000.00**

Core Indicators

Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	0			
Male	0			
Total	0	0	0	0

Provide additional explanation on targets, other methodologies used, and other focal area specifics (i.e., Aichi targets in BD) including justification where core indicator targets are not provided
Please, consider the LDCF/SCCF core indicators worksheet and metadata attached to the submission.

Part II. Project Justification

1a. Project Description

1)	The global adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed

1.	The Central African Republic (CAR) is landlocked country with an area of around 623,000 km2. The population of CAR is predominantly rural (62.1%), female (50.2%) and young (49.4% less than 18 years of age). It is among the poorest countries on the world, with a Human Development Index at 0.397 in 2019, which put the country in the low human development category – positioning it at 188 out of 189 countries. The Central African economy relies on a primary agricultural sector which is highlighted in the National Communications to the UNFCCC as one of the most vulnerable sectors to climate change impacts. Decades of conflicts and political instability has also spread insecurity throughout the population causing the abandonment of the production systems and migration to safer zones which has impeded further the adaptive capacity of communities and government. Local people tend to fall back on the remaining forest ecosystems for food and nutrition security without proper sustainable planning and governance systems in place which causes further degradation and reduces their adaptive capacity to climate change as well.

National MPI 0.465

BA: Bangui
BB: Bamingui-Bangoran
BK: Basse-Kotto
HK: Haute-Kotto
HM: Haut-Mbomou
Ké: Kémo
LO: Lobaye
MB: Mbomou
MK: Mambéré-Kadéï
NG: Nana-Grébizi
NM: Nana-Mambéré
OH: Ouham
OM: Ombella-M'Poko
OP: Ouham-Pendé
OU: Ouaka
SM: Sangha-Mbaéré
VA: Vakaga

Notes: Source: MICS year 2010, own calculations. Underlying shp-file from Global Administrative Areas (2019).
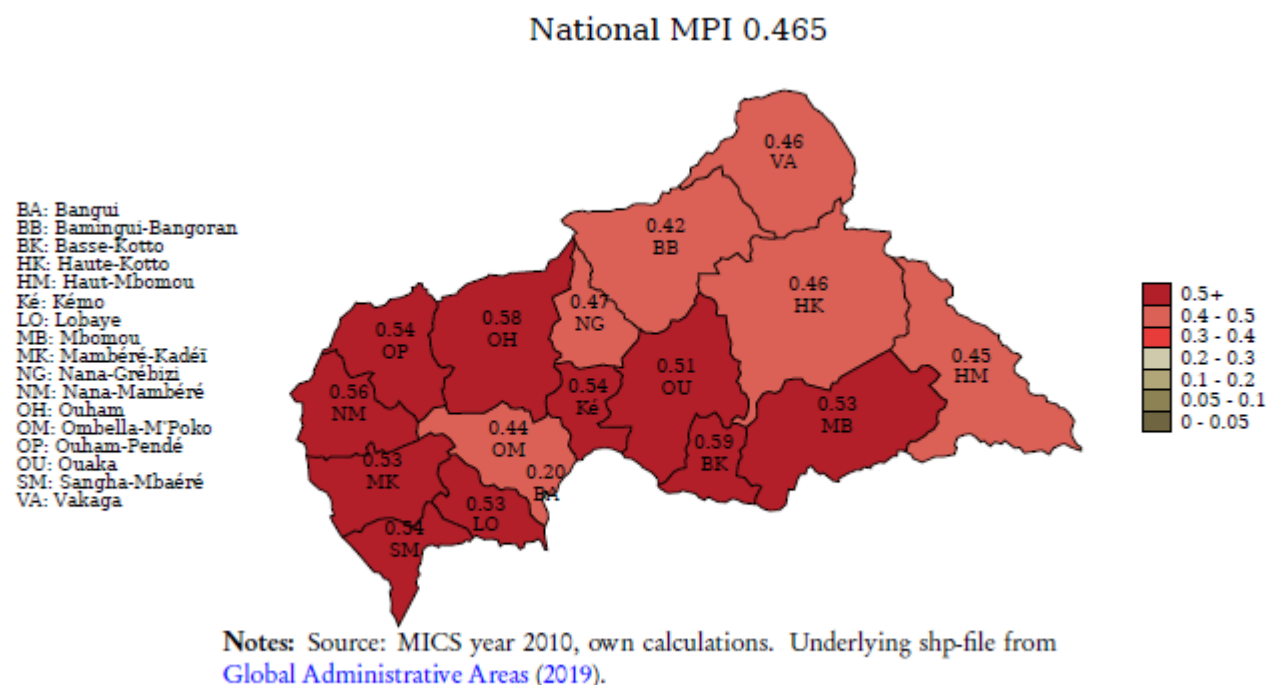
Figure 1. Mapping Multidimensional Poverty Index value by Subnational Region (OPHI, 2020)

2.   In 2013 and 2014 the CAR has witnessed a surge in violent conflicts with two consecutive civil wars. A reconciliation process was launched in 2014, which led to the 2015 Bangui Forum, a new constitution and a new inclusive government. With the support of the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank Group a Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment was prepared and led to the development and adoption of a National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan (*Relèvement et consolidation de la paix en Centrafrique* - RCPCA[1]), which consists of three pillars: (i) Critical reforms to promote peace, security, and reconciliation; (ii) Reforms to provide basic social services such as education, health, water, and sanitation; and (iii) Measures to facilitate rapid improvement of the business environment and to improve natural resources management, including of minerals and timber (RCA Gvt, 2016). Despite massive investments in development projects and the signature of six different peace accords up to 2019, conflict-related violence persevered and the situation remains fragile, especially in the Eastern parts of the country.

3.   Food insecurity is widespread over the country, with a rate of households suffering from food insecurity ranging from 32% to 65% in late 2020, depending on the Prefectures (IPC CAR, 2020[2]). An Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) analysis carried out from May-August 2020 estimated that 2.36 million people in CAR were severely food insecure (IPC Phase 3 or higher), covering 35 sub-prefectures (Figure 2). Following the National Evaluation of Food Security (ENSA) conducted by WFP and ICASEES in November 2019, the proportion of households dedicated to agriculture has significantly increased within the last 3 agricultural seasons (92% in 2019 compared to 67% in 2017) and highlights the key role it plays for the majority of the population.
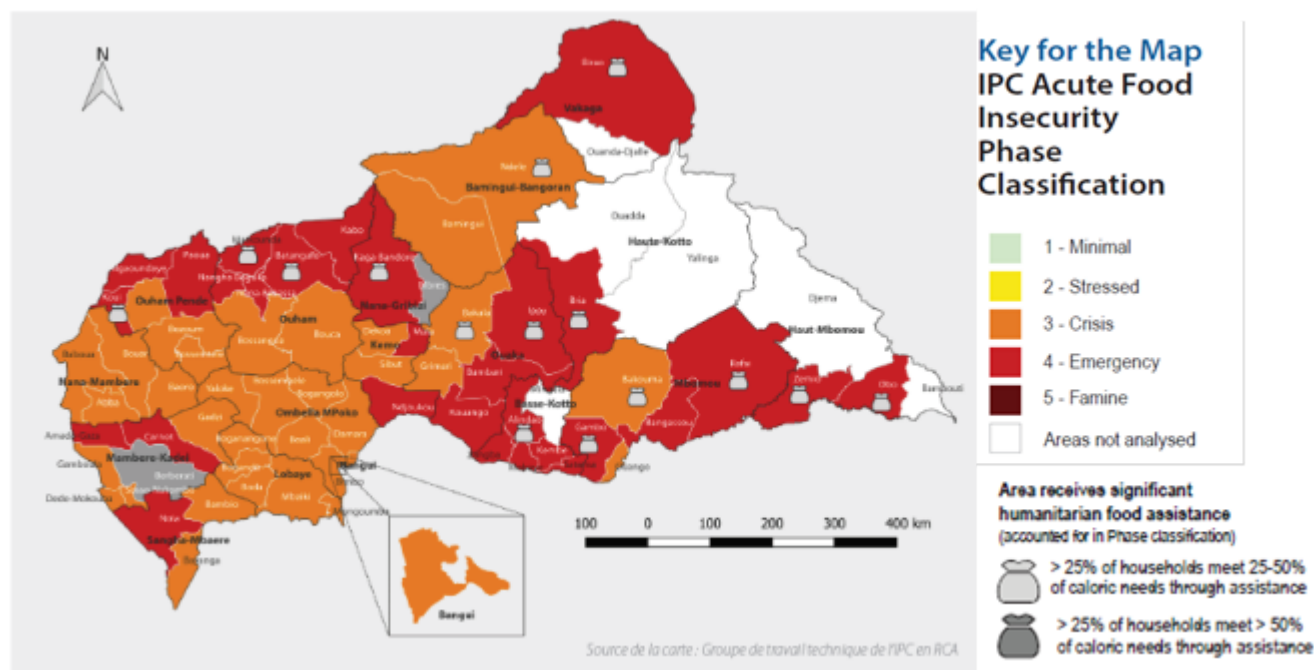

Figure 2. Food insecurity situational analysis May-August 2020 (IPC CAR, 2020)

4.   At present, the main economic sectors in Central Africa are linked to subsistence farming and the exploitation of forest resources. Agriculture is of one the key sectors of the economy contributing 39,3% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) source and providing employment to 85,6% of the total population. The CAR has a great natural potential, represented by 15 million hectares of arable land suitable for agriculture and nearly 16 Mha of pasture and rangeland suitable for livestock activities. It has also significant water resources, through a dense hydrographic network, favorable to crop irrigation and inland
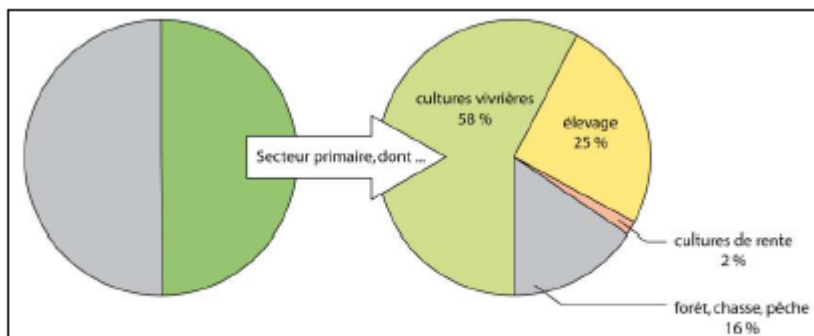
Figure 7 : Part du secteur primaire dans le PIB et part des sous-secteurs dans le PIB Agricole (PNIASAN, 2013)

Figure 3. Overview of contribution of the primary sector and its sub-sectors to GDP (PNIASAN, 2013)

5.   Agriculture is mostly orientated towards food crops, mainly focusing on cassava, groundnut, maize, rice, sesame and plantain (MEEDD, 2013a). CAR's agriculture is characterized as mainly being rainfed and with extremely low productivity of the land and labor. It is estimated that 70% of the small-scale farmers cultivate an area less than 1 ha. Cash crops are marginal, with tobacco, coffee and palm oil small-scale plantations in the southwest. Small-scale farmers often supplement their incomes by working for wealthier households, hunting and gathering natural resources, or mining in the country's large informal mining sector (FEWSNET, 2012) (WFP, 2015). Agricultural exports, which accounted for 50% of the country's wealth, has been completely shut down, due to the fragmentation of the existing value chains due to the continuous political and insecurity crisis. In the SW region, most of the land area is under forest concession (PEAs) and the local communities have access to the 'Series for Agriculture and Human Settlement' ('*Séries d'Agricoles et d'Occupation Humaine*', SAOH) to practice agriculture in these PEAs (see table below).

Forest concession	Total surface area	SAOH
171	475,002	-
185	270,005	37,321
169	186,596	15,406
164	225,321	2,730
165	208,638	9,253
186	218,587	14,591
192 lot A	155,739	963
193 lot B	12,430	2,997
174	395,856	21,157
183	325,563	24,442
175	188,692	35,721
184	370,294	34,631
188	228,336	8,517
190	234,634	6,596
TOTAL	3,495,693	214,325

Table 1. Surface area of forest concessions in SW region of CAR and corresponding SAOH area
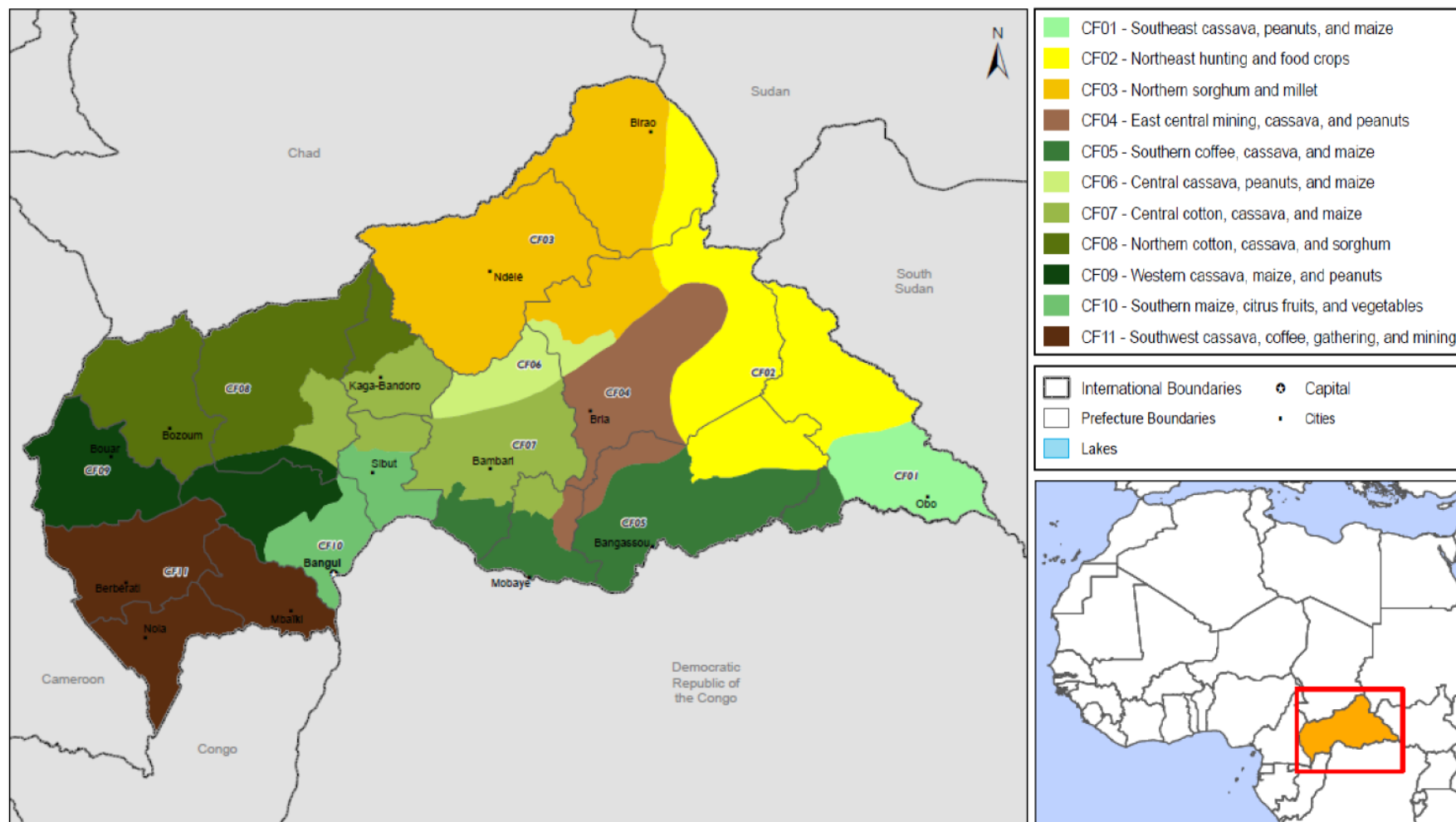
Figure 4. Livelihoods map of CAR (FEWSNET, 2012)

6.   CAR can be divided into 11 major livelihood zones (Figure 4) defined by the agroecological characteristics and the project target sites are characterized by the livelihood zone 5 in the Southeast where communities focus on coffee, cassava and maize; the livelihood zone 10 in the South with a focus on maize, citrus and vegetables and the livelihood zone 11 where main livelihoods are focusing on cassava, coffee, gathering and mining. In the National Adaptation Programme of Action, submitted in 2008, several climate impacts and vulnerabilities were highlighted for these zones. The below table provides a summary:

Livelihood zone	Climate risks on agriculture sector and its impacts		
	Excessive drought	Excessive rainfall	Socio-economic impact

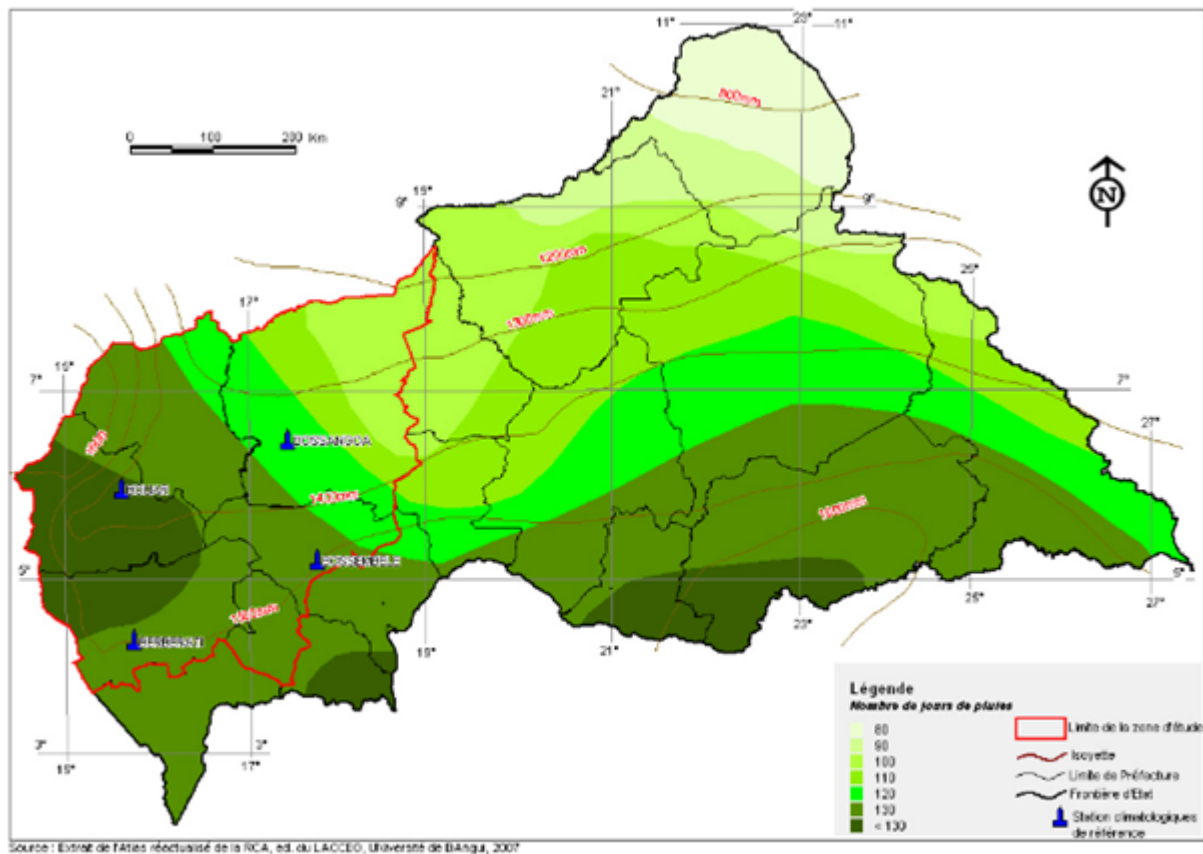|				
ones 5 and 11)		mers and livestock - agricultural production cycle disturbed - increase in bushfires and reduction or loss in food reserves - enhanced pressure on NTFPs - enhanced land and soil degradation	d bad herbs - increase in pests and diseases - flooding of agricultural fields (especially tubers) - disturbance in vegetative production cycle	tion/productivity - enhanced food insecurity - increase in poverty - migration - degradation of environment - enhanced dependancy of aid - human stress and health - loss of incomes and jobs
	Natural resources	- Reduction in number of growth days - Increase in forest fires - Degradation of forest ecosystems - Loss in biological diversity - Diffusion of pathogens - Lower productivity (forest companies, NTFPs) - Shift in species dispersion	- Degradation of vegetation due to floods - Loss of biological diversity - Erosion and reduction in soil fertility - Excessive pathogens and plant diseases - Pollution of aquatic ecosystems - Lower productivity (timber and forest companies)	
Food savanna zone (zone 10)	Agriculture	- Disappearance of certain sources of water - increase in livestock mortality and migration - spread of diseases - competition for natural resources - lower productivity - disturbance in agricultural calendar - changes in species compositi	-flooding and associated risks - increased humidity and increase in pests and diseases - disturbance in agricultural calendar - erosion of soil, degradation of lands - changes in species composition	

Table 2. Climate change risks and vulnerabilities for targeted project regions (NAPA, 2008)

7.	With 11% of the GDP (Cerutti. 2018), the forestry sector contributes to around half of the total exports and plays an important role in national budget equilibrium. The private forestry sector employed directly 4,000 people and indirectly 6,000 people before the crisis in 2013. Under ideal circumstances, forest companies largely contribute to the mobilization of fiscal bills and to the budgets of local Communes, through the payment of forest taxes to the forest Communes for the financing of their local development plans[3] (WB, 2018). Artisanal logging can also be considered an important economic activity, as field survey carried out just before the crisis in 2010 and 2011 by LESCUYER et al. (2014) demonstrate that 50% of the wood supply or 33,000 m^3/year were sold in CAR and, in addition 6,000 m^3/year were exported to Chad. Most of the artisanal sector remains informal and according to a survey carried out by Dubiez et al. (2019), 93% of the respondent indicated to have no cutting permit, despite the obligation under the forest code.

8.	Forest play even a more important role to the national economy if we consider the numerous services and goods it provides to local communities. According to the 2012-2017 National Strategy and Action Plan for the promotion of Non-Timber Forest Products (KONZI-SARAMBO et al., 2012)[4], the livelihoods of 72% or rural people in the CAR depend partly or entirely on NTFPs. This would even be greater for the marginalized indigenous peoples, such as Pygmies / Bay'Aka. The most well-known NTFPs are the following (MDRA, 2013)[5]: kökö (*Gnetum* spp) (harvest estimated at 500 t/year), caterpillars (notably *Imbrasia* spp. Total harvest estimated at 540 t/year), pepper (*Piper negrum*), diverse mushrooms, etc. but there are many others of socio-economic interest. Caterpillars are greatly appreciated in CAR, and especially in the South-West, as they provide a valuable source of proteins and are part of the traditional culture (Moinecourt, 2009)[6]. This study also carried out an identification of host trees and 11 host trees and nine types of edible caterpillars[7] were identified. Essesang (*Ricinodendron heudelotii*) was considered as one of the most valuable and the most requested by local populations, as it can host three different types of caterpillars. Unfortunately, the increasing pressure on NTFPs tends to favor unsustainable practices, such as uprooting of trees, etc.

9.	Because of its close proximity to the equator, the climate of the CAR is characterized as hot and humid with a dry and a wet season. The average annual temperature ranges from 15°C in the South to 38°C in the North (CAR Gvt, 2015)[8]. The country can be divided following the rainfall patterns and is characterized by the following three main climatic zones going from South to North: tropical climate in the equatorial forest of the south; inter-tropical climate in the center; and arid, sub-Sahelian climate in the north (Figure 2).

Figure 5. Isohyets of CAR

10.   This diversity in climate types has provided CAR with a wide range of ecosystems and forests and five phytogeographic domains can be distinguished:

●   Congo-Guinean or Guinean forest domain: this domain forms part of the Congo Basin and the vegetation is characterized by dense humid forests. It has one long wet season and one short dry season, and it is characterized by rainfall of more than 1.600 mm.

●   Sudano-Ubanguian domain: this domain is characterized by semi-humid forests and gallery forests with a rainfall between 1.300 and 1.600 mm.

●   Sudano-Guinean woodlands: characterized by wooded and tree savanna.

●   Sudano-Sahelian domain: characterized by shrub savanna, grassy savanna and steppes in north of the country.

●   Sahelian domain: typical Sahel landscape in far north of the country with longer dry seasons than wet season and rainfall lower than 700 mm.

Figure 6. Phytogeographic domains of CAR.

11.　　　　The project targeted areas (SW and SE) are mainly within the Guinean Forest and the Sudano-Oubanguian domains where climate change impacts such as reduced certainty of agricultural calendars, increase in temperature, erratic and excessive rainfall, flooding are threatening the livelihoods of local communities. The overall practiced slash-and-burn agriculture is highly vulnerable to these impacts and in response communities survive through collecting of NTFPs and encroach further on the forest ecosystems which on their turn have a reduced adaptive capacity when fragmented or degraded. In both zones local communities also have small-scale coffee plantations as cash-crops to supplement their income, but these are often not managed sustainable and consist of old stands. Due to conflict, market access is also very limited, although in the SE linkages have been maintained across the border. Climate change is projected to have a negative impact[9] on productivity of coffee. Higher temperatures will reduce yields of Arabica (*C. arabica*), while anticipated increasing variability of intra-seasonal temperatures will have an impact on Robusta (*C. canehora*). Robusta coffee suitability will be lost in the Congo basin with 60 % (RCP 2.6) to 95 % (RCP 8.5) of total suitability lost in the center of origin of the species. as such improved varieties and management practices need to be promoted and extension services need to be capacitated.
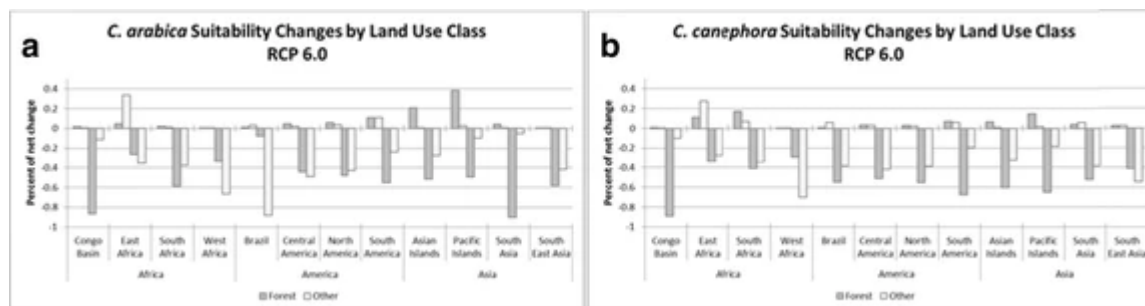

Figure 7. Distribution of suitability changes by region and the land use classes with forest cover and without forest cover by 2050 under RCP 6.0; a C. arabica b

12.	The total forest cover in the CAR is very important: around 28.3 Mha (45.5% of total land surface) is covered by forests, with 5.5 Mha (8.9%) of dense humid forests encountered in one-third of the country (South-West, where they are commercially logged, and South-East where they are not) and 22.8 Mha (36.6%) of forest-savanna mosaics encountered in the other two-thirds of the country (WRI, 2013).

13.	Several Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) assessments have been carried out, but each use a different set of definitions in terms of land use classes, which makes comparison of data difficult (SalvaTerra, 2015). The definition for forests is not consistent, as such there is no clear consensus about the level of forest degradation and deforestation at the national level. During the period 1990-2010 (table 3), the country has lost 406,700 ha (or 4% of total surface) of dense forests, equivalent to 20 335 ha per year on average (CNI-REDD, 2020).

Tableau 6 : Evolution historique (1990-2000-2010) de la surface des forêts denses en RCA par préfecture (EDF, 2013)

Préfecture	Surface totale (km²)	1990 Surface forêt dense Km²	1990 Surface forêt dense %	Changements 1990-2000 Déforestation Km²	Changements 1990-2000 Recolonisation Km²	Changements 2000-2010 Déforestation Km²	Changements 2000-2010 Recolonisation Km²
Mambere-Kadei	30 100	9 845	32,7	694	59	436	151
Nana-Mambere	27 400	3 342	12,2	251	17	244	19
Ouham-Pende	23 300	1 093	4,7	105	25	99	7
Ouham	27 300	3 733	13,7	200	27	187	28
Kemo-Gribingui	16 800	4 582	27,3	318	32	347	15
Ouaka	49 200	5 246	10,7	263	112	188	120
Haute Kotto	16 200	4 174	25,8	182	23	254	27
Basse Kotto	17 200	2 750	16,0	54	102	53	160
Mbomou	60 400	23 668	39,2	362	141	364	116
Haut Mbomou	24 000	5 731	23,9	117	139	74	144
Sangha Mbaere	18 700	17 713	94,7	124	34	118	55
Lobaye	18 400	10 223	55,6	119	7	128	64
Ombella-Mpoko	32 100	6 536	20,4	308	1	115	14
Total	361 100	98 636	27,3	3 097	718	2 607	919
Déforestation nette		Km²		2 379		1 688	
Déforestation nette		%		2.41		1.75	

Table 3. Historic evolution (1990-2000-2010) of surface area of dense forests in the CAR by prefecture (EDF, 2013)

14.   According to a study realized in 2016 by FRM looking at the dense forests in the SW region (prefectures of Sangha-Mbaéré, Lobaye, Ombella M'Poko and Mambéré Kadei), similar estimated annual deforestation rates were found: 0,18%/year between 1985 and 2000 and 0,13%/year between 2000 and 2015.
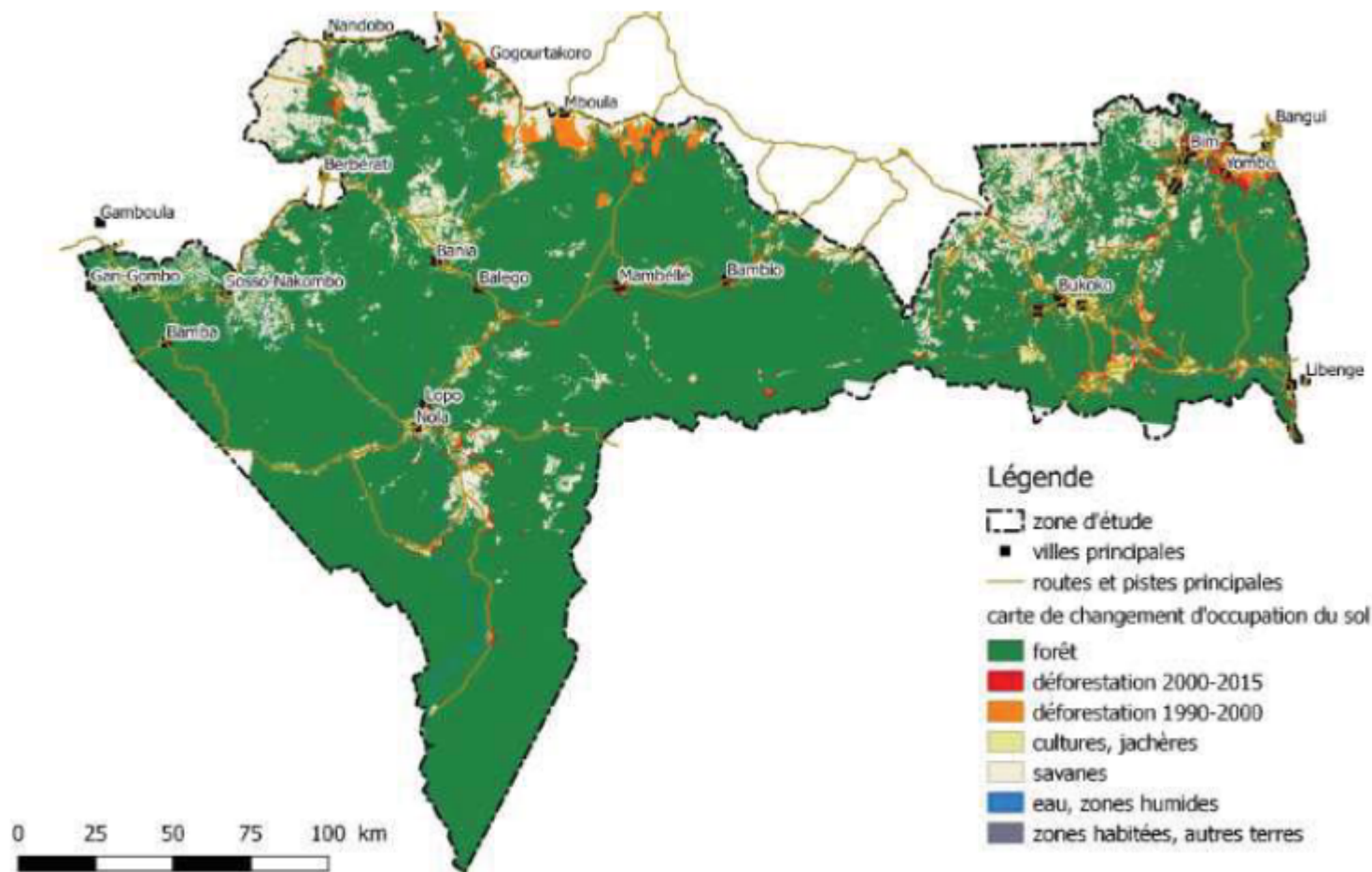

Figure 9 - Net deforestation 1990-2000 and 2000-2010 in the South-West (FRM et al., 2016)

15.   In Central African Republic, the total annual cost of land degradation is estimated at 700 million United States Dollars (USD) —this is equal to 40% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Moreover, a considerable share of the costs of land degradation (68%) is due to the decline in provisioning ecosystem services (e.g. food availability, wood production, etc.), which has a significant impact on the population of the country. The remaining share refers to the regulating ecosystem services (e.g. carbon sequestration, water regulation flows), which has an impact not only at the country level, but also on the regional and global scale due to the transboundary nature of these services that provide incentives for international cooperation (see table 3). In 2018 the National Coordination on Combatting Land Degradation and Desertification of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development undertook an evaluation of the LDN target 15.3 to estimate the proportion of land degraded in CAR. According to this National Land Degradation Assessment, 8.149 Mha of

has highlighted a declining gradient in land degradation from the northern to the southern parts of the country while threatening all ecosystems in the country. The loss in ecosystem services has reduced the overall resilience of the land which on its turn has increased the vulnerability of local communities and ecosystems to the point that they have no longer sufficient adaptive capacities to respond to numerous intertwined socio-economic and environmental challenges.

16.   The South-Western part of the CAR is a forest-rich area: 82% or 4.03 Mha of forest cover according to the LULUCF analysis carried out in 2016. The protected areas cover 8% (or 0.3 Mha) and the majority of the forest resources (92%) fall into 14 forest concessions. The companies are obliged to have Operation and Management Permits (*Permits d'exploitation et d'aménagement – PEA*) for industrial logging, and with the support of the AFD-funded Project for the Regional Development of the South-West (PDRSO) 12 PEAs have an approved management plan in place and two are in the process of finalizing it. The local population ha limited access to the forest ecosystems for artisanal logging as they can only request annual permits for a maximum of 10 ha in the agriculture or conversion areas of the PEAs, subject to the elaboration of the following documents: forest inventory, environmental impact assessment, technical specifications for logging including social and environmental safeguards. In practice, artisanal loggers do not request such permits and work informally (LESCUYER et al., 2014)[10].

Figure 10. Map of PEAs in the forest Massif of SW CAR and status of management plans in place in January 2019 (PDRSO, 2018)

17.   In the prefecture of Mbomou, the Forest Massif of Bangassou covers over 1,6 Mha and due to its remoteness remains unexploited by private companies. No thorough forest inventory has been carried out, but human pressure is causing severe degradation. The north of the massif is characterized by mosaics of dry forests and gallery forests and is threatened by large-scale conversion through slash-and-burn practices. The riverine forests are also degraded and are currently converted in secondary forests. It is estimated that 28.28% of the watershed is degraded (838 300 ha) (LDN-TSP, 2017).

Threats, causes and problems linked to climate

Current climate change vulnerability and trends:

18.	According to the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, climate change and climate variability have the potential to exacerbate or multiply existing threats to human security including food, health and economic insecurity, all being of particular concern for CAR. Many of these threats are known drivers of conflict. Causality between climate change and violent conflict are difficult to establish owing to the presence of these and other interconnected causes. For example, the degradation of natural resources as a result of both overexploitation and climate change will contribute to increased conflicts over the distribution of the resources. Developing the ability to adapt to climate change and bringing people together in a participative process contributes to reducing the conflict an tension and can be a strategic part of the process of reconstruction and reconciliation after many years of conflict and violence (CIFOR, 2013).
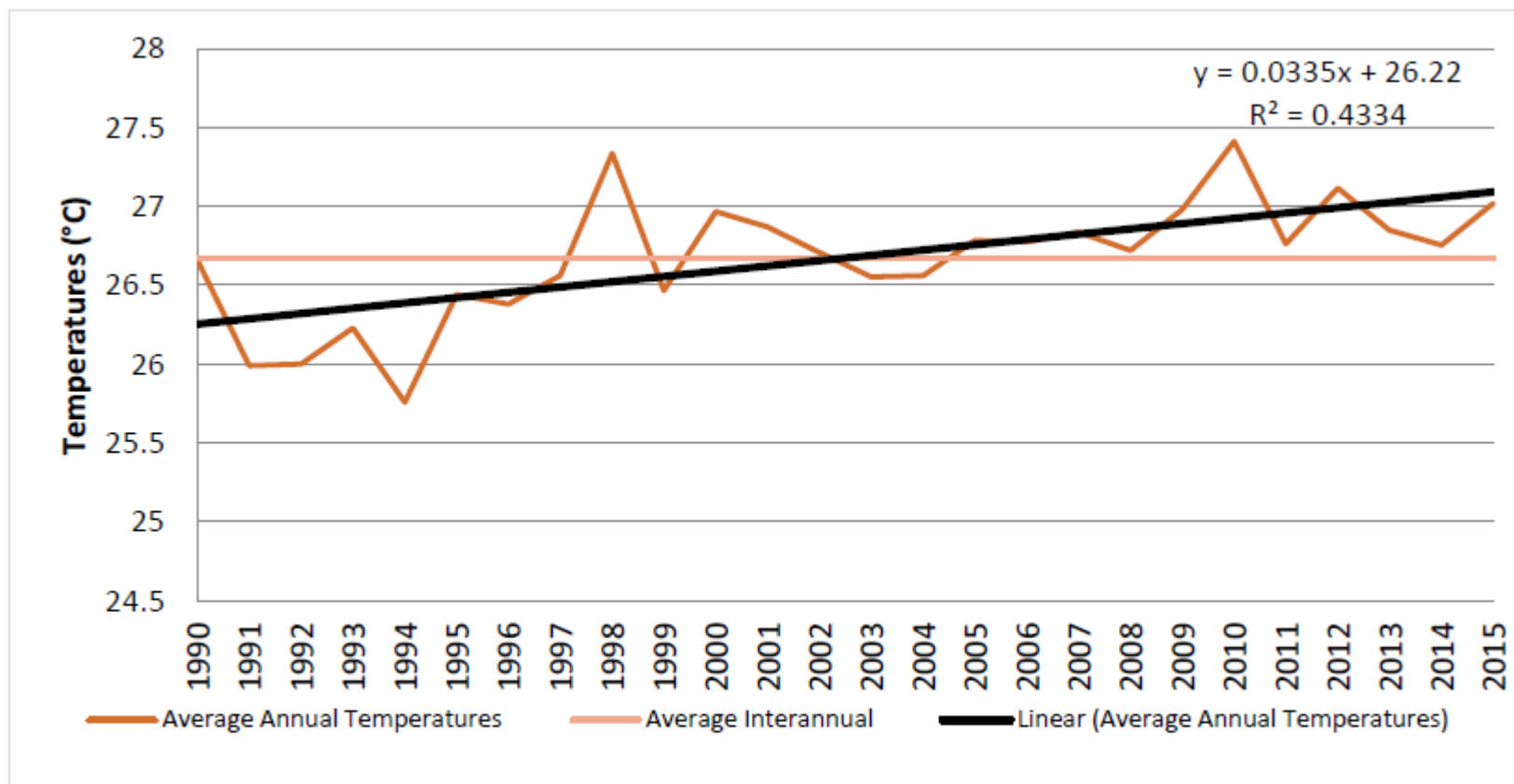
19.	All RCPs of CIMP5 (WB, 2021) ensemble modelling indicate an increase in temperature and an increase in climate variability and this will have impact on crop yield and intense rainfall could damage fields and erode soils. These impacts will increase the pressure on forest ecosystems both because of increased demand of NTFPs and encroachments by farmers.

20.	According to the Climate Change Vulnerability Index 2017[11], the CAR was ranked amongst the five worst performing in the world. The city of Bangui for example was identified amongst the 10 most vulnerable cities in the world in 2018, according to the same Index which calculates an overall risk figure from more than 50 separate data sources, including climate models, socio-economic factors and demographic trends. The country ranks 179 (out of 181) on the ND-Gain Index[12], which adds to the urgency of adaptation actions to address land-use and urban development issues. The Central African Rep. is the 17th most vulnerable country and the least ready country. Inadequate land-management planning and practices, with rising concentration of settlements in hazard-prone areas, have increased CAR's vulnerability to the effects of climate change, as demonstrated by the 2019 flooding, which impacted an estimated 100,000 people.

21.	Sonwa et al. (2020)[13] developed a case study based on field observations in the Mpoko Watershed in the Central African Republic, as well as information from literature and the key findings were: (1) the forest-related water cycle of the Congo Basin is not stable and is gradually changing; (2) climate change is impacting the water cycle of the basin; and (3) the slow modification of the water cycle is affecting livelihoods of local communities.

22.	The study shows changing rainfall patterns that manifest in unpredictable shows changing rainfall patterns that manifest in unpredictable starts to the rains, a prolonged dry season and some periods of dryness during the rainy season. The interannual variability is thus coupled with a long-term trend in lower precipitation. This is also experienced in the lowering/dryness of surface water levels and the disappearance of springs, streams and wetlands.

23.	The World Bank as well indicated already in 2010 that during the period 1978-2009 an average increase in temperature was recorded of about 0.3 C per decade and a reduction in rainfall of 19 mm/year. The recent analysis of Sonwa et al (2020) confirms these trends and the rainfall data reveal an increasing interannual variability and drying out (in line with IPCC study noting decreased tropical rainfall in Africa).

Figure 4. Evolution of the average annual temperature at the Bangui Mpoko station.

Figure 11. Evolution of the average annual temperature at the Bangui Mpoko station

24.   Climate change projections indicate an increase of between 0.7-3°C by 2080 for low, medium, and high emissions scenarios. Total annual days of temperature above 35°C would rise by 60.6 days in 2050, while total annual days of temperatures above 40°C would be 14.5 days by 2050 and 50.7 by end of century[14]. Mean annual rainfall in CAR has increased slightly since the end of the 1990s, as recorded by a 4-percent increase over the 1995-2017 average in Bangui. Rainfall is projected to become more erratic, in terms of duration, intensity, and frequency. Figure 12 below presents future projections of increase in average high temperature in both project sites and an increase in precipitation for SW region and decrease for SE region.

Figure 12. Future average high temperature and change in future total rainfal projections for 2081-2100 for SW and SE region of CAR according to CGCM3.1 (T47) Model under high (A2) SRES emission scenario[15].

25.   Floods account for the largest share of natural disaster-related losses in CAR. Torrential rains and floods affect principally the southern part of the country, impacting housing, buildings, roads, and other infrastructure. Unusually heavy rains in late-2019 caused flooding and damage across eight prefectures, impacting 57,000 people, with 20,000 people displaced and over 10,000 homes destroyed (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2019; NRC, 2019).Figure 13 presents the regions of CAR with highest intensity of rainfall on annual average from 1984-2018. The below table provides an overview of percentage of people living in high flooding risk areas within our targeted project areas:

Figure 13. Intensity of rainfall over the period 1984-2018

Prefecture	Vulnerability score	Susceptibility score	% of population in high flood risk areas	Number of people in high flood risk areas	Fina risk category
Ombella M'Poko	1	4.20	74%	320,360	High
Lobaye	3	3.59	53%	161,627	Low
Mambéré-Kadei	2	2.87	27%	122,092	Very low
Sangha-Mbaéré	3	3.65	59%	74,824	Medium
Mboumou	1	4.12	79%	163,962	Medium

Table 4. Vulnerability of population in targeted prefectures to flood risk

26.   The vulnerability of CAR to climate change is exacerbated by the following facts: (1) the country and the local population largely depend directly on the natural resource base for their livelihoods; (2) the poverty situation makes the impacts of environmental degradation more serious as most of the recent natural disasters can be linked to the climate (meteorological factors and water); (3) the adaptive capacity of the local population is already weak due to limited access to technologies or alternatives. According to the NAPA (2008)[16] submitted to the UNFCCC, five sectors were identified as most vulnerable to climate change hierarchized in order of importance: agriculture and food security, forestry and agroforestry, water resources, energy and health.

Climate change impact and projections on agriculture:

27.   The vulnerability of the agricultural sector has been highlighted by the study carried out in 2014[17], which looked at the impacts of climate change on agriculture production in the West of the CAR. The following impacts would largely impact the capacity of the smallholder farmers to plan their livelihood activities: changes in the duration of the growing season, disturbance in the biological cycles of the crops and the associated micro-organisms, enhanced water and thermal stress, 20-50% reduction in cereal production. This scenario highlights the need to put in place context-specific adaptation strategies to reduce the vulnerability of the local communities. As such the integration of climate change adaptation into local and national planning process is crucial, as well as promoting of adapted agricultural practices.

28.   Stuch et al (2020) investigated the impacts of climate change for a medium-term scenario period (2041-2070) on yields of maize and tropical cereals in SSA which are of particular importance to smallholder farmers. Their results showed a particular risk to food security in Central Africa where mean maize yield decreases over 89% of harvested maize areas, and its variability increases over 54% of these areas. The mean yields of tropical cereals will be more robust to climate change than maize, although yields still decrease over 23% of tropical cereal harvested areas. Several adaptation options could be proposed, such as shifting of crops, promotion of heat-tolerant cultivars, and promoting trees in agroforest systems which have a cooling effect on surrounding crops that can significantly mitigate the impacts of heat stress (Sida et al., 2018). Under climate change, suitable conditions for cassava are expected to be greatest in Central and Eastern Africa, and due to cassava's hardiness at high temperatures and sporadic rainfall, it could prove to be a good substitute for cereal crops as an adaptation response to climate change (Jarvis et al., 2012).

Climate change impact of forests:

29.   Climate change is expected to have a range of impacts on forest ecosystems, but the effects of CO_2 and temperature on tropical forest growth are not yet fully understood[18]. Generally higher atmospheric CO_2 concentrations might increase forest growth and carbon capture. Higher temperatures, however, might have negative impacts on growth and it will affect the forest reproduction. At the extreme northern sides, decrease in rainfall and increase in temperature will promote a shift towards open savannahs. Climate change will potentially disrupt or eliminate mutually beneficial ecologic interactions between plants and their pollinators (Memmott et al, 2007). There is a considerable potential for climate change to drive significant forest loss via land conversion to agriculture, even if climatic conditions do not themselves lead the trees to decline[19]. Forest conversion to agriculture and other land uses increases the portion of bare ground and therefore increases albedo (Figure 14).

3
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.   The changing patterns of precipitation have serious consequences on the reproduction of insects. The early start of the rainy season creates several problems. All edible caterpillar species now appear earlier (May), which means that they are smaller and fewer in numbers. Their life cycle also finishes more quickly. These changes can cause a decline of about 83.44% in collection (20 kg/year/household compared to 145 kg/year/household in 'a good year') which represents a significant drop in household budgets and it affects food security[20].

31.　　　In this context ecosystem-based adaptation has been an important approach defined as having high potential for the Congo Basin and CAR (IPCC, 2014; Somorin et al, 2012; Sonwa et al, 2012a) The following barriers have been identified to　promote ecosystem-based adaptation　to reduce the vulnerability of the local communities and the forest ecosystems to climate change impacts they depend on:
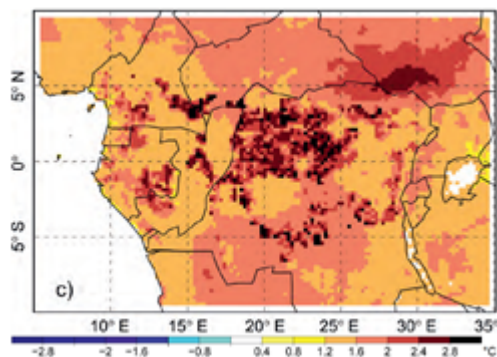

Figure 14. Mean temperature change (°C) due to the succession of forests in the Congo Basin region to agriculture and other land uses from 2041-2060 directly from modification due to water and energy balance (Akkermans et al, 2014).

Lack of sustainable adaptive forest management and restoration plans

32.　　　Poverty is affecting the lives of most rural people, and in difficult times the local communities heavily depend on forests providing their food, fodder, medicine and other services. In the SW forest massif, slash-and-burn agriculture is one of the major forest degradation causes and is mainly linked to the rotation of cassava/maize production long the forest fringes for a period of 5-10 years (Amoudou et al., 2018). Due to increased population pressure (migration due to conflict and insecurity), especially in the SW region, there has been an increase of these kind of practices. In the past the majority of subsistence smallholder farmers would plant coffee and cacao as a cash-crop, but due to the political crises, a continued collapse of extension services and absence of market access, production has collapsed over the past years.

33.　　　Adaptive forest management plans and forest and landscape restoration plans are two important tools for forest and landscape adaptation enhancing the functionality if both forest and forest landscapes under multiple pressures of global change, in particular the alterations of growing conditions for forests due to climate change impacts (extreme weather events and accompanying pathogen pressures) (Spathelf et all, 2018). The conversion zones or SAOH do not have a sustainable management plans in place, neither are there any structures in place to plan and monitor the management of these zones within the PEAs. The local communities also don't have the necessary knowledge and information on climate change impacts and the corresponding adaptation measures to be implemented to ensure for .

Limited access to financial resources, technologies and information

34.　　　The majority of the existing farming systems are based on the unsustainable slash-and-burn methodology and continues to degrade the existing forest ecosystems. They are characterized by low productivity, very little mechanization and very few inputs and are practices on very small holdings. For instance, in 2018, the average yield were the following for the main food crops: 2.8 t/ha for cassava, 1.3 t/ha for groundnut, and 0.88 t/ha for maize, respectively 3.2, 0.6 and 2.3 times less than the average yield for these food crops in Africa in 2018 (FAOSTAT, 2020). The majority or 70% of the poorest

households cropped 1 ha or less. They often supplement their incomes by working for wealthier households, hunting and gathering natural resources of mining in the country's large informal mining sector (WFP, 2015). Smallholder farmers have limited access to improved technologies, especially those adaptation technologies that can enhance their resilience to climate change impacts such as improved seeds and inputs.

35. In terms of agricultural support, both the Central African Institute for Agricultural Research (ICRA) and the Central African Agricultural Development Agency (ACDA) have not been performing well for the past decade, and they were seriously impacted by the 2013 crisis. The technical institutes focusing on rural development suffer from a chronic lack of human and financial resources (MEE, 2009b). As for the extension services, they are in a difficult situation and barely reach the farmers, as most of the recent support in the agriculture sector has been targeted towards distributing food aid (World Bank, 2016e).

Weak operational and planning capacity at the decentralized level

36. In early 2020, the National Assembly of the CAR passed the first Decentralization Law on Territorial Administration, which is a key component of the Peace Treaty. The aim is to further support the process to be able to organize local elections around the late-2021/2022 timeframe to promote local fiscal responsibility and respect the needs and the demands of the local population.

37. Especially the Eastern region of the country has suffered severely from the 2013-2014 political crisis and remains in a kind of insulated stage with regards to local administration. Since 2015, the Government of CAR has been engaged in a process of decentralization, but due to the continued general status of insecurity in a large part of the country, the needed infrastructure and capacity development at the decentralized technical services have not been realized to ensure the needed change to be able to support properly local communities adapt to slow-onset of climate change. This is especially the case for the sectors that have an impact on the forest cover, namely agriculture, forest, energy and mining sectors.

38. The communes have limited capacity in terms of operations as well as technical knowledge to identify, plan and implement climate change adaptation measures. In the SW region, communes (mainly the forest-related municipalities) are currently receiving support from the PDRSO and the PGRN projects to develop local development plans. The existing local development plans do not sufficiently integrate green investments / adaptive nature-based solutions (such as agroforestry, restoration interventions) and, in particular, climate change impacts in the agriculture and forestry sectors.

Limited knowledge of the integrated landscape approaches under climate change

39. The Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) submitted in 2015 highlights key adaptation options and improving the knowledge about resilience to climate change is one of them. Currently there is limited knowledge on the existing and future resilience mechanisms mainly of the priority sectors that are most vulnerable to climate change, namely the agricultural and forestry sectors. Both the NDC and the National Investment Framework for REDD+ recall the importance of preserving natural resources to reduce the vulnerability to climate change and increase the resilience of local communities and ecosystems. The promotion of agro-ecology is in line with the concept of Ecosystem-Based Adaptation and is one of the key measures proposed to be rolled out. Local communities already possess local knowledge and experience related to agro-ecology linked to limited agroforestry practices but, in general, the capacity both at national and local levels is limited in terms of resilient plants and seed production, promotion of innovative cropping systems alternative to the traditional

Complex tenure system and weak governance at the local level

40.   In the SW region, the majority of the 3.8 Mha of the forest massif has been earmarked as private concessions where forest companies have the necessary Exploitation Permits to extract the wood and to protected areas. The only official areas where local communities have access to practice agriculture and to harvest NTFPs and firewood are the 'Series Agricoles and Human Occupation' (SAOH) in the forestry concessions where land use rights are based on customary traditions. At the moment there is no consistent legal framework that obliges the establishment of any sort of management plans. Despite the provision in the Forest Code for the creation of public forest spaces with inclusive and integrated management plans in place and the possibility to establish community-based forests to ensure legal ownership and long-term vision, most of the artisanal forest exploitation (including collection of NWFPs) remains informal and limited data exists on these multiple value chains.

41.   The process to acquire legal ownership of land is complex and very costly, and the majority of land today belongs to the State. The law from 1964 (law 60.139 on acquisition and tenure code) does not recognize the traditional land rights of indigenous peoples and local communities and as such they don't have any long-term security of their lands and are not so keen to invest in long-term sustainable practices.

42.   A recent report[21] from the FAO and the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America (FILAC) clearly demonstrates lower deforestation rates in those territories where governments have formally recognized collective land rights and this also indicates an efficient and cost-effective way to reduce carbon emissions.

Weak intersectoral coordination

43.   Climate change is a cross-cutting issue and its impacts can be felt amongst different sectors. In order to develop adequate and proactive strategies to enhance the resilience of local communities and ecosystems, efficient coordination mechanisms/platforms need to be effectively promoted both at national and local levels. There is not a National Adaptation Plan to guide the different sectors and institutions towards an enhanced resilience, but in 2017 a Decree was published to set up a National Climate Coordination (MEDDEFCP, 2017) which supported the development of the National REDD+ Investment Framework 2020-2025 (CNI-REDD+). A national civil society platform, called Sustainable Management of the Natural Resources and the Environment (*Gestion Durable des Ressources Naturelles et de l'Environnement* - GDRNE), exists and participates in discussions on climate change, FLEGT, community forests, but this platform needs to be supported in terms of capacities and engagement.

44.   A National Committee on REDD+ was also proposed in this CNI-REDD+ to ensure coordination at the highest level across the different Ministries as well as sectors. At the local/ decentralized level, inter-prefectural committees (IPCs) were proposed to facilitate coordination across administrative boundaries which is crucial for the forest and climate change context. Only two of the three proposed IPCs have been currently established but are not fully operational yet.

2)   the baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects:

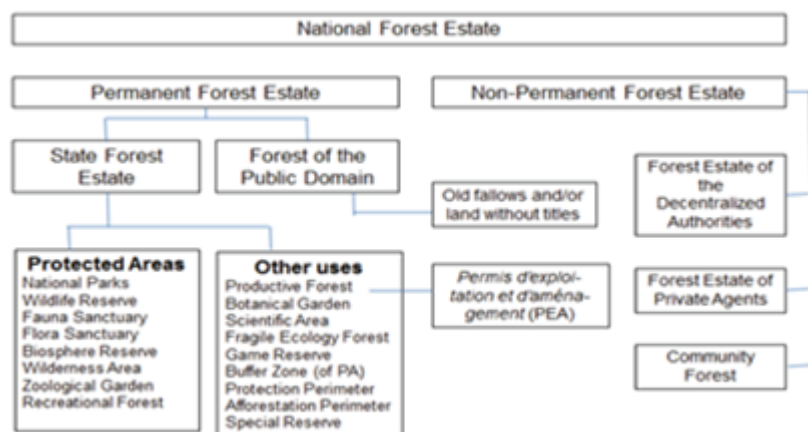**Institutional framework:**

45.   The management of forest resources, including oversight of commercial forestry operations and management of the national parks and the implementation of the Forest Policy is under the responsibility of the Ministry for Water, Forests, Hunting and Fishery (MEFCP) in collaboration with other Ministries, in particular the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD), the Ministry of Finances and Budget (MEF), and the Ministry of Planning, Economy and International Cooperation (MPECI). In 2012 the national Agency for Sustainable Management of the Forest Resources (AGDRF[22]) (Loi n° 12-006) was created under the MEFCP to: (1) provide guidance and support to the Ministry in terms of definition and implementation of its Forest Policy and (2) to guide and monitor the forest societies towards a sustainable and integrated management of the forest resources. The Agency is currently being supported by the Development Project of the SW Region (PDRSO) and is mainly active in the SW region.

Policy and legal framework

Forestry:

46.   It is worthwhile mentioning that the Government has adopted an overarching National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan (*Relèvement et consolidation de la paix en Centrafrique* - RCPCA) which consists of three pillars : (i) Critical reforms to promote peace, security, and reconciliation; (ii) Reforms to provide basic social services such as education, health, water, and sanitation; and (iii) Measures to facilitate rapid improvement of the business environment and to improve natural resources management, including of minerals and timber. In line with the national vision and the sectoral policies, targeted efforts are needed to ensure that the recovery interventions have not any negative impact on the environment.

47.   The main legal texts ruling the sector are the Law n°08-022 to enact the Forest Code (CAR Gov, 2008)[23] and its implementing Decrees n°09-117 (CAR Gov, 2009a)[24] and n°09-118[25]. The Forest Code sets specific measures for Permanent and Non-permanent Forest Estate, the first being subdivided into Private State Domain and Public State Domain, as can be seen in the figure below:

48.	After many years without a clearly defined forest policy, the Government of the Central African Republic has adopted a Forest Policy in 2019 for the period 2019-2035. The vision is to ensure that "*the forest ecosystems and the associated resources are co-managed for the goods and services necessary for the peace, for a sustainable development, for the conservation of the biological diversity and for the protection of the global environment*". The main objective of the Forest Policy is to restore the authority and the actions of the Government in the sector, and as such contributing to the peace outlined in the RCPCA. It aims to promote a sustainable development which will allow for the reduction of GHG emissions and the increased resilience to climate change.

49.	In the revised Forest Policy, the possibility to create community-managed forests has been included in the legislation, but the institutional arrangements for their implementation and management needs to be further defined, piloted and inserted in regulatory framework (CNI-REDD+, 2019). Currently a procedural manual exists to create these Community Forests with some gaps and amendments were proposed by the civil society and validated in 2019. A practical management manual is lacking and could provide support towards the putting in place such forests.

50.	The CAR forest sector is also guided and in line with the 2015-2025 COMIFAC Convergence Plan, which aims at promoting sustainable forest management and contributing to poverty alleviation. The CAR is also one of the few countries worldwide having signed a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union under the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) initiative, to guarantee the sustainability and legality of timber production and export.

Agriculture:

51.	There is no general Law for agriculture in the CAR. The 2011-2015 Strategy for Rural Development, Agriculture and Food Security (SDRASA) gives the key orientations for the sector. The National Program for Agricultural Investments in Food and Nutrition Security (*Programme National des Investissements Agricoles de la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle* – PNIASAN) guides the implementation of the SDRASA. The overall vision is "*to have a Centralafrican, productive, environment-friendly agriculture, building on local initiatives and the gender concept, creating wealth and necessary conditions for a dynamic private agriculture sector, for employment while contributing to the reduction in poverty and achieving food security for all*". After the political crisis, a roadmap for the agriculture sector was developed with the support of FAO, which is the most recent strategic document for the sector. Based on this Regional Agricultural Development Programmes (*Programmes Régionaux de Développement Agricole* – PRDA) were developed to guide the technical services of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MALR) in each of the six agro-ecological regions in terms of priorities. The focus for the Forest Massif regions in the SW and SE is on relaunching the coffee and cacao value chains and palm oil.

Environment:

52.	In 2007 an Environmental Code was adopted with the support of the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Social Economy (MEDDES). The Code is quite detailed, but it misses certain issues. In particular adaptation and mitigation to climate change are not explicitly described and measures regarding soil protection are not detailed.

Agreements, conventions, treaties and international commitments

53.   The Government has ratified numerous international Agreements / Treaties relevant to the protection of the environment, biodiversity and climate change. The table below gives the key ratified international treaties/commitments/conventions:

UN Convention to Combat Desertification	1996	- 2009-2019 National Action Plan for fight against Land Degradation (PAN-LCD) and Mid-term National Investment Plan on Sustainable Land Management (PNIMT) - Voluntary targets of LDN in 2018
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Kyoto Protocol	1995 2008	- two National Communications in 2003 and 2015 - National Adaptation Programme of Action in 2008 - Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and associated implementation guide in 2015 under the Paris Agreement
UN Convention on Biological Diversity	1995	- 2000-2015 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (SNPA-DB)
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)	1980	- draft National Plan for the Sustainable Management of Wildlife 2017-2019
REDD+ process and Forest Carbon Partnership Facility	2008	- REDD+ Plan Idea Note in 2013 - REDD+ National Investment Framework in 2019
Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union under the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) initiative	2011	- VPA signed in 2011 and ratified in 2012
Treaty on the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa	2005	- Adoption of COMIFAC Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management of the forest ecosystems with priority 4 focusing on climate change and desertification

		anagement of NTFPs in 2007
		-adoption of revised Convergence Plan 2015-2025 with 6 priority intervention areas: (i) Harmonising of forestry and environmental policies; (ii) Sustainable management and exploitation of forest resources; (iii) Conservation and sustainable utilisation of biological diversity; (iv) Fight against climate change impacts and desertification; (v) Socio-Economic development and multi-stakeholder engagement; (vi) Sustainable financing.
Bonn Challenge and AFR100	2016	- 3,5 Mha to be restored by 2030 generating both economic (1,099 million USD) and climate (0,33 GtCO2 sequestered) co-benefits.

Table 5. International conventions, treaties, engagements relevant to the LDCF project.

Projects and Programmes:

54.   The following project and programmes constitute the baseline for the project. Not all of these projects will contribute to the co-financing, but each project will provide lessons, tools and approaches to inform LDCF implementation. A number of projects are focusing on the agriculture sector, while others are focusing on the forestry sector. Only few projects are focusing on an integrated landscape approach to provide the necessary environmental and socio-economic benefits for the local communities.

55.

Baseline Project	Baseline Project Details	Complementarity as LDCF Baseline
Development of Agricultural Value Chains in the Savannas (PADECAS)	**Financier:** IFAD/ADfB **Amount:** $30,940,000 USD **Implementing agency:** **Duration:** 2018-2023 **Geographic coverage:** Prefectures of Lobaye, Ombella-Mpoko and Ouham-Pendé	The overall project objective is to contribute to the reduction of poverty and the sustainable improvement of food and nutrition security. The project is implemented through three components: development of agriculture and livestock value chains, institutional support to the agricultural sector and coordination of the project. **This project is considered as a co-financing project.**
Agriculture Recovery and Agrib	**Financier:** WB	Increase agriculture productivity of small scale

Project (PRADAC)	Amount: $25,000,000 USD Duration: 2019-2024 Implementing agency: MADR Geographic coverage: NE, NW, Central	nd medium agribusiness enterprises in the project area, and provide immediate and effective response in the event of an Eligible Crisis or Emergency. Especially component 1 on Development of Productive Infrastructure and Competencies for Agriculture and Rural Entrepreneurship and component 3 on Improvement of the quality of Agriculture Public Services are important and will benefit the LDCF project through enhanced capacity of MARD and technical agencies as well as learning from innovation platform to be established at the national and communal levels. This project is considered as a co-financing project.
Forest Development Fund (FDF)	Financier: Government Amount: $847,908 USD Duration: 2020-2021 Implementing agency: MWFHF Geographic coverage: national	Through this Fund, the Government aims to finance the programmes related to forestry, wildlife and tourism. The LDCF project will promote the mainstreaming of climate resilience and vulnerability in project and programme development/implementation. This project is considered as a co-financing project.
Regional Programme ECOFAC VI	Financier: EU Amount: $5,000,000 USD Implementing agency: MWFHF, African Parks Network Duration: 2018-2023 Geographic coverage: NE	In CAR, the project focuses on the sustainable management of protected areas and the buffer zones around them both in the north of CAR and in the zone around Chinko Natural Reserve. The project is following an integrated landscape approach to ensure that the socio-economic activities and local livelihoods continue to benefit from the ecologic and environmental services and goods from the protected areas. This project is considered as a co-financing project.
Community resilience in CAR	Financier: USAID Amount: $5,000,000 USD/year Implementing agency: Invisible Children Duration: 2017-2022 Geographic coverage: SE	Strengthen collaboration between communities and conservation actors in the region by building community awareness of regional conservation efforts and how they relate to human security. This project is considered as a co-financing project.
NDC Partnership Climate Action Enhancement Package (CAEP)	Financier: NDC Amount: $249,310 USD	The main objective is to enhance CAR's NDC, including by raising its ambition, as part of the Paris Agreement NDC update process. Numer

	Implementing agency: FAO, Duration: 2020-2021 Geographic coverage: National	ated to carbon sequestration potential of the ecosystems, potential for Forest and Landscape Restoration, review of NDC and vulnerability of sectors to climate change. The project also aims to support the development of a land-use plan using latest technologies available. The LDCF project will build upon the results and integrate the results in its project. **The project is not considered a co-financing source for the LDCF project.**
Support to enhance effectiveness of community-based forestry in CAR	Financier: FAO Amount: $80,000 USD Implementing agency: Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries (MWFHF) Duration: 2018-2020 Geographic coverage: National	This project aims to improve the effectiveness of community-based forestry. Through a thorough evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses, a national strategy and action plan is being developed to promote participatory forestry management. Information from this project and lessons learned will be used by the LDCF project to mainstream climate resilience in a participatory manner for improved management of the forests and surrounding landscapes. **The project is not considered a co-financing source for the LDCF project.**
Women, agriculture and climate change for peace in CAR	Financier: Fonds du PBF Amount: 1,500,000 USD Implementing agency: UN Women and FAO Duration: 2019-2021 Geographic coverage: Béréngo et Bambari	Outcome 1 : The main beneficiaries of the project (women and girls, displaced people, women cooperatives) have strengthened their social cohesion within the local communities and raised awareness on the need for a enabling environment for farmers (incl access to land) by 2021 Outcome 2 : By 2021, productivity and profitability for women and vulnerable girls have increased and become more resilient to climate change Outcome 3 : By 2021, the main beneficiaries have access to financial services and products adapted to their needs and to the platform Buy FromWomen. **This project is considered as a co-financing pr**

Natural Resources Governance Project (PGRN)	**Financier:** WB **Amount:** $10,000,000 USD **Implementing agency:** Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries (MWFHF), Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Mines and Geology (MMG) **Duration:** 2018-2023 **Geographic coverage:** SW	Component 1 - Institutional support: Strengthen the fiscal and governance framework of the forest sector US$ 1,35M Component 2 - Local development: Support the relaunch of a timber industry that generates socioeconomic co-benefits US$ 2,42M Component 3 - Technical assistance to improve mining sector policies and institutional governance US$ 1,81M Component 4 - Local development -Formalization of the Artisanal Mining Sector US$ 1,98M Component 5 - Project management, including contingencies and overheads US$ 2,23M **The project is not considered a co-financing source for the LDCF project.**
Forest and Landscape Restoration supporting Landscape and Livelihoods Resilience in the Central African Republic (CAR) under The Restoration Initiative	**Financier:** GEF **Amount:** $10,000,000 USD **Implementing agency:** Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries (MWFHF) **Duration:** 2018-2023 **Geographic coverage:** SW	The project is providing support to improve the institutional framework favorable to FLR and will provide valuable lessons learned in terms of both on the ground restoration experience as well as planning and M&E for FLR. **The project is not considered a co-financing source for the LDCF project.**
Scaling up ecological corridors and transboundary connectivity through integrated natural resources management in the Ngotto Forest landscape and Mbaéré-Bodingué National Park	**Financier:** GEF **Amount:** $7,606,881 USD **Implementing agency:** Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries (MWFHF) **Duration:** 2021-2025 **Geographic coverage:** SW	The project falls under the SLM Congo Basin Impact Programme and aims to improve governance and strengthen capacity in the forest and mining sectors in the CAR. Overall Goal of the GEF AF is to improve integrated natural resources management and sustainable rural livelihoods in the Ngotto Forest landscape and Mbaéré-Bodingué National Park. The project will provide valuable lessons on enhanced participatory management planning and best practices on sustainable alternative livelihoods creation will be shared. **The project is not considered a co-financing source for the LDCF project.**
Combating the Effects of Climate Change on Agricultural Production and Food Security in CAR	**Financier:** GEF **Amount:** $2,780,000 USD	The project aims to strengthening climate risk management capacity for enhanced food security and rural livelihoods in CAR

	т Agriculture, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development **Duration:** 2021-2026 (original 2010-2015) **Geographic coverage:** SW	eveloped and strengthened to plan for and manage climate change risks to the agricultural sector; ii) Adapted agro-pastoral options implemented in key vulnerable areas; ii) knowledge/ experiences shared, capitalized and disseminated. The project was supposed to be implemented from 2010-2015, but it was postponed due to security situation. Synergies will be sought on climate information, climate-resilient agricultural options and on policy interventions for climate change integration into local planning. **The project is not considered a co-financing source for the LDCF project.**
Support to the Parliamentary Alliance for Food and Nutrition Security in the framework of the Zero Hunger Challenge and the COVID-19 context	Financier: FAO Amount: 250,000 USD Implementing agency: FAO Duration: 2020-2022 Geographic coverage: National	Strenghtening the capacities of the member of parliament for improved lobbying and political commitment towards zero hunger and nutition for all. The project will build on the partnership and network to enhance capacity and influence towards promoting nature-based solutions as a suitable and cost-effective adaptation measure against climate change impact. This project is considered as a co-financing project.
Pilot project to introduce and disseminate improved cassava resistant to Cassava Mosaic and Brown Streak diseases	Financier: FAO Amount: 350,000 USD Implementing agency: FAO Duration: 2021-2022 Geographic coverage: National	Collect and promote the multiplication of improved varieties immune to the mentioned diseases. The project will build upon the knowledge and experience gained to promote relevant cultivars to smallholders in their fight against climate change impacts. This project is considered as a co-financing project.

Table 6. List of ongoing projects in relation to the LDCF project.

56.   Furthermore, the project will capture the lessons from and build on the work carried out under the recent finished AFD-funded Project for the Regional Development of the South-West (PDRSO) which supported 10 out of the 21 recognized forest Communes in the AR to prepare and implement Local Development Plans with a strong focus on basic infrastructure and collective services development. The proposed project will build on the capacity developed

and focus on the integration of climate change considerations and green investments as a means to adapt/mitigate climate change. The PDRSO also identified some pilot REDD+ activities near Bangui (including improved cropping practices and restoration of degraded forests) which can be used as good example for implementing the proposed project interventions.

57.   The ongoing GEF6 funded TRI project will provide valuable lessons on the planning and implementation of restoration interventions on the ground. A public-private partnership is also being piloted to provide impacts to farmers on the ground, while restoring degraded lands. Through TRI a virtual incubation programme is also spearheaded to support entrepreneurs to develop robust business plans for innovative nature-based business ideas and linked to restoration and/or sustainable management of the land. The proposed project will learn from the approach used and build on the knowledge and experience/expertise generated.

58.   The USAID funded Community Resilience in CAR project is supporting local communities to develop Community Action Plans through enhanced communication and radio network by identifying the unique challenges and strengths within each community with a strong focus on violence and conflict threats. This is done through the establishment of Peace Committees which in some cases also identify strategies to conserve environmental resources. The proposed project will build on this approach and focus on the identification of climate change hazards and impacts and propose adaptation measures.

3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project

59.   The proposed project will support removal of the barriers identified hindering the local communities and the decentralized authorities in promoting restoration and sustainable management of the natural resources and forest ecosystems as a cost-effective adaptation measure (CIFOR, 2015; FAO,2020) and adapting and diversifying the livelihoods through inclusive and sustainable territorial planning value chain/business development. The municipalities will be targeted to integrate climate change adaptation/landscape restoration into their local development plans and to promote inclusive natural resources and territorial planning across the sectors. Local communities such as forest and smallholder farm producers in the SW and the SE region will be directly targeted through the setting up of innovative management models such as community-managed forests which will enable them to ensure legal ownership and promote longer term investments in sustainable and climate-resilient value chain development (such as NTWFPs, artisanal logging, agroforestry, etc.).
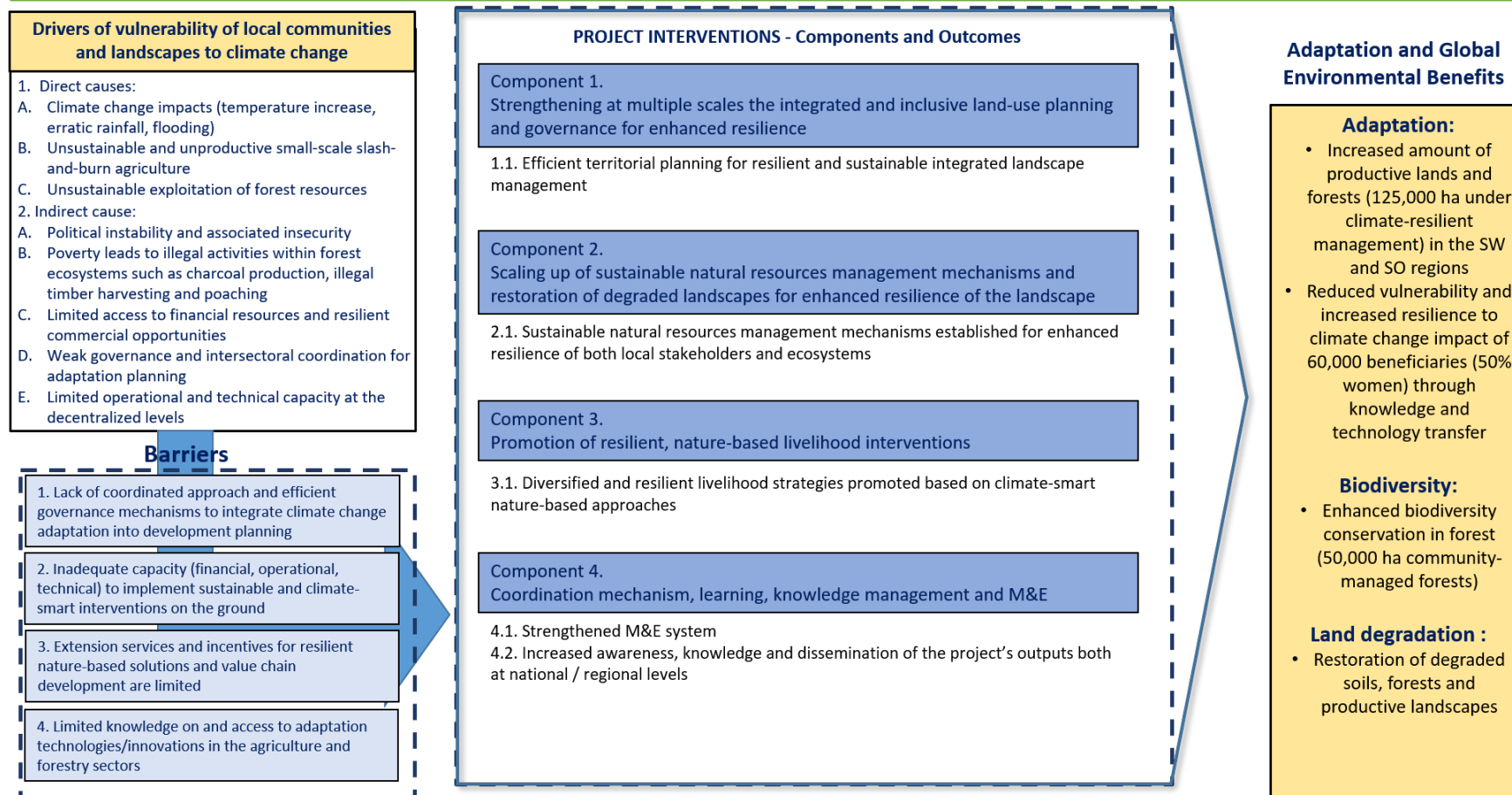
Strengthening the adaptive capacity of communities by up-scaling integrated landscape management and restoration in SW and SE region of Central African Republic

Vision: Enhanced resilience of productive and forest landscapes and rural communities through valuation of nature-based innovations and inclusive governance mechanisms

Drivers of vulnerability of local communities and landscapes to climate change

1. Direct causes:
A. Climate change impacts (temperature increase, erratic rainfall, flooding)
B. Unsustainable and unproductive small-scale slash-and-burn agriculture
C. Unsustainable exploitation of forest resources
2. Indirect cause:
A. Political instability and associated insecurity
B. Poverty leads to illegal activities within forest ecosystems such as charcoal production, illegal timber harvesting and poaching
C. Limited access to financial resources and resilient commercial opportunities
D. Weak governance and intersectoral coordination for adaptation planning
E. Limited operational and technical capacity at the decentralized levels

Barriers

1. Lack of coordinated approach and efficient governance mechanisms to integrate climate change adaptation into development planning

2. Inadequate capacity (financial, operational, technical) to implement sustainable and climate-smart interventions on the ground

3. Extension services and incentives for resilient nature-based solutions and value chain development are limited

4. Limited knowledge on and access to adaptation technologies/innovations in the agriculture and forestry sectors

PROJECT INTERVENTIONS - Components and Outcomes

Component 1.
Strengthening at multiple scales the integrated and inclusive land-use planning and governance for enhanced resilience

1.1. Efficient territorial planning for resilient and sustainable integrated landscape management

Component 2.
Scaling up of sustainable natural resources management mechanisms and restoration of degraded landscapes for enhanced resilience of the landscape

2.1. Sustainable natural resources management mechanisms established for enhanced resilience of both local stakeholders and ecosystems

Component 3.
Promotion of resilient, nature-based livelihood interventions

3.1. Diversified and resilient livelihood strategies promoted based on climate-smart nature-based approaches

Component 4.
Coordination mechanism, learning, knowledge management and M&E

4.1. Strengthened M&E system
4.2. Increased awareness, knowledge and dissemination of the project's outputs both at national / regional levels

Adaptation and Global Environmental Benefits

Adaptation:
• Increased amount of productive lands and forests (125,000 ha under climate-resilient management) in the SW and SO regions
• Reduced vulnerability and increased resilience to climate change impact of 60,000 beneficiaries (50% women) through knowledge and technology transfer

Biodiversity:
• Enhanced biodiversity conservation in forest (50,000 ha community-managed forests)

Land degradation :
• Restoration of degraded soils, forests and productive landscapes

Figure 15. Theory of Change for the proposed LDCF project

Component 1. Reducing climate change vulnerability through inclusive integrated land-use planning

60.   The component builds on the Government's Decentralization code to put in place National and Regional Land-use Plans (SNAT and SRAT) to promote an integrated landscape approach involving all the relevant sectors. It also builds on the work carried out by several projects (WB[26], AFD[27]) to strengthen the capacity of certain forest communes (mainly in the SW) to elaborate their Local Development Plans (LDP). Despite the fact that these plans are not specifically orientated towards green investments and focus mainly on the urgent needs (such as health and education), the basic capacity is there. With the support of the project, climate change adaptation concerns and measures (such as nature-based solutions and FLR) will be integrated into the LDPs. Landscape planning also goes beyond the borders of the communes, as such support will be provided at the sub-prefecture or prefecture level to develop macro-level spatial planning while ensuring the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders during the process.

Outcome 1.1. Efficient territorial planning for resilient and sustainable integrated landscape management

Output 1.1.1. Capacity building programs implemented for national and decentralized entities or jurisdictions (prefectures and communes) to integrate climate change adaptation into development planning processes and through a landscape restoration approach

Output 1.1.2. Community structures (Forest and Farm producer groups, Community Forest Associations, …) strengthened/established to promote climate change adaptation thanks to access to tools/data that adopt nature-based solutions/integrated landscape management approach (including FLR)

Output 1.1.3. Intersectoral and multi-stakeholder platforms set-up/strengthened at all levels (national, regional and local) to promote coordination amongst all stakeholders across the sectors for efficient effective climate change integration landscape planning and M&E of adaptation interventions

Component 2. Promotion of ecosystem-based approach for enhanced resilience of both the landscapes and the local communities

61.   This component builds on one of the Government's priorities to reduce poverty and fight against land degradation which is also reflected in the RCPCA: the promotion of self-organization and efficient governance structures at the local community level. The importance of an ecosystem-based approach to enhance the resilience and adaptive capacity of both the ecosystems and the associated livelihoods is well documented, especially in cases where local communities heavily rely on the natural resource base. The national and decentralized capacity (human, technical, operational and financial) of the forest services is insufficient to promote adaptive forest management in the public forest domains outside the forest concessions or protected areas. The WB-funded Mining and Forest Governance project is setting up pilot community forests near Berberati in the SW region, and this will provide valuable lessons learned for upscaling through this project. As such the project will pilot community-based forest management models outside the PEAs and sustainable management plans for the Series for Agriculture and Human Settlement (SAOH-Séries Agricoles et Occupation Humaine) in the PEAs integrating economic, environmental and social concerns. Through the development and implementation of adaptive forest management plans, local communities will have identified in a participatory manner appropriate measures to counteract climate change hazards, for example restoration with resilient local tree species, putting in place fire management and detection measures, training on pest and diseases identification/measures building as well on local indigenous knowledge.

Outcome 2.1. Forest ecosystems and productive landscapes are locally sustainably managed for enhanced resilience of local communities

Output 2.1.1. Sustainable management plans developed and implemented for at least 6 Series of Agriculture and Human Settlements (SAOHs) in SW and in buffer zone of Bangassou Forest

Output 2.1.2. Forests in at least 5 communes are sustainably managed and restored by local communities for enhanced ecological functionality and climate change resilience.

Component 3. Promotion of climate-smart nature-based livelihood interventions to decrease the risk of human/nature conflicts

62.   Most of the local communities in the targeted landscapes rely on unsustainable and low-productive farming systems (mainly cassava and maize) on limited parcels of land. This component will focus on the promoting of sustainable innovations in nature-based value chains, including sustainable management and efficient transformation of selected NTFPs on one side, and piloting (or improving) on the other side of climate-resilient agroforestry production systems, building on cash crop value chains such a coffee and cacao. The utilization of trees on farms, the usage of heat-tolerant crop varieties as well as improved soil conservation measures are some of the indicative adaptation measures that will be promoted by the project to counteract the anticipated climate impacts such as increase in temperature and rainfall variability. FAO has extensive experience in promoting the revolving funds to enhance the resilience of local communities and in combination with the promotion of Forest Farm Producer groups, Farmer Field Schools and Club Dimitra, local communities will have enhanced adaptive capacities to ensure sustainable livelihoods and income generation. With the support of the existing FAO project on restoration of degraded landscapes (The Restoration Initiative), the capacity of national research centers (ICRA and ISDR) is strengthened to implement applied research programmes in both agroecology and Forest and Landscape Restoration, and the project will build on the experience/expertise gained to promote scaling-up. The project would also promote the development of viable business plans following the innovative incubator approach currently used under TRI (Bridge for Billions, The Restoration Factory) and will build on ongoing work with agri-business incubator and micro-credit facilities in Bangui under the WB project.

Outcome 3.1. Diversified and resilient livelihood strategies promoted based on climate-smart nature-based approaches for increased community resilience

Output 3.1.1. Forest and farm producers groups/cooperatives established and empowered to ensure efficient and inclusive management and governance in climate change adaptation

Output 3.1.2. Sustainable NTFP/agriculture value chains identified and selected by forest and farm producer groups/cooperatives and bankable business plans developed for investments

Output 3.1.3. Capacities of research institutions and extension services strengthened to provide up-to-date adaptive support to forest and farm producer groups/cooperatives

Output 3.1.4. Climate-resilient agroforestry production systems identified by producer groups and developed with support of extension services to reduce climate change vulnerability

Component 4.Knowledge, learning and M&E

63.   This component will focus on the development of a robust and adaptive monitoring and evaluation system to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the project. The component will also capture various best practices and innovations from the project related to sustainable management of natural resources and development of climate-resilient production systems/businesses and disseminate them through publications, webinars and other communication tools to ensure widespread sharing of results and lessons learned. The organization of exchange visits between producer groups and the organization of technical field days will promote knowledge exchange and learning both at the local and national level.

Outcome 4.1. Lessons and knowledge from the project are captured through a robust M&E system

Output 4.1.1. A sound results-based project M&E framework has been developed

Output 4.1.2. Participatory monitoring approaches for adaptation interventions developed and implemented at decentralized level

Outcome 4.2. Enhanced knowledge and learning dissemination of the project's outputs both at national and/ regional levels through a robust knowledge development and dissemination strategy

Output 4.2.1. Exchange visits for key stakeholders (community groups, Forest Farm groups, cooperatives) organized to share best practices and increase knowledge on community-managed landscape planning and resilient nature-based value chain development

Output 4.2.2. Knowledge generated by the project is shared and communicated with broader stakeholder group in-country and with existing regional platforms (COMIFAC, Congo Basin countries) and initiatives to promote efficient exchange of knowledge and information

4) Alignment with GEF focal area and/or Impact Program strategies

64.	The proposed project adopts an integrated landscape approach to tackle climate change adaptation and vulnerability issues, with a focus on improved agricultural practices and the strengthening of selected nature-based value chains. It is fully aligned with the LDCF programming strategy[28], as described in the table below.

LDCF objectives	LDCF outputs	Proposed LDCF project outputs contributing to LDCF output
1. Reduce vulnerability and increase resilience through innovation and technology transfer for climate change adaptation	1.1.2: Livelihoods and sources of income of vulnerable populations diversified and strengthened	3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3., 3.1.4.
	1.1.4: Vulnerable ecosystems and natural resource assets strengthened in response to climate change impacts	2.1.1, 2.1.2., 2.1.3.
	1.2.1: Innovation incubators and/or accelerators introduced	3.1.2.
2. Mainstream climate change adaptation and resilience for systemic impact	2.1.1: Development/sector policies and plans integrate adaptation consideration	1.1.1, 1.1.2
	2.2.2: Adaptation and resilience relevant financing coordinated for synergistic programming including with the private sector	1.1.3
3. Foster enabling conditions for effective and integrated climate change adaptation	3.1.1: Systems and frameworks established for the continuous monitoring, reporting and review of adaptation	1.1.3, 4.1.1
	3.2.1 Capacities strengthened to identify, implement and/or monitor adaptation measures	4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3
	3.2.2: Increased awareness of climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation	4.1.3, 4.2.1

Table 7. Links between project and LDCF programming strategy.

65.	The proposed project highlights strong linkages with GEF-7 priorities, in particular in terms of land degradation and climate change focal areas. The project interventions intend to generate Global Environment Benefits through improved landscape planning and management at the localized level, promotion of adaptation technologies in nature-based value chains and enhanced knowledge generation on resilience. Biodiversity protection will also be strengthened through the establishment of improved community-based governance mechanisms set-up.

66.	Project interventions will also contribute to climate change mitigation as co-benefit from improved sustainable management of existing forests and

67.   The Congo Basin Sustainable Land Management Impact Programme and its Global Platform will provide an important opportunity for the project to not only share best practices on landscape planning and implementation of adaptation measures linked to sustainable forest-related value chains and food production systems, it will also provide an opportunity to learn from best practices/approached used in other countries within the region.

5) Incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the LDCF, and co-financing

Additional cost reasoning

Without LDCF

68.   Without the proposed interventions, the Central African Republic and the local communities in particular will continue to practice slash-and-burn agricultural practices and will suffer from food insecurity due to the anticipated gradual increase of climate change impacts. Climate change will continuously lead to an increase in forest degradation due to conversion into agriculture or unsustainable management of the ecosystem. There will be an increased conflict between local communities and private forest companies, due to limited space available for them to be able to sustainable use their forests and the products and services they provide. Local communities will continuously rely on unsustainable practices, such as slash-and-burn, to provide their daily livelihoods and they will become more and more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Through the prolonged decentralization process, local communes will receive support towards their own local development planning. But they will lack the necessary tools/knowledge to efficiently plan adaptation nature-based solution to really address climate change impacts and follow an integrated landscape planning approach. The NTFPs will be harvested and exploited by local communities without a long-term vision and sustainable business approach. Local communities will also not benefit fully from the best available science and research available to promote resilient crops/seeds/varieties which will be able to grow under the longer-term temperature and rainfall projections.

With LDCF

69.   With the proposed interventions, the Central African Republic will strengthen the adaptive capacity of local communities to improve local governance of the natural resource base, as most of their livelihoods depends on the sustainable management and provision of ecosystem services and goods. The project will also promote climate-smart agricultural practices (such as agro-forestry, and sustainable land management) in the food production systems, and enhance the capacity of local stakeholders to plan, implement and monitor forest and landscape restoration of degraded areas to minimize impact of climate change. Research organizations will provide support to local communities to secure their livelihoods under a changing climate.

70.   Through the project national and local decision-makers will be trained and have access to the necessary tools and technologies to integrate climate change considerations into their development planning. Through the identification and development of climate-resilient micro-enterprises, the local stakeholders will also increase their overall resilience.

6) Adaptation benefits

71.   The overall aim of the project falls within the overarching goal of the GEF Programming strategy [29] on adaptation to climate change for the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) for the period of 2018-2022. The project in particular will contribute to the first two objectives:

Objective 1: Reduce Vulnerability and Increase Resilience through Innovation and Technology Transfer for Climate Change Adaptation

Objective 2: Mainstream Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience for Systemic Impact

72.   At landscape level, adaptation and resilience building will be integrated into decentralized (or local) development planning through the strengthening of capacities of communes and the provision of tools/knowledge and improved decision making on land-use planning both at communal as at higher level (inter-prefectoral level). At the community level, the project will enhance the adaptive capacity of local people (75,000 people) through diversification of climate-resilient livelihood strategies and improved governance mechanisms to reduce the vulnerability of the ecosystems themselves and provide long-term vision for communities to manage their natural resources sustainably. The transfer of innovative technologies such as improved charcoal production, efficient cook stoves and sustainable agro-ecological approaches will form a key aspect of the project intervention logic, as they help sustain resilient and productive forest ecosystems and therefore resilient and productive communities.

73.   Estimates for the direct benefits are rooted in a challenging context, one of prolonged crisis and conflict. Population density is relatively low in CAR and transaction costs are extremely high. On the WBG's Logistics Performance Index, CAR ranks 150 out of 167 countries. Road infrastructure is extremely poor, putting much of the country beyond the reach of the road network and limiting access to services and markets. CAR's electricity access rate of 8 percent is among the lowest in SSA, with Bangui at 35 percent and the rest of the country at 2 percent. CAR has one of the lowest levels of financial inclusion in the region: only 13.7 percent of adults have access to a bank account. Microfinance accounts for only one percent of total credit facilities and serves only 0.5 percent of the population. It is envisaged to have 125,000 ha under resilient management (50,000 ha of forests and 75,000 ha of productive land).

7) Innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up

Innovation

74.   Through the promotion and implementation of targeted adaptive measures such as adoption of climate-resilient seeds, soil and water conservation practices and strengthened collaboration with research organizations, local communities will be able to ensure productivity in the long-term.

75.   The NDC highlights the need for capacity development programme to be adopted at various levels, both institutional and local as well as technology transfer in the following targeted sectors linked to the project intervention areas:

Sector	Target technologies
Agriculture and animal husbandry	- Soil analysis - Production, inspection and certification of high-quality seeds - Integrated management of plant diseases - Monitoring prevention and control of animal diseases of a trans-national character impacting human health and ecosystems - Agroecology
Land Use Change and Forestry	- Advanced conversion of wood - Land and forestry monitoring systems
System observatory	- Climatological and meteorological observation system - Research

76.   Through the participatory identification of climate-resilient NTFPs, the livelihoods of local stakeholders can be improved and the resilience strengthened. Through the promotion of improved and inclusive technology transfer /innovations, not only the local people themselves will benefit, but also the forest ecosystems through reduced pressure. The CNI-REDD+ has highlighted key gaps in terms of sustainable management of the SAOH, and on the non-existence of legal community-based forests. This project will spearhead both and provide the tools and knowledge to the decentralized services to support local communities in this effort and improve longer-term land-use planning in the targeted project areas and as such reduce its vulnerability to climate change.

77.   Communes/prefectures will also be supported and receive training on utilizing the latest technologies/tools to plan and monitor the adaptation measures. Tools such as Collect Earth and SEPAL will assist the decentralized institutions to ensure effective implementation and evaluation of the project interventions. It will also assist them in improved M&E linked to national commitments made (SDG, Bonn Challenge).

78.   Under the third component promising business ideas linked to sustainable value chain development and/or restoration of degraded lands will be supported and receive training to develop their ideas into viable business plans to enable potential private sector investment or get access to micro-credit or loans. Small grant would be provided to promising ideas in order to facilitate testing the business ideas in line with what the WB project is implementing.

Sustainability

79.   The project aims to promote sustainable diversification of the incomes of the most vulnerable communities to increase their overall resilience to climate change, while promoting sustainable forest management interventions. Through the inclusive and participatory approach to identify value chains and NTFPs, and through the establishment of legal community-based forests, communities will have full ownership of the project interventions, and as such ensure a high degree of sustainability in the long term. The project will also enhance the capacity of decentralized committees to integrate climate change adaptation and restoration into the development planning process and this will include identifying of sustainable financing mechanisms. Also with respect to project sustainability, resilience in the project intervention logic is interpreted in a rather comprehensive fashion, and therefore includes building less vulnerable communities to pandemics, putting in place the infrastructure to build back better, such as short value chains, livelihood diversification, extension services that easily and promptly address health related concerns so they do not become social, economic and environmental crises, etc. The project intervention logic has the potential to addresses critical issues around human-wildlife interaction (including increased exposure to viruses), and the landscape management plans will integrate this concern. The project approaches do offer opportunities to reduce future risk of zoonotic and other diseases to spill over to the human world, from the natural world, as it addresses the causes of forest ecosystem degradation, halts the degradation and restores the ecosystems. The causal links between protected and restored natural systems and their ecological functionality have been documented (https://www.cifor.org/event/strengthening-the-connection-between-forests-biodiversity-and-health-in-the-one-health-approach/, https://forestsnews.cifor.org/65326/terrain-through-the-lens-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-blueprint-for-a-healthy-planet?fnl=en), and the landscape management and governance work of the project are an opportunity to fully address concerns with forest boundaries, altered habitats, increasing pressure on ecosystems.

Potential for scaling up

80.   The project will set the stage for the inclusive development of nature-based small-scale enterprises and value chain development and pilot the development of community forests, as well as the development of sustainable management plans for the SAOHs. The project will build on the experience in country on running Farmer Field and life schools to not only collect but also share best practices and lessons learned at the community level. Through the training of FFS trainers and facilitators from the respective Ministries and project partners, it is anticipated that these will disseminate and train beyond the project scope. Club Dimitra will also be promoted to ensure widescale dissemination of best practices through means of audio-visual technologies. The lessons learned from the development of resilient micro-enterprises will be shared with similar regions to promote interest of possible micro-entrepreneurs.

81.	The project will continuously promote active knowledge exchange with ongoing projects both within the CAR as in neighboring countries to ensure continuous learning and dissemination of knowledge. Existing regional platforms, such as COMIFAC/OFAC and Platforms under the different GEF Ips (CBSL IP, FOLUR IP) also will provide opportunity for learning and sharing of best practices. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration also provides an opportunity to share knowledge and experience from the project.

82.	The country has extensive forest ecosystems and the lessons learned from the process towards establishment of community-managed forests will provide good lessons learned to showcase to other communities for potential upscaling.

83.	At FAO level, several platforms and online Communities of Practice (CoP) exist to which this project can contribute in terms of knowledge and experience: the Knowledge Sharing Platform on Resilience (KORE), the CoP on Forest and Landscape Restoration, the CoP on Family Farming and Agroecology.

84.	During the PPG a full knowledge sharing action plan and strategy will be developed to ensure efficient dissemination and learning within the country as well as with other countries.

[1] CAR Gvt, 2016c. Plan national de relèvement et de consolidation de la paix en RCA. Bangui – Gvt de RCA, 2016. 108p

[2] http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/emergencies/docs/IPC_CAR_AcuteFoodInsec_2020MayAug_Report_FRANCAIS-FINAL%20(002).pdf

[3] 1,5 Billion FCFA between 2012 and 2017 for the 23 forest Communes in SW region of CAR (PDRSO, 2017)

[4] KONZI-SARAMBO, B., F., DIMANCHE, L., et LAMBA, B., 2012. *Stratégie nationale et plan d'actions des PFNL en RCA – GCP/RAF/441/GER – Renforcement de la sécurité alimentaire en Afrique centrale à travers la gestion durable des PFNL*. Bangui – MEFCP, juillet 2012. 43p

[5] MDRA, 2013. *Programme national des investissements agricoles de la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle 2014-2018*. Bangui – MDRA, octobre 2013. 157p

[6] MOINECOURT, H., 2009. *Projet de plantations d'arbres hôtes de chenilles comestibles dans les villages limitrophes au dispositif de recherche sylvicole de M'Baïki*. Bangui – MEFCP, septembre 2009. 17p

[7] The TRI project team has undertaken a literature review on caterpillar utilization within the sub-region (mainly DRC) and in total 30 caterpillar species and 70 host plants have been identified for potential utilization.

[8] CAR Gvt, 2015a. *Contribution prévue déterminée au niveau national*. Bangui – Gvt de RCA, septembre 2015. 15p

[9] Bunn, C., Läderach, P., Ovalle Rivera, O. et al. A bitter cup: climate change profile of global production of Arabica and Robusta coffee. Climatic Change 129, 89–101 (2015). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-014-1306-x

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[11] https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/verisk%20index.pdf

[12] https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/rankings/ The ND-GAIN Country Index illustrates a country's vulnerability to climate change, its resilience and its readiness to improve resilience.

[13] Sonwa et al., Sustainability 2020,12, 2936 ; doi:10.3390/su12072936

[14] World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal –CAR Country Page https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/central-african-republic/climate-data-projections

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[21] FAO and FILAC. 2021. Forest Governance by Indigenous and Tribal People. An Opportunity for Climate Action in Latin America and the Caribbean. Santiago. FAO and FILAC. 2021. Forest Governance by Indigenous and Tribal People. An Opportunity for Climate Action in Latin America and the Caribbean. Santiago.

[22] Currently the AGDRF has been disbanded by decree, due to budgetary concerns and all support missions have been suspended.

[23] CAR Gvt, 2008. Loi n°08-022 portant Code forestier de la RCA. Bangui – Gvt de RCA, octobre 2008. 39p

[24] CAR Gvt, 2009a. Décret n°09-117 fixant les modalités d'application de la Loi n°08-022 portant Code forestier de la RCA. Bangui – Gvt de RCA, avril 2009. 8p

[25] CAR Gvt, 2009b. Décret n°09-118 fixant les modalités d'attribution des permis d'exploitation et d'aménagement. Bangui – Gvt de RCA, avril 2009. 12p

[26] Mining and Forest Governance project, support to 11 forest Communes of the SW in preparing their Local Development Plans

[27] AFD, 2012. Présentation du Projet de développement régional dans le Sud-Ouest de la RCA (PDRSO) - Comité des Etats étrangers du 7 novembre 2012. Paris – AFD, Novembre 2012. 31p

[28] Source : GEF. 2018. Updated results architecture for adaptation to climate change under the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund (2018-2022).
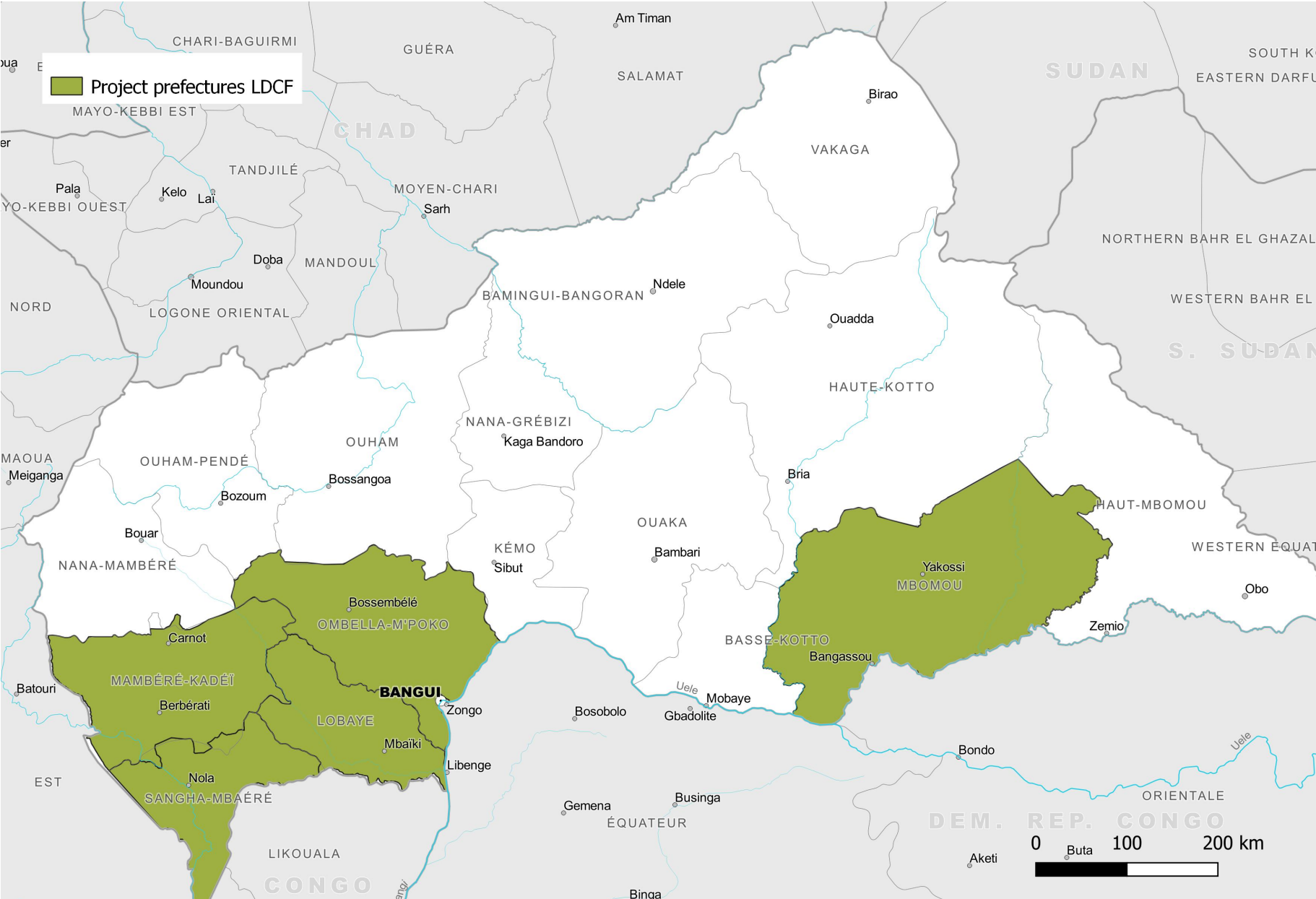
[29] https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/EN_GEF.LDCF_.SCCF_.24.03_Programming_Strategy_and_Operational_Policy_2.pd
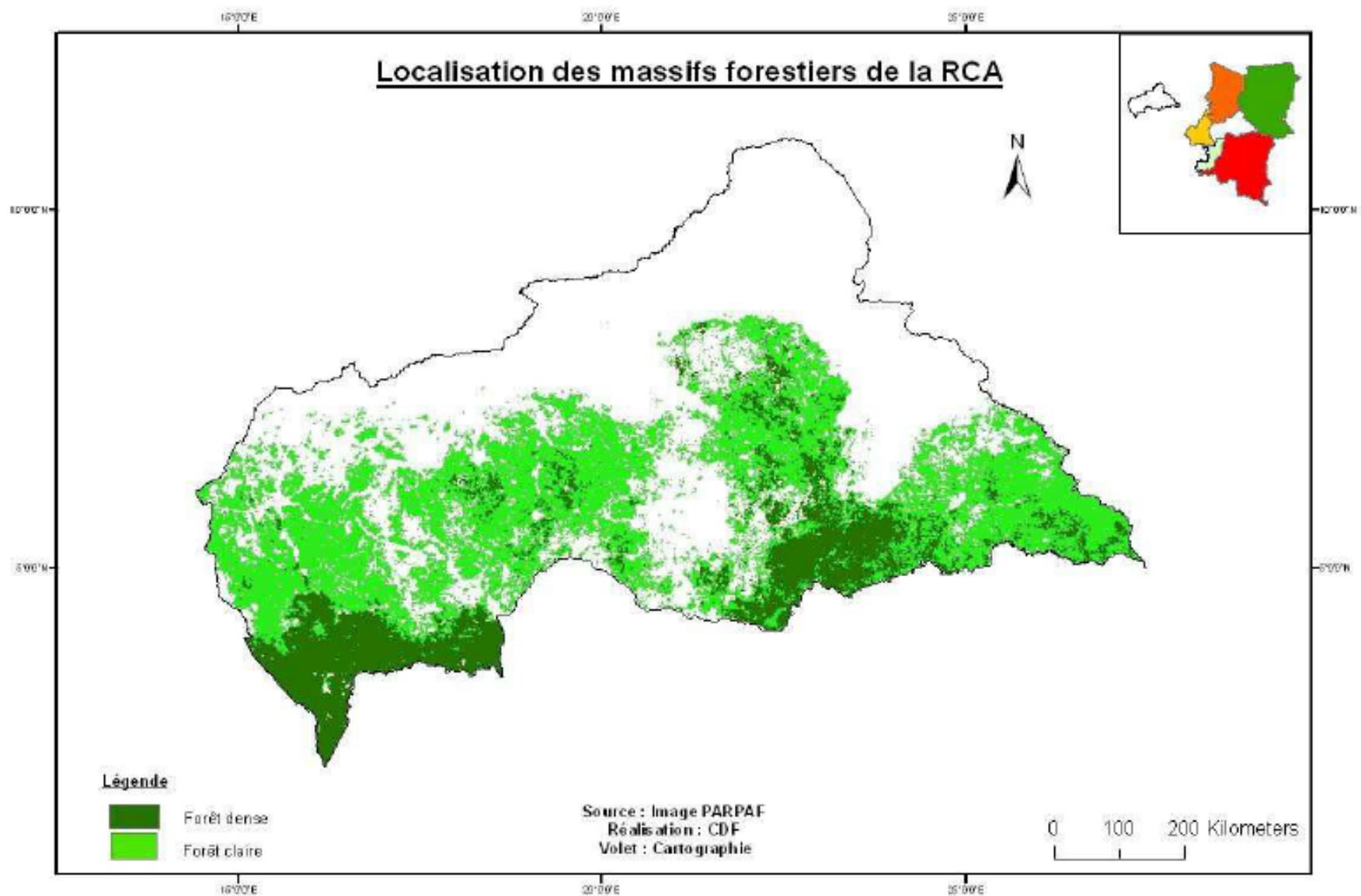
1b. Project Map and Coordinates

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

85. The project will be implemented in the south-west massif and the Bangassou massif in the east covering over 3.8+1.6 Mha in the prefectures of Ombella Mpoko, Lobaye, Sangha Mabéré, Mambéré Kadéi and Mbomou.

Figure 1 : Carte forestière de la RCA (Source: CDF, 2010) et les Aires Protégées de la RCA

igure 15. Map of project prefectures and associated forests in the CAR (CDF, 2010)

2. Stakeholders
Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

Civil Society Organizations Yes

Private Sector Entities

If none of the above, please explain why:

In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement

86.   On the 30th of January 2020, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Water and Forest, Hunting and Fisheries have organized with the support of FAO a first brainstorming meeting in Bangui with a wide range of stakeholders to launch the preparation of project design. An interdisciplinary working group (in annex list of experts) was established with stakeholders from the Government, civil society, private sector and development partners to support this process and a consultation was organized on 18, 20 and 26 of February 2020. A scoping mission was then organized from 2-7 March 2020 by a team of experts from the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) to support developing the zero draft document. Due to COVID-19 and security considerations, no field missions could be organized, and as such consultations with local communties will be organized during PPG phase (pending results of local elections and security status). In March 2021 bilateral consultations were organized to consult with wide range of stakeholders to validate the project approach and content.

87.   During PPG, further consultations will be organized with the private forest companies as they will not only be an important partner in terms of cofinancing, but they will also be able to provide technical support to local communities in their respective concessions. Currently the ongoing GEF6 TRI project is piloting a partnership with a private forest company to support local communities in restoring degraded landscapes and promoting agroforestry and this will be a valuable case study for the project. At PIF stage the below stakeholders have been identified and will be fully consulted during PPG:

Stakeholders	Roles
Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MESD)	MESD is the main implementing entity of the project in line with it mandate to monitor the environmental and social impacts of economic activities in CAR. During PPG they will chair the Project Steering Committee and coordinate consultations with Ministries, decentralized institutions and other stakeholders. The National Coordination on climate will lead the consultations to integrate climate change adaptation into local development planning and support the identification of best practices and capacity development need

Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries	MWFHF and its decentralized services will play a key role in supporting the development of community-managed forests and during the PPG will assist in identifying interventions linked to the establishment of community forests and the development of sustainable management plans.
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)	MARD and its decentralized services will provide support towards the implementation of revenue generating activities (such as climate-resilient agriculture, NTFPs value chains, agribusinesses) and also benefit from capacity building activities implemented by the project.
Ministry of the Promotion of Women, Family and Child Protection (Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme, de la Famille et de la Protection de l'Enfant - MPFFPE)	The Ministry's mandate is to coordinate policies and programs geared towards promoting gender equality and equity. It is responsible for improving the physical, mental and social well-being of children, women, men, the elderly and people with disabilities. The Ministry co-leads the PSC of the FAO-UN Woman project on women, agriculture and climate change for peace project. At the regional level the Regional Directors of Social Affairs and the Chiefs of the social sector also would play an important role in ensuring gender-responsive implementation on the ground. **The Ministry will be consulted with during PPG phase, and its data and information will be solicited in order to draw up the gender analysis and gender action plan.**
Women associations	The Organisation of Central-African Women (Organization des Femmes Centrafricaines OFCA) and the National Council of Girls (Conseil National de la Filles CNJ) group all organizations working on gender equality and women empowerment together at the national level. A number of civil society organisations the project will work with during PPG and beyond as they contribute to the promotion of entrepreneurship of women, include the Association des Femmes d'Affaires de Centrafrique (AFAC) and the Association des Femmes pour la Promotion de l'Entrepreneuriat (AFPE). These CSOs have set up a micro-finance structures created by women for women. **These women associations/NGOs/CSOs will be consulted with during the PPG to collect data and information for the gender analysis, but they will also be engaged in order to facilitate exchange with women beneficiaries (organization of consultation groups with women only, roll-out of household surveys,…) in order to develop the Gender Action Plan. The presence on the ground, the familiarity with the local customs and languages of these associations, facilitate the engagement of wo**

	puters, etc. and therefore possibly excluded from virtual consultations or surveys.
Prefectures and communes	Prefectures and communes are the official representatives of the State in the project areas and during the PPG the capacity needs and priorities will be identified to ensure that adaptation and restoration interventions will be integrated in the development planning processes. The Local Development Committees will be entry-point for the consultations.
Research Institutions (ICRA, ISDR, ACDA,...)	ICRA and ISDR are receiving support through the TRI project and during PPG the existing capacity/expertise will be analysed to support promotion of adaptation measures for the local communities (both in agriculture as agroforestry).
Major national CSOs	During the PPG, best practices on adaptation/ integrated planning/ community forestry will be identified for upscaling and capacity development needs assessment will be carried out.
Local forest-dependent communities	Direct beneficiaries of project activities. During PPG local communities will be consulted to identify project sites and beneficiaries and tentative sustainable livelihood options. Best practices/case studies on micro-enterprises will also be identified/analysed. FPIC will also be followed to ensure local ownership of all people (incl. indigenous peoples).
Private sector	Forest concessionaries are the main private operators in the SW region and their Forest Management Plans (FMS) of the PEAs form part of the land-use planning in the project area. During the PPG, they will be consulted to identify suitable project sites and partnerships (both cofinancing as well a technical support). Best practices on micro-enterprise development will also be identified and analysed during PPG.

88.   During PPG, particular attention will be given to the engagement of women in project decision-making, soliciting their views, suggested interventions, interest, and active engagement. With the support of a gender specialist mobilizing partners in the country (see table above), beneficiary women will be consulted and engaged through women-only consultation groups (face-to-face consultations are mandated, as women too often have no smartphones, PCs that allow them to engage directly in virtual consultations), individual interviews (household surveys), involvement in the PPG technical advisory group, and more. The approach to ensure gender equality and women empowerment is embedded in the project design, is a step-wise approach, involving: 1) raising gender awareness in the PPG team (including project partners); 2) identifying project entry points for gender equality and women empowerment; 3) collecting data; and 4) developing the gender analysis and gender action plan (and possibly the gender TOC). All steps involve a great number of actors, from women-specific actors such as the Ministry of the Promotion of Women, Family and Child Protection and a number of NGOs/CSOs (see table above), but also partners that do not have a gender specific mandate/mission.

3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis).

88. Despite the establishment of an action plan in 2007 to implement the National policy on Equality and Equity in the CAR, the inequality index for gender was 0.673 in 2017, which makes CAR the 5th lowest ranked country in terms of equalities between men and women. Only 8,6% of parliamentarians are women, and only 13.2% of women graduate in secondary school (against 30.8% for men) (UNDP, 2018).

89. Regarding land, property and other non-land assets, the law provides married/unmarried women with the same rights as married/unmarried men to own, use, make decisions and use as collateral (Family Code, art. 383; Constitution, art. 18). Regarding land management, reports show that few land titles are issued, presumably because of poor land management regulations and costly procedures to obtain land titles (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2014). According to customary law, divorced, single or widowed women cannot be considered landowners but land users, and can be allocated land for residential or agriculture purposes (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015). Traditional and customary marriages as well as cohabitation are neither regulated nor recognized by law. This factor limits women's ability to claim property or possessions acquired during the marriage which is generally considered to be the husband's (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2014). Husbands possess rights over their wives' property or economic activities, according to customary law (Klugman and Twigg, 2015). The recent conflict has seen many pillages and destruction of goods, lands and properties (including pillaging of housing and fields, burning of houses, partial or complete destruction of housing and dilapidated housing) by several armed groups, forcing many to flee (United Nations General Assembly, 2016)

90. According to the PNIASA (MDRA, 2013), women make up 50.2% of the total population and 53.7% of the workforce. They provide more than 74% of the labour force directly associated with agricultural production, including production, processing, and marketing. In particular, their efforts represent 90% of crop weeding, 80% of field-village transport, 60% of harvest work, and 90% of processing. They also participate in many off-farm activities: rodent hunting, small-scale fishing, picking of mushroom, caterpillars and termites for self-consumption, petty trade, etc.

91. The analysis of human development performance reveals strong gender differences. Women are more affected by poverty than men: in rural areas, 81% of women against 69% of men are affected by poverty. Although women have a higher average life expectancy than men, women are at greater risk of dying between the ages of 15 and 49 because of maternal mortality due to complications of childbirth and early marriages.

92. At the community level, the patriarchal nature of the Central African society and the local culture are dictating the determining factors towards gender inequality and inequity. Traditionally the men inherit the authority over the household. Those different perceptions of man and women roles are the basis of the division of tasks and unequal division of power. Women face serious issues to access production related services, such as access to production resources, access to finance to invest, participation in the value chain and as such they cannot contribute strongly to the economy. These inequalities are exacerbated by climate change.

93. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW (2014) reports the widespread incidence of gender-based violence related to conflict, including murders, enforced disappearances, cases of torture and acts of rape, sexual slavery and ill-treatment. The CEDAW Committee (2014) additionally notes the lack of services (medical, legal and psycho-social) available to women, the stigmatization of victims of rape, impunity for perpetrators and the collapse of the health and judicial system at large, preventing women victims of violence from getting necessary aid and justice.

94. The Risk and Resilience Assessment (RRA) carried out in 2018, highlighted that the cycles of violence are deeply rooted in drivers of fragility. Those drivers include: i) a lack of social cohesion at every level of society; (ii0 concentration of political power in the hands of a small elite, (iii0 social and regional

resources; and (v) a lasting state of insecurity.

95.   The CAR was the first African country to ratify the Convention 169 in 2010. In terms of indigenous peoples' rights over natural resources, it is outlined that the Article 14 of the Constitution, as well as the Articles 1 and 8 of the Forest Code, recognize their rights over natural resources. In particular, the Article 14 of the Decree n°09-021 authorizes their traditional access to NTFPs and wood products in the protected areas. However these rights are only for usage, and do not provide any legal safeguards in terms of tenure.

96.   Given the above gender context, the project will take a gender-responsive approach at all levels of the project components. The aim is to promote gender equity and equality in access to and control of natural resources, innovative technologies, services, decision-making and land-use planning process, products and income from forest and productive landscapes in order to enhance the resilience of rural households, in particular women and girls.

97.   During the PPG phase, it will be important to fully understand the roles of the various stakeholders in the sector and to identify value chains and jointly design interventions based on their needs, knowledge and capacities. A gender specialist will be recruited to support the design process throughout the PPG phase, and conduct a fully-fledged gender assessment, following the FAO-GEF step-wise guidelines which aim at delivering gender-transformative project interventions. This work will result in a gender strategy and action plan for the project, with dedicated gender outputs, indicators and targets, the promotion of gender-transformative tools and approaches (such as the embedded Dimitra Clubs and Farmer Field Schools), and more.

Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment? Yes

closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources; Yes

improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or Yes

generating socio-economic benefits or services for women. Yes

Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

4. Private sector engagement

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

Please briefly explain the rationale behind your answer.

98.   The proposed project is linked to the priorities identified in the LDCF strategy for private sector engagement, as the project will target some interventions at nature-based small-scale enterprises level through capacity development.

99.   The formal private sector, mainly concentrated in Bangui, is small and consists mostly of family-owned businesses. Most of the economic activity is informal, conducted by MSMEs, representing 40-60 percent of GDP. The CAR is also among the most challenging places to business in Africa: it ranks 184th out of 190 countries in the WB 2020 Doing Business report.

100.   The identification of exact SAOHs in the PEA within the south-west region will depend on the interest and commitment of private forest companies to invest in supporting local communities to develop sustainable livelihoods in the concession areas. As such these partnerships and co-financing potential will be identified during PPG.

101.   During the PPG key private companies will be also identified to provide training, tools on specific interventions based on the commodities identified. The project will also benefit from potential regional and global networks linked to coffee and cacao, as these were identified as potential agro-forestry systems in the project area and are in line with the government priorities to revitalize these value chains. The Farm and Forest Producer Organizations will also work with private sector stakeholders along the value chains to ensuring business opportunities, value addition and job creation. The project will also learn and link up with the Word Bank funded incubator platform as part of the PRADAC programme to create opportunities and attract potential investments for agri-businesses.

5. Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the Project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the Project design (table format acceptable)

102.   A full risk assessment will be carried out during PPG phase, but the table below highlights some of the potential risks.

Risk	Level	Mitigation measures
Return to widespread conflict and violence	Medium	The project will promote as much as possible collaboration with local NGOs and institutions for on the ground implementation to mitigate potential risk of not being able to execute due to UN rules and regulations. Local NGOs and CSOs are generally less impacted by conflict with respect to national or international development partners. To this end, the project focuses on strengthening the capacities to adapt to climate change of local community groups, as agents of change. Furthermore, the project interventions aim to support social cohesion through the implementation of FFS, Club Dimitra to promote not only good agricultural practices but also good governance.
Political instability	High	The country will go through protracted period of elections in 2021 and 2022, which are likely to be contested. This could have an influence on project support at the ground level as extension officers would be limited to the capital. The project would promote the utilization of local-based NGOs/partners as much as possible to support project implementations
Institutional capacity for implementation	Medium	In the CNI-REDD+, it is highlighted that the capacity of the different ministries and institutions to support beneficiaries on the ground is very limited. As such the project will support capacity strengthening at the decentralized level.
Lack of interest at prefectural/communal levels	Low	The project will ensure early involvement of selected communes/prefectures in the design process to get full ownership of planned interventions in line with local needs and priorities.
Lack of interest of local communities to engage in climate-resilient agriculture/NTFP value chain	Low	Local communities will be engaged during the PPG to ensure they have full ownership of the planned project interventions and the revenue generating activities will be selected following a participatory approach

Limited capacity/knowledge on adaptation measures	Low	Research organizations will be supported to ensure latest science is available to support project interventions, and knowledge/best practices will also be shared with and from other projects (through CBSL IP for example)
Local, regional and/or global measures to contain impacts from pandemics (such as Covid-19) and their repercussions on availability of technical expertise, engage stakeholders, and secure financing	Medium	During PPG, the project will follow all sanitary measures to interact with stakeholders and the project itself will promote sustainable management of forest ecosystems and promote income generating activities based on sustainable utilization of natural resources and as such build back better.

To overcome concerns in mobilizing the technical expertise to support project design and implementation, the project will work as much as possible with locally rooted (CSOs, NGOs, government institutes, extension services, …) organizations and realities in order to minimize the impacts of limitations on mobility at the national and international level. Technological alternatives to face-to-face consultations will be deployed, securing proper participation and engagement of all relevant stakeholder groups, including women and youth.

As government priorities potentially shift to address crises (health or other), the project will deliver evidence and increase its sensitization and awareness raising and capacity development efforts in order to advocate for continued support to green and resilient recovery.

Financial resources from co-financiers will be reassessed during PPG, but investments have been engaged before the pandemic, and remain relevant in the current context. |
| Climate-induced hazards | High | The project aims to enhance the resilience of local communities and as such will analyze climate risks with local communities and experts to ensure minimizing future climate risks. For example heat-tolerant and resilient seeds/crops would be promoted as well as diversification of livelihoods. At the landscape level, the integrated planning approach used would identify the necessary mitigation actions (restoration, reforestation, flood management). Synergies will be sought with other LDCF project focusing on climate information data and services. |

103.   The project has undertaken a rapid climate risk screening following FAO's internal guidance and the climate risks was categorized as high, mainly due to higl level of vulnerability and low level of adaptive capacity. The following recommendations were provided to integrate during the project design phase:

Component1.

Robust, comprehensive and updated climate impact assessments of the targeted landscapes and communities need to be undertaken to ensure territorial and management planning is appropriately informed by accurate climate information and data. It is also recommended to include participants from national and decentralized meteorological authorities, climate research institutions and other experts in the capacity building programs to be implemented.

Component 2.

Further household level assessment and integration of vulnerability and adaptive capacity of local communities to climate change needs to ensure that resilience enhancing measures are integrated into the sustainable management/restoration plans. Education and outreach initiatives focusing on climate and tailored climate information relevant to forest and degraded landscapes should be integrated.

Component 3.

Impact of climate change on specific commodity or livelihood should be assessed in order to promote diversification of livelihoods based on robust science and evidence of future projections. Effective climate interventions in value chain development should be considered such as diversification, climate-proofing, supply chain efficiency.

6. Coordination

Outline the institutional structure of the project including monitoring and evaluation coordination at the project level. Describe possible coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.

104.   The project will actively coordinate with relevant Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, UN Agencies, and other development partners as well as NGOs, private enterprises and research institutions to facilitate synergies and avoid duplication of efforts. Coordination will take place through established mechanisms including Project Steering Committee, sharing of reports and ad hoc meetings. This will be supported by a technically strong management unit. During the PPG phase, further in-depth consultations will be undertaken to establish/strengthen partnerships and practical modalities for linking and collaborating with relevant ongoing and planned interventions.

105.   At the national level, MESD will be responsible for coordination. The Project takes place within the framework of the National REDD+ Investment Framework (CNI-REDD+) which has established a national coordination mechanism, the national REDD+ committee presided by the Prime Minister. The National Climate Coordination under the MESD is mandated to provide strategic direction in terms of climate change and will also support adaptation planning at the decentralized level. The MESD, will ensure coordination with all related activities, including activities of other relevant Ministries (MWFHF, MADR, MLMDLD). FAO, as GEF Agency, will be responsible for ensuring coordination with other internationally supported initiatives, including those financed by GEF (TRI, Congo Basin SLM, FOLUR). Synergies will be sought with the ongoing GEF 6 project under The Restoration Initiative, especially in the SW region where valuable lessons can be learned on integrated planning for restoration, implementation of restoration interventions and enhanced practical research on agroecology and agroforestry. The experience of creating a partnership with the private sector to enhance the resilience of local communities will also be useful for the project. Synergies will also be sought with the GEF7 project "Scaling up ecological corridors and transboundary connectivity through integrated natural resources management in the Ngotto Forest landscape and Mbaéré-Bodingué National Park" to learn from best practices on participatory management and promotion of alternative sustainable livelihoods for communities living on the border of the protected areas.

106.   At the Prefecture and communal level, the Project takes place with the framework of the inter-prefectoral REDD+ committees as well as the Local Development Committees which oversee the development and implementation of Local Development Plans.

7. Consistency with National Priorities

Is the Project consistent with the National Strategies and plans or reports and assesments under relevant conventions?

If yes, which ones and how: NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc

107.   In 2016, the CAR government requested support from the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank Group to prepare a Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment (RPBA), and based on ths evaluation the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan (RCPCA) was adopted. The RCPCA is articulated around three priority pillars and 11 strategic objectives. The project will actively contribute to the second and third pillar aiming to promote economic recovery and boosting the productive sectors to rapidly provide the population with income-generating activities and employment opportunities in core productive sectors, and to improve the business and investment environment more broadly.

108.   The Central African Republic has signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 and ratified it in 1995. The country also signed and ratified the Kyoto Protocol in 2007 and 2008 respectively. CAR submitted two National Communications (NC) to the UNFCCC (2003 and 2015) which highlight the vulnerability of the agriculture sector due to its dependance on rainwater and a decline of productivity due to anticipated climate change. It also stated that the extreme weather events would cause changes in reproduction periods of certain species, in the duration of planting season and possible increase of mortality for both plant and animal species which will affect the overall composition in forest ecosystems. These mutations will affect the forestry industry, ecotourism potential, the supply of Non-Timber-Forest-Products (NTFPs), traditionnal pharmacopoeia and these will reduce the livelihoods of the rural communities depending on the natural resources.

109.   The project responds to key government priorities for climate change adaptation in CAR. The project will contribute to the overarching objective of the NDC focussing on sustainable, low-carbon development and growing resilience of the sectors of agriculture and food security, heath, management of natural resources and infrastructure against the advers effects of climate change. Agriculture and food security are identified as the sectors most vulnerable to climate change. Specifically, the project is in alignment with the following adaptation priorities identified: "(i) adjustment of the policy framework, (ii) improve knowledge about resilience to climate change, and (iii) sustainable management of the agricultural, forestry and animal husbandry systems, land-use planning, guarantee energy security."

110.   The project will contribute to the implementation of some of the priority measured proposed in the CAR's National REDD+ Investment Framework for 2020-2025 in order to achieve a reduction in GHG coming from deforestation and degradation of forests, to enhance forest carbon stocks and socio-economic cobenefits. This contributes to realizing the goals set in the NDC: reduce 5% of the emissions by 2030 and 25% of emissions by 2050, while ensuring annual agricultural growth rate of 6% and stabilize food insecurity around 15%.

111.   The CAR has submitted their National Adaptation Programme of Action to the UNFCCC in 2008 aimed to determine urgent interventions to adapt to climate change. A major focus was on the agriculture, forestry and agroforestry due to their high climate vulnerability, and this project will contribute to the following prioritized adaptation options in the agriculture and food security and forestry sectors:

● Mitigation of climate risk impacts on the agricultural production and food security

● Prevention of forest degradation and rational management of forest resources

112.   The project will contribute to the National Forest Policy 2019-2035 which aims to restore the action and the authority of the government in the sector, while contributing to the emergence of a green economy creating jobs and added value and to the National Recovery and Peacebuilding plan (RCPCA). The project is aligned with the vision of the Forest Policy which is the following: "*The forest ecosystems and its associated resources are co-managed for the*

goods and services necessary for peace, for a harmonious and sustainable development, for the conservation of the biological diversity and for the safekeeping of the global environment.'

113.   The project is also well aligned with the 2011-2015 Strategy for rural development, Agriculture and Food Security (SDRASA) which aims to promote a productive, profitable central African agriculture respectful to the environment, while supporting local initiatives and embracing gender concept and creating richness and the emerging conditions for a dynamic private agricultural sector, for job creation which on its turn will contribute to the reduction in poverty and achieving food security for all. The project will also contribute to the associated National Agricultural Investment and Food Security and Nutrition Programme (PNIASAN) which aims to attain and maintain   an annual agricultural GDP rate of 6% and a food insecurity rate of 15%. The importance of strengthening agriculture technical services at national level and decentralized level is highlighted, as well as the need to support the commercialization of the sector and the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices. The strategy also calls for the rebuilding of certain agricultural export value chains, such as coffee.

114.   The project is aligned with the Law n 09.003 adopted in 2009 on the orientation of the national policy of spatial planning which is put in place by the government in consultation with the decentralized territorial authorities, civil society and the private sector in order to improve the quality of life. Due to political instability and conflicts, this national policy has not been put in place. There are two levels of decentralized territorial authorities in the CAR: the regions and the communes of which the latter is the only operational one. But since the Bangui forum on recovery and peacebuilding, the decentralization process has not been initiated. It is foreseen that in 2021 communal elections will take place, followed by regional elections in 2023.

115.   The project will contribute to the overall Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) target set by the country in 2017 to improve the state of more than 15% of the national territory (1,227,415.2 ha) by 2030 through coordinated actions on the restoration and conservation of degraded landscapes. The project will contribute to the following specific targets: (i) restore 50% of the vegetation cover (19,384 ha) by 2030 with reference to the 2010 baseline; (ii) by 2030, reduce by 50% land productivity loss and improve 25% of the biomass all throughout the national territory relative to the 2010 baseline; (iii) by 2030, increase by 10% the amount of soil organic carbon and reduce by 5% the GHG emissions as laid out in the INDC; (iv) reduce by at least 50% the conversion of gallery forests into agricultural lands, with reference to the 2010 baseline.

116.   UNDAF 2018-2021 Outcome 3: Sustainable economic recovery: output 3.1: "By 2021, the political and administrative institutions, the civil society and the private sector implement reforms that contribute to the resilience of urban and rural communities from crisis and climate change impacts." and output 3.2: "By 2021, the political and administrative institutions, the civil society and the private sector implement policies, programmes and reforms focused on inclusive economic growth (good economic governance, recovery and creation of employment) and the transparent, ethical and sustainable management of the natural resources."

117.   FAO's Country Programming Framework (2018-2021) Priority 2: Supporting communities and households resilience in the face of crises and climate change, and priority 4: Supporting the sustainable improvement of agricultural, animal, forest and fisheries value chains.

8. Knowledge Management

Outline the knowledge management approach for the Project, including, if any, plans for the Project to learn from other relevant Projects and initiatives, to assess and document in a user-friendly form, and share these experiences and expertise with relevant stakeholders.

118.   Knowledge management will be an integral part of the project, enabling institutional memory, promoting learning and continuous improvement, generating knowledge and lessons for in-scaling, up-scaling, and out-scaling. Specific knowledge and learning activities are incorporated within the project's outputs of component 4 and will be conducted in support of capacity building and training actions under the different components, such as promotion of suitable adaptation options and restoration interventions.

119.   Knowledge capture: The project will have a solid M&E system in place to ensure lessons and knowledge generated by this project is captured. This M&E strategy and system includes participatory M&E by local communities (project beneficiaries, *in primis* farmers, forest and farm producer groups, community forest associations), which is proven to be a powerful vehicle to empower project beneficiaries, as it helps them to generate, analyze, and use information for their day-to-day decision making as well as for long-term planning. Being able to properly capture lessons on adaptation practices, tools, approaches is essential in order to promote continuous learning, both in the context of this project (in-scaling), and the context of other development investments (up-scaling and out-scaling).

120.   Knowledge development: The lessons learnt and best (and unsuccessful) practices will be developed in order to address different stakeholder groups/audiences, at the grassroots, national and international level. To facilitate adult learning, uptake of new or updated practices and technologies introduced by the project (NSB, FLR, … for climate adaptation), the project will rely on tried and tested learning approaches such as the farmer field schools, field visits, etc. At the national level and international level, information/data/lessons generated by the project will be made available to the scientific community, decision-makers and practitioners through tailored knowledge tools and channels (e.g. technical information fact sheets on practices, scientific seminars, video, …). This tailored knowledge development will serve the project directly as practitioners (extension services, science community in the country, …) and decision makers are sensitized on the potential contribution of NBS and FLR to climate change adaptation and resilience of rural communities, and they are mobilized and equipped to uptake lessons and integrate these in policies, strategies and plans.

121.   Knowledge dissemination: The broader dissemination of experience and lessons learnt generated by the project will be pursued through engaging national and regional technical and educational institutions, and regionally and internationally through South-South cooperation mechanisms. The Global and Regional Platforms which are being established under the GEF Impact Programmes (Congo Basin, FOLUR) will provide a good vehicle to share knowledge generated by the project and capture lessons learned from other projects. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration also will provide an opportunity for the project to share project outputs and learn from other initiatives. Both at the local level (LDCs and REDD+ Committees) will be capacitated to harvest knowledge and information and this will directly contribute to knowledge management at Prefectural level. At the National level, the project is implemented within the REDD+ framework and the knowledge generated by the Project will be disseminated through the national coordination committee as well as the national climate committee through the MESD.

9. Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

Provide information on the identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project/program based on your organization's ESS systems and procedures

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification*

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Medium/Moderate			

Measures to address identified risks and impacts
Provide preliminary information on the types and levels of risk classifications/ratings of any identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project (considering the GEF ESS Minimum Standards) and describe measures to address these risks during the project design.

Please, see attached certificate with mitigation measures proposed.

Supporting Documents
Upload available ESS supporting documents.

Title	Submitted
Climate change risk screening	
ESS certificate	

Part III: Approval/Endorsement By GEF Operational Focal Point(S) And GEF Agency(ies)
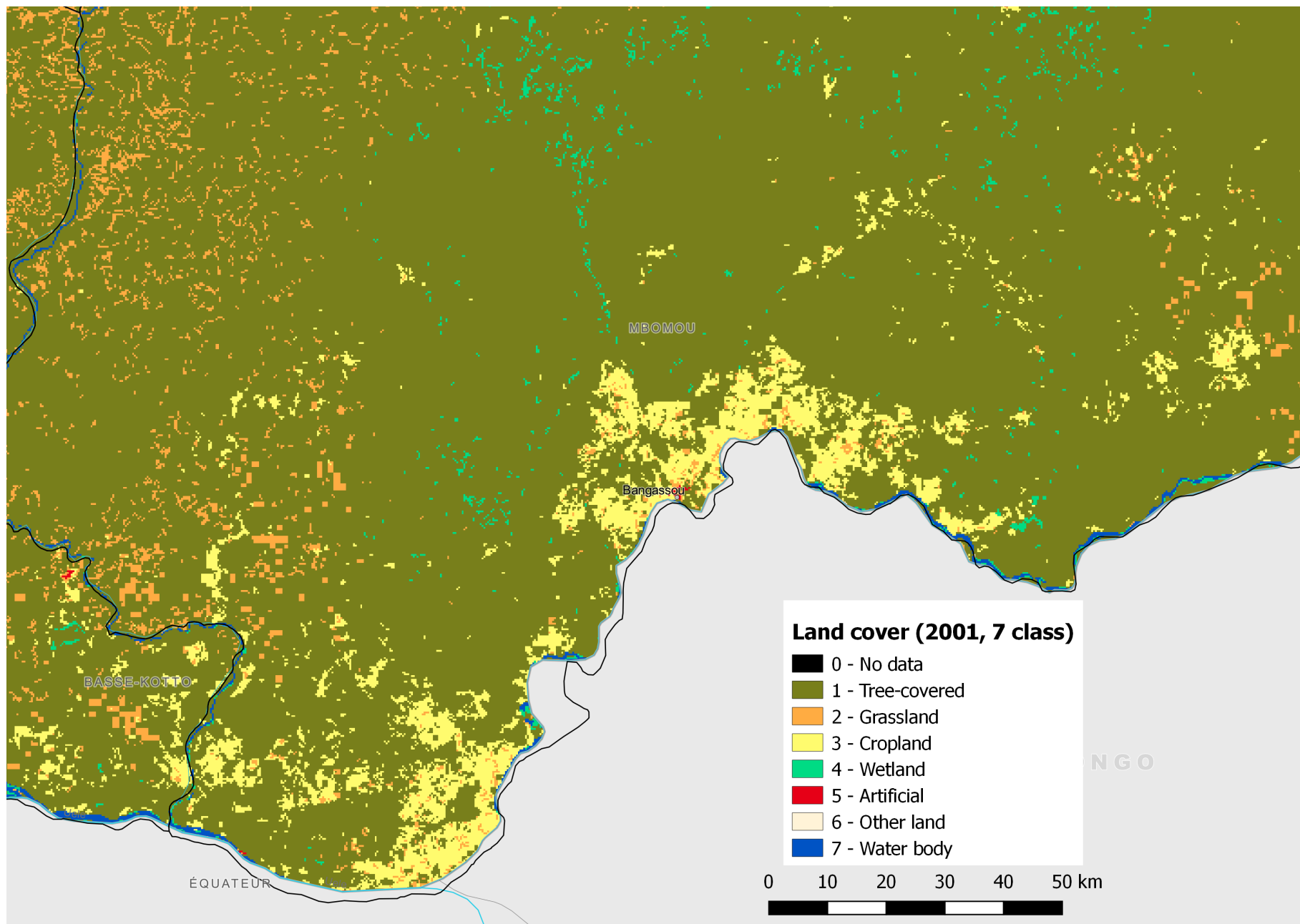
A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S): (Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter with this template).
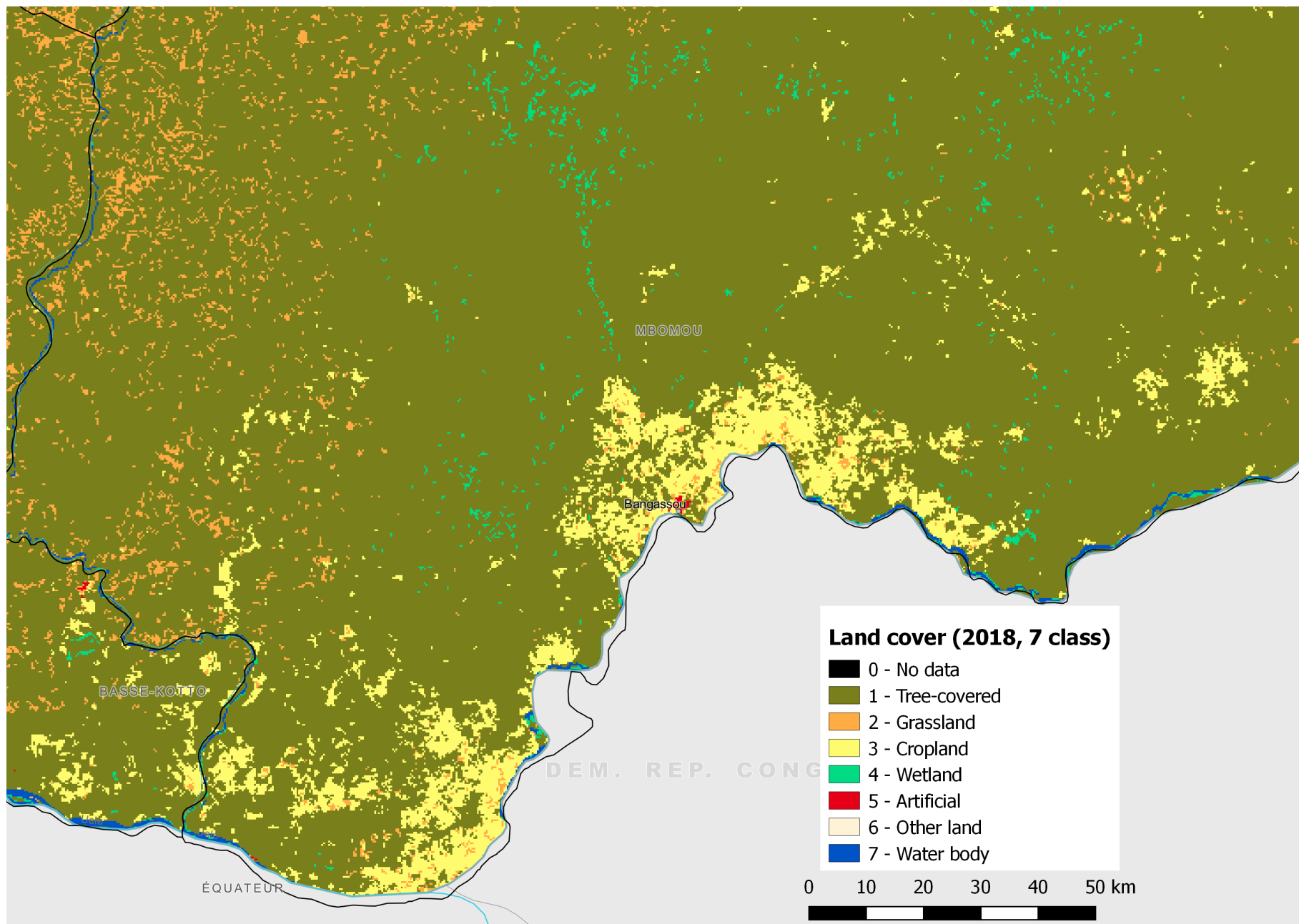
Name	Position	Ministry	Date
Lambert Gnapelet	GEF Operational Focal Point	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	10/29/2019

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project intervention takes place

Figure 16. Land cover change and land cover degradation Bangassou area (Prefecture Mbomou)

Land cover (2001, 7 class)

- 0 - No data
- 1 - Tree-covered
- 2 - Grassland
- 3 - Cropland
- 4 - Wetland
- 5 - Artificial
- 6 - Other land
- 7 - Water body

0   10   20   30   40   50 km

Land cover (2018, 7 class)

- 0 - No data
- 1 - Tree-covered
- 2 - Grassland
- 3 - Cropland
- 4 - Wetland
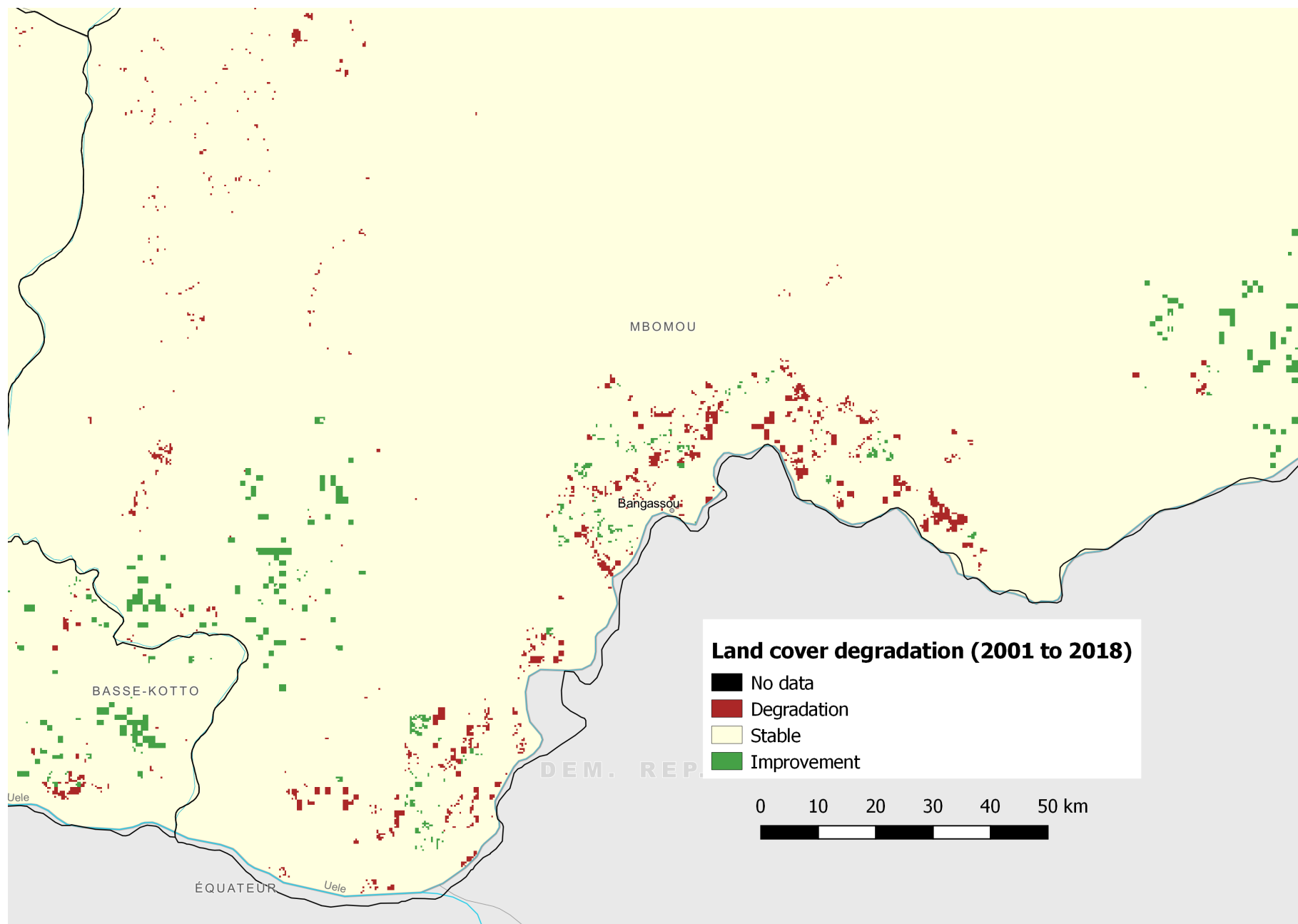- 5 - Artificial
- 6 - Other land
- 7 - Water body

Figure 17. Land cover change and land cover degradation SW region of CAR.

Land cover (2001, 7 class)

- ⬛ 0 - No data
- 🟩 1 - Tree-covered
- 🟧 2 - Grassland
- 🟨 3 - Cropland
- 🟩 4 - Wetland
- 🟥 5 - Artificial
- ⬜ 6 - Other land

Land cover (2018, 7 class)

- ◼ 0 - No data
- ◼ 1 - Tree-covered
- ◼ 2 - Grassland
- ◼ 3 - Cropland
- ◼ 4 - Wetland
- ◼ 5 - Artificial
- ◼ 6 - Other land
- ◼ 7 - Water body

Land cover degradation (2001 to 2018)

- No data
- Degradation
- Stable
- Improvement

25 50 75 100 125 km