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Report No: {Report No}

INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT APPRAISAL DOCUMENT

ON A

PROPOSED GRANT

IN THE AMOUNT OF US\$8.471 MILLION

TO THE

REPUBLIC OF GABON

FOR A

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF CRITICAL WETLAND ECOSYSTEMS PROJECT

{ RVP/CD CLEARANCE DATE - SAME AS ON MOP }

Environment, Natural Resource Management, Water and Disaster Risk Management
(AFTN1)
Sustainable Development Department
Africa Region

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CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(Exchange Rate Effective {Date})

Currency Unit	=	Central African CFA francs (XAF)
500 XAF	=	US\$1

FISCAL YEAR

January 1	–	December 31
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABS	Access and Benefit Sharing
ACD	<i>Accord Conversion de Dettes</i> (France-Gabon Debt Relief Agreement)
AFD	<i>Agence Française de Développement</i> (French Development Agency)
ANPN	<i>Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux</i> (National Agency of National Parks)
CAF	<i>Contrôle de l'Aménagement Forestier</i> (Forestry Management Verification)
CCGL	<i>Comité Consultatif de Gestion Locale</i> (Local Management Consultative Committee)
CDC	<i>Caisse de Dépôts et de Consignation</i> (National Deposit Bank)
CEMAC	<i>Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale</i> (Central Africa Economic and Monetary Union)
CENAREST	<i>Centre National pour la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique</i> (National Center for Scientific and Technological Research)
CNPN	<i>Conseil National des Parcs Nationaux</i> (National Council for National Parks)
CPAR	Country Procurement Assessment Review
CPS	Country Partnership Strategy
CSO	Civil Service Organizations
CQS	Consultant Qualification Selection
DCAF	<i>Direction Centrale des Affaires Financières</i> (Central Directorate for Financial Affairs)
DGEPN	<i>Direction Générale de l'Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature</i> (Directorate for Environment and Nature Protection)
ESMF	Environment and Social Management Framework
FEM	<i>Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial</i> (Global Environment Facility)
FMR	Financial Management Report
FMV	Forest Management Verification
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GOG	Government of Gabon
IEEP	Institute for European Environmental Policy
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IGAD	<i>Institut Gabonais d'Appui au Développement</i> /Gabonese Institute for Support and Development [for agriculture development and investment]
MAT	Mutually Agreed Terms
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEEDD	<i>Ministère de l'Economie, de l'Emploi et du Développement Durable</i> (Ministry of Economy, Employment and Sustainable Development)
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCB	National Competitive Bidding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resource Management

NPIF	Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Products
ODDIG	<i>l'Observatoire de promotion, de Développement Durable, des produits et services de l'Industrie du Gabon</i> /Observatory for the Promotion, Sustainable Development, and Products & Services of the Gabon Industries
OHADA	<i>Organisation pour l'Harmonisation des Affaires en Afrique</i> (Organization for the Harmonization of Business in Africa)
ORAF	Operational Risk Assessment Framework
PF	Process Framework
PIC	Prior Informed Consent
PSGE	<i>Plan Stratégique Gabon Emergent</i> (Strategic Roadmap for an Emerging Gabon)
QCBS	Quality and Cost Based Selection
RIS	Ramsar Information Sheet
SA	Special Account
TEEB	The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity for Water and Wetlands
UNWTO	United Nations World Trade Organization
WBG	World Bank Group
WII	Wetlands of International Importance (used interchangeably with “Ramsar wetlands”)
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

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GABON
SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF CRITICAL WETLANDS ECOSYSTEMS PROJECT

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PAD DATA SHEET

Gabon

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF CRITICAL WETLANDS ECOSYSTEMS (P143914)

PROJECT APPRAISAL DOCUMENT

AFRICA

AFTNI

Report No.: PAD607

Basic Information			
Project ID	Lending Instrument	EA Category	Team Leader
P143914	Specific Investment Loan	B - Partial Assessment	Salimata D. Follea
Project Implementation Start Date		Project Implementation End Date	
29-Apr-2014		31-Dec-2019	
Expected Effectiveness Date		Expected Closing Date	
01-Dec-2014		30-Apr-2020	
Joint IFC			GEF Focal Area
No			Biodiversity
Sector Manager	Sector Director	Country Director	Regional Vice President
Benoit Bosquet	Jamal Saghir	Gregor Binkert	Makhtar Diop
Borrower: REPUBLIC OF GABON			
Responsible Agency: Directorate of Environment			
Contact:	Luc Oyoubi	Title:	Minister of Economy, Employment, and Sustainable Development
Telephone		Email:	
No.:			
Project Financing Data (in USD Million)			

<input type="checkbox"/> Loan	<input type="checkbox"/> Grant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other			
<input type="checkbox"/> Credit	<input type="checkbox"/> Guarantee				
Total Project Cost:		8.47		Total Bank Financing:	
Financing Gap:		0.00			
Financing Source			Amount		
BORROWER/RECIPIENT			0.00		
Global Environment Facility (GEF)			8.471		
Total			8.471		
Expected Disbursements (in USD Million)					
Fiscal Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Annual	.440	1.819	3.259	1.634	1.319
Cumulative	.440	2.259	5.518	7.152	8.471
Proposed Global Environmental Objective(s)					
The PDO/GEO is to enhance protection of biodiversity in selected forested wetlands on the Ramsar list through knowledge creation and development of conservation measures for sustainable wetlands management.					
Components					
Component Name			Cost (USD Millions)		
Component 1: Improvement of Knowledge and Monitoring of Selected Critical Wetland Ecosystems			0.600		
Component 2: Support to Sustainable Management of Selected Critical Wetland Ecosystems			3.110		
Component 3: Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol			.950		
Component 4: Strengthen Institutional Framework to Support Wetlands Management			3.326		
Component 5: Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation			0.485		

Institutional Data				
Sector Board: Environment				
Sectors / Climate Change				
Sector (Maximum 5 and total % must equal 100)				
Major Sector	Sector	%	Adaptation Co-benefits %	Mitigation Co-benefits %
Agriculture, fishing, and forestry	General agriculture, fishing and forestry sector	100	70	30
Total		100		
<input type="checkbox"/> I certify that there is no Adaptation and Mitigation Climate Change Co-benefits information applicable to this project.				
Themes				
Theme (Maximum 5 and total % must equal 100)				
Major theme	Theme	%		
Environment and natural resources management	Biodiversity	100		
Total		100		
Compliance				
Policy				
Does the project depart from the CAS in content or in other significant respects?			Yes []	No [X]
Does the project require any waivers of Bank policies?			Yes []	No [X]
Have these been approved by Bank management?			Yes []	No []
Is approval for any policy waiver sought from the Board?			Yes []	No []
Does the project meet the Regional criteria for readiness for implementation?			Yes [X]	No []
Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project			Yes	No
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01			x	
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04			x	
Forests OP/BP 4.36			x	
Pest Management OP 4.09				x
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11				x

Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10		X	
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12		X	
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37			X
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50			X
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60			X
Legal Covenants			
Name	Recurrent	Due Date	Frequency
Description of Covenant			
Conditions			
Name			Type
Description of Condition			
Team Composition			
Bank Staff			
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Country	First Administrative Division	Location	Planned	Actual	Comments

I. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

A. Country Context

1. Gabon is a resource-rich country, well endowed with arable land, forest, and mineral resources. It has extraordinary biodiversity as well as rich deposits of magnesium and iron ore. It is the fifth-largest oil producer in Sub-Saharan Africa and the second-largest exporter of manganese. With a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita estimated at US\$8,643 in 2010, it is one of Africa's few middle-income countries.

2. Demographic pressure on natural resources is low. Gabon is one of Africa's most urbanized countries with more than 85 percent of its population living in urban areas, predominantly in Libreville (the capital), Port-Gentil (the economic capital), and Franceville (the mining region). The Gabonese population is young, with 50 percent under 19 years of age. The rural population is widely dispersed over the hinterland where access is difficult. With a per capita forest area of 15 hectares, the pressure of population on forest resources is significantly lower in Gabon than in most African countries.

3. Despite its wealth, Gabon is unlikely to meet a number of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015. The third national MDG progress report, published in 2010, concluded that MDG targets relating to poverty reduction, infant and maternal mortality, and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS are unlikely to be achieved. With respect to education, Gabon has succeeded in making primary education available to all (net enrollment has increased from 88 percent in 1990 to 91 percent in 2005), but the numbers of qualified teachers and classrooms remain insufficient. Infant mortality dropped from 155 per 1,000 in 1990 to 52.7 per 1,000 in 2010, but it will be difficult to reach the target of 31.5 per 1,000 by 2015. Although maternal mortality fell from 600 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 420 deaths in 2010, it is also unlikely that the target of 150 deaths per 100,000 live births will be achieved by 2015.

4. In 2009, the new government presented a new economic vision: Emerging Gabon. The strategic roadmap for an Emerging Gabon (*Plan Stratégique Gabon Emergent* – PSGE) aims at modernizing the country and turning it into an emerging economy by 2025. This strategy is based on accelerating growth and reducing poverty but also looks to capitalize on Gabon's comparative advantages in the regional and global landscapes. The strategy is built on three pillars:

- (a) Industrial Gabon “*Gabon Industriel*” aims to develop Gabon into a metallurgic and industrial center of excellence. (optimizing oil and mining and support to industries through construction, building materials, and agro-industrial transformation).
- (b) Green Gabon “*Gabon Vert*” has three major goals:
 - (i) instituting sustainable forest management and transforming Gabon into a global leader in certified tropical timber production;
 - (ii) developing agriculture and livestock farming to improve food security; and,
 - (iii) creating sustainable and responsible fisheries.

- (c) Gabon of Services “*Gabon des Services*” has the objective of making Gabon a center of excellence in business, ecotourism, and value-added services, such as higher education and research, health, media, and information technologies.

5. Gabon’s unique combination of exceptionally abundant and diverse natural resources with a low population presents a favorable context for implementing a sustainable development strategy.

B. Sectoral and Institutional Context

6. Gabon is endowed with exceptional biodiversity. Gabon belongs to the Congo Basin rain forest ecosystem, which is the world’s second-largest area of contiguous rain forest. The country has rich faunal and floral wildlife, a variety of landscapes, and an 800-kilometer coastline. Gabon contains three Terrestrial Ecoregions and is defined by WWF as the world’s most outstanding examples of each major habitat type: the Congolian Coastal Forest, the Northwestern Congolian Lowland Forests and the Western Congolian Forest-Savanna Mosaic. In addition, there are significant stands of Central African mangroves along the coast and patches of Congolian-Zairean swamp forests in the northeast. Furthermore several priority freshwater systems occur within the country, as well as the littoral and marine ecosystems.

7. The 2012 Environmental Performance Index (EPI), published by Yale University (USA) in July 2012, named Gabon as the most environmentally sustainable nation in Africa¹ (Gabon ranked at position 40 in the world in the said index). This high score was achieved inter alia because Gabon’s biodiversity is largely intact, and a large proportion of its national territory has been placed under environmental protection. Consequently, it has the lowest risk of any African nation of experiencing major environmental deterioration in the short and medium term.

8. Overall environmental protection in Gabon rests primarily with the *Direction Générale de l’Environnement et la Protection de la Nature* (DGEPN). The DGEPN was established in 1985 with the decree creating the Ministry of Environment. In order to better mainstream environment into economic sectors, the DGEPN has since been moved to the Ministry of Economy, Employment, and Sustainable Development. However, the mandate of the DGEPN remains as it was originally conceived in the decree: implementation of national environmental policy; environmental protection (aquatic, terrestrial, rural, urban, flora, fauna); environmental impact assessments and management and monitoring plans for industrial activities; ecosystem research and monitoring; pollution control; and the development of local environmental monitoring and protection capacity. The DGEPN is also tasked to collaborate with relevant government services or institutions on issues/studies of environmental protection, improvement, education, legislation, and regulation. Hence, it will collaborate on this project with the *Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux* (ANPN) and

¹ The EPI ranks countries on performance indicators tracked across policy categories that cover environment and health, and ecosystem vitality. The indicators gauge at a national level how close countries are to established environmental policy goals.

other government departments, thereby fitting perfectly within its mandate as the national institution promoting the crosscutting issue of environmental protection.

9. National parks are the responsibility of *Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux* (ANPN). Law 003/2007 established both the ANPN and the *Conseil National des Parcs Nationaux* (CNPN). The latter is an inter-ministerial government committee overseeing the process leading to effective management of the park network. Since 2002, Gabon has significantly expanded its areas under protection. In August of 2002, the late President Omar Bongo and his government created a network of 13 national parks covering 28,371 km² – 10.6 percent of the Gabon's surface area.

10. Management effectiveness of the national parks has significantly improved since 2007. A US\$10 million GEF grant (PARCS project), administered by the World Bank, was declared effective a few months after the creation of the ANPN. One of the objectives of the GEF project was to build the capacity of the newly created agency. After five years of implementation (and despite difficulties at the beginning) the PARCS project has helped define the roles and operational modalities of the ANPN and contributed to the set-up of key systems in the functioning of the agency (fiduciary management, human resources management, Monitoring and Evaluation system). Many features developed under the project for three targeted national parks are now applied to the entire network of 13 parks. The partnership with international NGOs has been significantly adjusted over the past few years to account for leadership of the ANPN on all issues related to national parks in Gabon. New partnerships have been deployed with local NGOs. The project has also contributed to increasing the efficiency and autonomy of the Management Unit within ANPN, leading to greater impacts in terms of monitoring and control.

11. Biodiversity management outside the national parks network remains a challenge. Over the past few years, major progress has been made in preserving biodiversity within national parks and their immediate buffer zones. However, there is an increasing awareness that biodiversity and ecosystem services also need to be preserved outside the national parks. One priority that has been clearly established by the Government of Gabon (under the leadership of the ANPN and the General Directorate of Environment) is the preservation of the critical wetlands sites.

12. Wetlands provide major ecosystem services to the world, yet they are often overlooked. The worldwide value of the wetlands and their associated ecosystem services has been estimated to be potentially as high as US\$15 trillion annually.² Yet many of these services, such as the recharge of groundwater, water purification, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, or aesthetic and cultural values, are rarely explicitly valued. Planners and decision-makers at many levels are not fully aware of the connections between wetland conditions and the provision of wetland services, and the consequent benefits for people. These benefits often have substantial economic value (see Box 1).

² Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. 2005. Ecosystems and Human Well-Being: Wetlands and Water Synthesis. World Resources Institute. Washington, DC.

Box 1.

Wetlands are critical ecosystems and sustain long-term growth. Wetland ecosystems are a major part of the natural wealth. At a global scale they provide services worth trillions of US dollars every year, making a vital contribution to human health and wellbeing. Important key ecosystem services delivered by wetlands are listed below.

- (i) Provisioning services: products such as fresh water, fish, prawns, seaweeds, fruit, grain, wild game, fiber, fuel, building materials, natural medicines.
- (ii) Regulating services: benefits such as climate regulation, natural hazard regulation (droughts, floods, storms), water purification, and waste treatment.
- (iii) Cultural services: nonmaterial benefits such as beautiful places for recreation and education, and places of religious significance.
- (iv) Supporting services: nutrient cycling, sediment retention and provision of habitats.

Source: www.ramsar.org

13. In Gabon, wetland ecosystems are critical in the provision of drinking water to major urban centers, energy, and also in sustaining fisheries production. For example, the Mbé watershed, one of the most economically important wetlands in Gabon, provides the sole source of freshwater for the population living in the capital city, Libreville. In addition, Libreville's principal electricity source is a hydroelectric plant on the Mbé operated by *Société d'Energie et d'Eau du Gabon* (SEEG). The Mbé forest provides other ecosystem services, as it reduces siltation in two artificial lakes that feed this plant. The forests also regulate year-round water flow and prevent flooding. Coastal mangroves are vital for the fishing industry in Gabon and beyond, as they constitute irreplaceable habitat for fish breeding.

14. Gabon has been a party to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (WII) since 1987 with the inclusion of the first three sites on the list of Gabonese WII. The country has registered a total of nine sites on the list of WII representing a wide variety of aquatic ecosystems (mangroves, savannas, waterfalls and rapids, lagoons, rivers, and lakes) of more than 2.8 million hectares (Table 1). Despite the political engagement through the adhesion to the Convention, only limited actions has been taken so far to operationalize the Convention pillars on the ground. However, the new priorities set by the Government in terms of biodiversity preservation are clearly targeting the WII. Accordingly, the Government has decided to use the entire Gabon allocation under the GEF-5 replenishment to foster significant progress on WII management.

Table 1. Gabon Ramsar Sites

<i>Ramsar Site Name</i>	<i>Surface Area (ha)</i>	<i>Registration Date</i>
Wonga-Wongué	380,000	December 30, 1986
Petit Loango	480,000	December 30, 1986
Setté-Cama	220,000	December 30, 1986
Akanda	54,000	April 2, 2007
Pongara	92,969	April 2, 2007
Monts Birougou	536,800	April 2, 2007
Bas Ogooué	862,700	April 2, 2009
Falls on the Ivindo river	132,500	April 2, 2009
Falls of Mboundou Badouma and Doumé	59,500	April 2, 2009

C. Higher Level Objectives to which the Project Contributes

15. **Country Partnership Strategy (CPS).** The Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for the 2012-2016 period aims to set in motion a process of transformative change towards a sustainable economic growth. The Board of Executive Directors of the World Bank Group (WBG) approved the CPS on February 23, 2012. The CPS builds on two strategic themes: (i) increasing Gabon's competitiveness and employment; and (ii) supporting vulnerability and resilience (re: paragraph 77 of the CPS).

16. The proposed project directly falls under the second WBG strategic theme – vulnerability and resilience – and will contribute to the fifth outcome: sustainable management of natural resources.³ Wetlands are vital parts of the natural assets needed for addressing climate change. Well-managed wetlands constitute one of our best insurance policies against some of the most damaging effects of global warming:

- (a) Coastal wetlands – mangroves, tidal flats, and saltmarshes – absorb some of the energy from storm and tidal surges, while the roots of wetland plants stabilize shorelines and reduce erosion. Where protective wetlands have been destroyed by human activities, costly artificial flood defenses have to be built in their place.
- (b) Floodplain wetlands – lakes and freshwater marshes – naturally store and slow down floodwater, protecting downstream areas from destructive flooding. This role becomes more important in areas where the frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall is predicted to increase.

17. Degradation and loss of wetlands would increase people's vulnerability to climate change impacts such as floods, droughts and famine. Preserving and/or restoring wetlands and maintaining hydrological cycles are of utmost importance for addressing climate change, flood mitigation, water supply, food provision, and biodiversity conservation.

18. **National Climate Plan.** In 2010 Gabon created a National Advisory Committee on Climate Change⁴ to report directly to the President. This Committee has since produced a National Climate Plan. The Plan includes strategies to: control GHG emission, improve climate change adaptation capacity, implement the Plan, and finance the Plan. This GEF project fits into the strategy to improve climate change adaptation. The Plan notes that there is a lack of information on the vulnerability of land and people to climate change hazards: information on ecological services and socioeconomic systems. This project will contribute to the information base needed to assess climate change vulnerability and adaptation capacity. Where preliminary research has been done – in Gabon's littoral zones – one of the most vulnerable urban centers is in one of the project sites.⁵ Project work will contribute directly to implementing the climate change strategy by sensitizing local populations and promoting appropriate adaptive land use practices.

³ IBRD and IFC. 2012. Country Partnership Strategy FY2012-FY2016 for the Gabonese Republic. February 23.

⁴ Conseil National sur les Changements Climatiques.

⁵ Gamba is in the WII Setté-Cama.

19. In conjunction with Gabon's National Climate Plan, the country has also started to develop a national land use plan.⁶ It has become evident that in order to promote climate change adaptation, it is necessary to improve land management. Currently, unclear land tenure, and overlapping resource use rights, create conflicts and prevent strategic land use planning for optimal resource allocation and climate change adaptation planning. This GEF project will contribute to the knowledge base needed for prioritizing land uses.

20. Also related to the National Climate Plan, Gabon is starting to prepare a Project Concept Note for a National Capital Accounting initiative. Through the WAVES⁷ partnership program, the government will work with the World Bank to develop approaches to ecosystem service accounting. This GEF project with its emphasis on ecosystem service identification and valuation in forested wetland ecosystems will contribute to the WAVES initiative.

21. World Bank's Prosperity and Poverty Reduction Goal. The project aligns with the Bank's twin goals of shared prosperity and poverty reduction. As noted above, despite Gabon's high per capita income (US\$8,643 in 2010), its MDG progress is flagging. Poverty is increasing. The latest household survey (supported by the WBG) found that Gabon's population living below the poverty line increased from 25 percent in 1997 to 33 percent in 2005. Typically those most vulnerable are living closest to the natural resources, or on the margins of urban economic activity. Rural depopulation is also a concern in Gabon, as urban areas draw young people who see no economic opportunity in rural areas.

22. At the local level, this project will identify incentives for improved environmental protection that also benefits local populations who depend on forested wetland ecosystems for subsistence and livelihood. Furthermore, if local areas offer income possibilities, the young people will have reasons to stay. (A tourism initiative (implemented by the ANPN) in Setté-Cama provided positive indications that income-generating activities can stem out-migration and raise local incomes.)

23. With respect to shared prosperity, Gabon's wealth is embodied in its large stock of natural resources, which has very high income-generating potential. The country's development strategy targets shared prosperity from the sustainable development of that potential. This project supports the sustainable development of natural resources by those living closest to the resources, so that they benefit from an increased return (an increased prosperity) from the country's natural wealth.

24. GEF-5 Focal Area Objective. The project contributes to three GEF-5 focal areas: Biodiversity (BD), Land Degradation (LD-3), and Sustainable Forestry Management (SFM/REDD+). Capacity will be enhanced for cross-sector consultation, collaboration, and on-the-ground action, all of which are fundamental to the development of a national strategy on wetland protection. Gabon's wetlands are rich in biodiversity, but it has no effective protection. There are multiple activities underway in these wetlands: forestry, mining, fishing, and agriculture. All stakeholders – government, donor partners, NGOs/CSOs – need

⁶ Plan National d'Affectation des Terres.

⁷ Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services

to be engaged in order to address competing wetland resource use issues, and develop conservation measures to protect wetland biodiversity. In this manner, the project will build capacity for the development and implementation of integrated land management plans with SLM and SFM activities, and as well as other sustainable activities suitable for forested wetland ecosystems.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE(S) (PDO) / GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT OBJECTIVE(S) (GEO).

PDO/GEO

25. The PDO/GEO is to enhance protection of biodiversity in selected forested wetlands on the Ramsar list through knowledge creation and development of conservation measures for sustainable wetlands management.

Project Beneficiaries

26. Project beneficiaries are found in three groups. 1) National institutions will benefit from capacity building (information, technical, institutional, and policy) to promote sustainable management of forested wetlands. As per their respective roles in national environmental management, DGEPN and ANPN will both benefit from strengthened capacity. 2) Farmers and fishers in the three project sites will benefit from the development and promotion of improved farming and fishing practices to increase productivity and food security, while preserving the ecological functions of wetlands. 3) Communities in and near the project sites will benefit from improved livelihood opportunities arising out of the development and implementation of management plans, and access to investment funds for micro projects. These people will also benefit from secured environmental services and increased eco-tourism potential in the regions.

27. Direct beneficiaries of the project will be some percentage of the estimated population of 70,000 living within the three WII sites. As the project is implemented, local populations directly affected will be more precisely identified. Similarly, people in the project sites benefiting indirectly from the project will also be more clearly identified.

PDO Level Results Indicators

28. Three PDO level indicators have been identified for the operation (see annex 1 for the results framework):

- (a) Indicator one: ecosystem services valuations are undertaken for each selected site.
- (b) Indicator two: management plans are prepared for each selected site.
- (c) Indicator three: a national wetlands management strategy is developed.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

29. The project is designed around four main components, the collective aim of which is to help the Government of Gabon implement the recommendations of the Ramsar Convention and the resolutions of the Conference of the Parties to:

- (a) improve the level of knowledge of Gabon's WII;
- (b) establish a system for monitoring ecological characteristics of wetland ecosystems;
- (c) establish the conditions necessary for managing an effective WII network in Gabon; and,
- (d) undertake economic valuation of wetlands ecosystem services.

30. The project will focus on three Ramsar sites: Bas Ogooué, Monts Birougou, and Petit Loango/Setté-Cama. These sites were selected by DGEPN based on: (i) the importance of wetland ecosystem services for local populations, including climate change adaptation and mitigation; (ii) the threats to the wetland ecosystems from competing land uses (forestry, mining, agriculture); and (iii) conservation initiatives already undertaken at the sites. The selection process also prioritized a diverse representation of marine and terrestrial biodiversity. Thus, the three sites chosen represent coastal, alluvial plain and high interior, heavily forested wetland habitats. Applied to these three sites, the project objective of enhancing protection of forested wetlands through conservation measures for sustainable wetland management aligns with GEF objectives for the Biodiversity (BD1), Land Degradation (LD3), and Sustainable Forest Management/REDD+ (SFM/REDD+1) focal areas.

31. Component 1 addresses wetland knowledge acquisition (including economic valuation), and establishes a monitoring system for Gabon's WII. Component 2 strengthens capacity for local management of WII. Component 3 furthers the Nagoya Protocol on Access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable Sharing of Benefits arising from their utilization (ABS). Component 4 strengthens national institutional capacity for WII management. Summaries of these four components plus the fifth project management component are presented below. The detailed project description can be found in annex 2.

A. Project Components

Component 1: Improvement of Knowledge and Monitoring of Selected Critical Wetland Ecosystems (GEF – US\$0.600 million).

32. This component will generate knowledge on wetlands in Gabon and set up a reliable monitoring system that can produce early warnings on potential alterations of wetland ecosystems. The component is divided into two sub-components.

33. Sub-Component 1.1: Knowledge creation on wetland ecosystems. This sub-component will support research work on the biological wealth and socioeconomic dimensions of Gabon's wetland ecosystems. This research will identify and quantify the multiple ecosystem services delivered by wetlands. The ultimate goal of this information is to help decision-makers better understand the importance of wetlands and the potential trade-offs with other competing activities in the wetlands (with a specific focus on forested wetlands).

34. Targeted research will focus on three selected Ramsar WII sites: Petit Loango/Setté-Cama, Monts Birougou, and Bas Ogooué. The research program will compile existing information, and identify research needed for priority issues. With guidance from the Ramsar

Handbooks,⁸ a Research Coordinator located in DGEPN – in consultation with ANPN – will prioritize and oversee environmental and socioeconomic research in the selected three WII sites. Research activities, conducted jointly between national and international research entities, will involve: (i) diagnostic studies; (ii) economic valuation of services delivered by wetlands ecosystems; and (iii) research on traditional uses of natural resources (including medicinal plants).

35. The Research Coordinator will also consult with the research coordinator for the AFD-supported Arc d’Emeraude project in the WII sites of Akanda and Pongara. The components of the Arc d’Emeraude project are similar to those of this project (see Table 2 Annex 5). Hence, there are project synergies that will expedite research and the development of a national wetland monitoring system (sub-Component 1.2) and the development of a national wetland strategy (Component 4).

36. Sub-Component 1.2: Monitoring system for wetland ecosystems. The objectives of this sub-component are to define and operationalize the most appropriate monitoring system for ecological, physicochemical, and socioeconomic characteristics of the wetlands in Gabon. The ANPN has developed management plans, which include monitoring strategies, for the national park areas that are close to or within this project’s selected Ramsar sites. Accordingly, this project will build on the monitoring system work already done by ANPN in Petit Loango and Birougou national parks. It will also benefit from monitoring system development work being done through the AFD project in the Pongara and Akanda Ramsar sites.

37. The Research Coordinator will oversee the development and implementation of a monitoring system for Gabon’s Ramsar sites. Informed by the Ramsar Handbooks, the Research Coordinator will work closely with both the DGEPN and ANPN to ensure that the information and data capture of Component 1 facilitates the development of an appropriate monitoring system for the sites. The Research Coordinator will also consult with the AFD-supported project in the Akanda and Pongara Ramsar WII sites to share lessons and promote consistency in monitoring system development.

Component 2: Support to Sustainable Management of Selected Critical Wetland Ecosystems (GEF amount – US\$3.110 million).

38. The priority under this component is to promote sustainable management of critical mangrove ecosystems through the following three sub-components:

⁸Ramsar Convention Secretariat, 2010. *Wise use of wetlands: Concepts and approaches for the wise use of wetlands*. Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands, 4th edition, Volumes 1-20. Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Gland, Switzerland.

39. Sub-Component 2.1: Planning for sustainable management of selected sites. The situations of the Ramsar sites in Gabon are quite varied in terms of legal status, geographical and hydrological features, and typology of pressures. As of today, there is no management plan (or any planning tool) that appropriately defines the modalities to support sustainable management of the wetland ecosystems. Therefore, these tools need to be developed, but in a targeted manner to ensure that the specific challenges and threats of the different wetland areas are addressed appropriately.

40. To that end, guided by the Ramsar Handbooks, and in consultation with other government agencies and development partners active in the sites, this sub-component will prepare management plans for the selected Ramsar sites, based on extensive consultative work in those sites, and the results of the research activities undertaken in Component 1.

41. Implementation of sub-Component 2.1 will require cross-sector consultation. The DG of Water and Forests will be consulted for information for SFM opportunities in the selected sites. In particular, synergies will be sought with an AFD-supported project in the forestry sector: Forest Management Verification (see Table 2 Annex 5). This AFD project reinforces forestry management capacity, which includes, inter alia, forestry best practices and forest information communication. The DGs of Fisheries and Aquatic Ecosystems will be consulted for input on local fisheries improvement possibilities; and the DG of Agriculture will be consulted for input on agricultural production possibilities and opportunities to increase local capacity for SLM.

42. Sub-Component 2.2: Strengthening surveillance capacities in the selected sites. Unless they are included in a national park, most of the existing Ramsar sites do not have adequate monitoring activities, mostly because of insufficient staff on the ground and lack of equipment.

43. The goal of this sub-component is to reinforce the capacity of local people in the three selected WII sites to monitor wetland activities through:

- (a) Provision of appropriate equipment and infrastructure to reinforce capacities of local staff to properly implement monitoring activities in the selected sites, which would include, for example, vehicles, boats, camping equipment, and the construction of staff quarters.
- (b) Training of local staff in monitoring activities, such as that delivered to ecoguards in the national parks under the previous GEF-financed project and including conservation software systems such as MIST/SMART⁹ already used by the ANPN for the monitoring of the national parks.
- (c) Engagement of local communities in wetland monitoring, through regular consultation with the local community management committees, technical assistance (on fisheries, for example), and other education and awareness raising activities.

44. Sub-Component 2.3: Environmentally friendly, community-driven activities in wetlands. The objective of this sub-component is to help communities adjacent to the selected Ramsar

⁹ SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) and MIST (Management Information System) are software tools to assist protected area wildlife law enforcement and site-based conservation activities.

sites develop income-generating activities for sustainable wetland management. As appropriate, this will be done in partnership with local NGOs and CSOs; and in collaboration with other government entities, notably those responsible for tourism development, forestry, fisheries, and agriculture. Tourism activities could include, for example, infrastructure (access roads, campsites, docks, boat ramps, watch towers); and community or private enterprises (restaurants and concession stands, lodges, nature guides, transportation services). Apart from tourism, other sustainable economic activities eligible for project financing could include fisheries development, fiber harvesting, apiculture, plant nurseries, horticulture, transformation of agricultural products, NTPF and medicinal herb product development, and small livestock production.

45. An income-generating manual has been developed and will guide the selection, implementation and closure of income-generating activities. Annex 2 also provides a summary of the selection process, including eligibility criteria, thresholds for financing and fund allocation.

Component 3: Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol (GEF – US\$0.950 million).

46. Gabon has clearly led the way in the Africa region, being the first country to ratify the Nagoya Protocol in May 2011 (Gabon was the twenty-second signatory of the Protocol). Moreover, Gabon has already completed a draft national strategy and plan of action to implement the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS).¹⁰ The objective of this component is, therefore, to consolidate and implement the measures contained in the strategy document, and thereby operationalize the Nagoya Protocol. Led by the National Focal Point for the Nagoya Protocol located in the DGEPN, this component will: (i) strengthen the capacity of key Government actors and local communities on ABS procedures; (ii) develop and validate legislative and administrative measures; and (iii) implement the institutional framework for the protocol. (please see details in annex 2).

Component 4: Strengthen Institutional Framework to support Wetlands Management (GEF – US\$3.326 million).

47. This Component will establish an institutional framework favorable to the sustainable management of the WII in Gabon at both the national and local levels.

48. The project will establish an MOU with the Ramsar Convention to provide technical assistance to DGEPN for the development and implementation of a national institutional framework for the management of Gabon's network of Ramsar sites. With guidance from the Ramsar Handbooks, analyses will be undertaken to (i) assess the existing policy framework for wetland protection in Gabon; and (ii) assess the institutional structures currently governing each WII site. The studies will propose recommendations to strengthen the policy and institutional frameworks to better achieve wetland protection objectives. With support from the Ramsar Convention, and based on the data analysis and information obtained in Component 1, and the priority setting and resource use planning work of Component 2, this component will also develop a national wetlands strategy, in consultation as appropriate, with other government DGs.

¹⁰ National Strategy on Access to Biological and Genetic Resources, and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising out of the Use Thereof. MEESD. Directorate General of the Environment and the Protection of Nature. National Focal Point of the Convention on Biological Diversity. 2012.

49. Mapping capacity in DGEPN will also be strengthened to generate wetland maps geocoded with environmental and socioeconomic data (refer sub-Component 1.1). As a basic modality for integrated natural resource management, this component will conduct environmental audits of industrial operations (mining, forestry) operating in and around the three WII sites. To that end, the component will finance technical assistance to strengthen DGEPN capacity by the provision of specialists in environment, fisheries, and social development. These specialists will provide expertise to both DGEPN and ANPN, and it is expected that they will be absorbed by in the DGEPN structure at the end of the project, depending on national budget availability.

Component 5: Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation (GEF – US\$0.485 million).

50. This component supports the overall daily administration of the project, to ensure that regular monitoring and evaluation is carried out, and the results are fed back into decision making on project implementation. As the DGEPN is responsible for the overall administration, coordination, and implementation of the project, Component 5 will support the DGEPN with the recruitment of the following personnel: (i) a specialist/assistant in procurement; (ii) a financial management specialist/assistant; (iii) a specialist/assistant in monitoring and evaluation.

B. Project Financing

51. The five-year project is financed by a SIL (Specific Investment Loan) instrument. Total project financing requirements are estimated at US\$8.471 million (exclusive of GOG in-kind contribution which amounts to US\$37,226,267 – see details in annex 5). Detailed information on costs and financing sources is provided in the Table 2 below:

Table 2. Project Cost and Financing

Project Components	Project cost US\$	GEF Financing	% Financing
1. Improvement of Knowledge and Monitoring of Wetland Ecosystems in Gabon	600,000	1,690,000	100
1.1 Knowledge creation on wetlands ecosystems	400,000	950,000	100
1.2 Monitoring system for wetland ecosystems	200,000	740,000	100
2. Support to Sustainable Management of Selected Critical Wetland ecosystems	3,110,000	3,756,000	100
2.1 Planning for sustainable management of selected sites	150,000	746,000	100
2.2 Strengthening surveillance capacities in the selected sites.	1,960,000	2,010,000	100
2.3 Environmental-friendly community-driven activities in wetlands	1,000,000	1,000,000	100
3. Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol	950,000	950,000	100
4. Strengthen Institutional Framework to support Wetlands Management	3,326,000	1,540,000	100
5. Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation	485,000	485,000	100
Total Project Costs	8,471,000	8,471,000	100
Front-End Fees	0	0	
Total Financing Required	8,471,000	8,471,000	100

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

A. Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

52. Key entities involved in the project are: (i) the General Directorate of Environment (DGEPN) under the Ministry of Economy, Employment and Sustainable Development. The DGEPN is institutionally responsible for managing the WII sites in Gabon, and is the focal point for the Ramsar Convention; (ii) the ANPN under the Presidency is responsible for the country network of protected areas composed of 13 national reserves and; (iii) the Comités Consultatifs de Gestion Locale (CCGL) involved with implementation of national parks management plans at the local level.

53. The project will be jointly executed by the DGEPN and the ANPN because of the respective strengths of the two organizations. The ANPN, with its operational presence in the field, is responsible for the execution of Components 1 and 2. The DGEPN, which contains the focal points for the Ramsar Convention and the Nagoya Protocol, will be responsible for the execution of Component 3 and Component 4. The DGEPN is also responsible for the execution of Component 5, in respect of the project as a whole.

54. Project implementation will be based on the existing organization already established to coordinate projects on biodiversity conservation at ANPN being financed by the Government and development partners. The DGEPN will establish a project coordination unit to support its existing structure with overall project coordination.

55. Annex 3 provides further details on the implementation arrangement. The Government is also preparing detailed project implementation manuals to guide project execution. The manuals will be finalized at project negotiations and validated before project effectiveness.

B. Results Monitoring and Evaluation

56. The M&E system is based on the Results Framework (Annex 1), which provides outcome targets for annual work plans and budgets. Progress towards the PDO is measured by consultant reports on wetland ecosystem valuations; management plan documents for the selected wetland sites; and the adoption of a national wetland strategy. Component 1 on knowledge creation is tracked by the development and implementation of a research scheme, and wetland ecosystem monitoring reports. Component 2 for management planning in the selected wetland sites is monitored by progress and METT reports on community activities, and land and forest area brought under sustainable management. Component 3 creates the institutional framework for the Nagoya Protocol; hence progress here is monitored through consultant reports, and the adoption of various legal texts. Progress in Component 4, which builds capacity in the DGEPN, is monitored by the creation and operation of the National Ramsar Committee and its local sub-committees, by completion of environmental audits of operators in the selected wetland sites, and by production of wetland maps. Project management in Component 5 is monitored by workplan progress and safeguard instrument implementation.

57. As the project is jointly executed by DGEPN and ANPN, each has responsibility for data collection and progress assessment with respect to their specific components: ANPN

executes Components 1 and 2; DGEPN executes Components 3, 4, and 5. ANPN has experience in project monitoring and evaluation through the recent GEF PARCS project. The DGEPN has less experience with Bank project M&E, however it has executed one project (IDF grant), and this new project will reinforce DGEPN M&E capacity through the provision of an M&E assistant. The overall budgeted cost for M&E capacity reinforcement and implementation is US\$250,000.

58. The project Steering Committee will consult and review project progress at regular intervals. This joint management mechanism will provide the means for a regular review of indicators, and assessment of project effectiveness. At these reviews, implementation gaps can be addressed through appropriate adjustments to work plans.

C. Sustainability

59. The project evolved in response to the GOG's stated priorities: the *Gabon Vert* pillar of the PSGE prioritizes sustainable management of natural resources; and Gabon's National Report to the Ramsar Convention lists government priorities specific to the Ramsar Convention. This project thus aligns with Gabon's goals and objectives: sustainable management of its natural resources – in this case wetlands and their forests – through institutional and capacity development (within the Ramsar framework). Because the project aligns with Gabon's stated priorities, it is likely that Gabon will take ownership of the project and sustain its outcomes.

60. The Government has sustained its engagement with the Ramsar Secretariat since it became a Contracting Party in 1987, meeting its reporting requirements and participating in other Ramsar initiatives such as the Changwon Declaration on human wellbeing and wetlands. Most recently, in July 2013, the DGEPN participated in a workshop for the Ramsar project "Globwetland Africa."¹¹ It would appear that GOG is motivated to further the aims of the Ramsar Convention, which align with the objectives of this project.

61. Beyond motivation, other factors critical to the sustainability of the project concern capacity. Resources – human, equipment, financial – are limited in both the DGEPN and the ANPN. As such, and in accordance with the CPS, this project builds both the long-term capacity of these institutions (for strategic planning, cross-sectoral coordination, etc.), and the capacity for project-specific implementation. Capacity building is central to project in terms of data acquisition, knowhow, equipment, on-site implementation of the local planning processes, and national-level and cross-sectoral planning processes. Technical assistance in terms of an experienced Research Coordinator will be available throughout the life of the project to ensure that capacity development occurs as expected. Therefore, by the end of the project – given adequate financial resources – there should be enough institutional capacity – nationally and locally – to sustain the momentum of the project outcomes.

62. At the national level, the long-term sustainability of wetlands management effort ultimately depends on government budget allocation. Fortunately, as noted above, the GOG

¹¹ Joint initiative of Ramsar Secretariat and the European Space Agency (ESA) to use satellite data to monitor wetlands for sustainable water management.

appears to be motivated to further the goals of the Ramsar Convention. Hence, it is likely that the GOG will build on the investments of this project and ensure adequate resources, staffing, and equipment to carry the wetlands strategy forward, to support the National Inter-ministerial Ramsar Committee, to continue planning and management processes in three selected and other Ramsar sites, and to maintain the long-term surveillance of the WII network. All of which is both consistent with the Ramsar Convention, and the green pillar of the PSGE.

63. At the local level, the project will have built wetland management capacity in the community decision-making structures of the three selected WII sites. After the project, it will be up to the CCGL forums,¹² with continued support from the national government, to further the implementation of wetland management plans. The momentum of the planning and implementation processes at the local level will be largely driven by the success of the project in bringing all stakeholders into the decision-making process. Local communities, including operators, need to own the local plans. The project designates the ANPN to implement the planning activities at the community level. The ANPN has experience in community consultation, and is aware of the imperative that local stakeholders own their plan and participate effectively in decision making. Assuming that plan ownership is achieved, and that the GOB remains motivated to work towards its wetland resource management goals, local level project outcomes are likely to be sustained.

64. Regarding livelihood activities under sub-component 2.3, expected financial sustainability is a criterion of selection, among others. Each micro-project that is financed and managed by the community will be required to be ultimately self-sustaining, in order to provide the required incentives for continued collective management by communities. The project will ensure adequate capacity building of the communities to promote long-term sustainable management of the micro-projects.

V. KEY RISKS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

65. Potential risks are summarized in the Operational Risk Assessment Framework (see Annex 4). Overall project risk is moderate. However, anticipated risks are manageable and mitigation measures are identified. The key project risk is related to land use competition. Prospects for development of extractive industry activities in wetlands exist and this could create major pressures on the integrity of the wetlands ecosystems, jeopardizing on the medium- to long-term their capacity to deliver ecosystem services. While this could certainly create a risk for the operation, it should be highlighted that the mitigation measure is embedded in the design of the operation itself as the project will strive to develop management plans that are inclusive of diverse stakeholder interests, take account of different economic values, and promote sustainable natural resources management. A valuation of economic services provisioned by the wetlands ecosystems covered by the project will be conducted in order to inform decision-makers on potential conflicting uses and trade-offs.

¹² Comité Consultatif de Gestion Locale (CCGL) is the institutionalized forum for dialogue between local people, industrial operators, and park authorities; the goal of which is to achieve equitable natural resource use benefits.

VI. APPRAISAL SUMMARY

A. Economic and Financial Analysis

66. The PDO/GEO of the operation is *to enhance protection of biodiversity in selected forested wetlands on the Ramsar list through knowledge creation and development of conservation measures for sustainable wetlands management*. Accordingly, at the national level project benefits are linked to capacity development in terms of knowledge acquisition, technical expertise, and institutional strengthening for improved protection of wetland ecosystems. At the local level, project benefits are linked to biodiversity protection from improved capacity to implement conservation measures. Most of the benefits of this project are broad-based public goods and, as such, government with assistance from international (GEF) resources will finance the project.

67. In the absence of this project – in the absence of strengthened national and local capacity to manage forested wetlands – the risk is high that land use competition by resource industries (mining, petroleum, forestry) will create major pressures on the integrity of those ecosystems. Unfettered exploitation of Gabon’s forested wetland ecosystems could compromise the medium- to long-term capacity of these ecosystems to deliver ecosystem goods and services needed for, inter alia, biodiversity protection and climate change adaptation. This project has important synergies with national planning strategies (national climate change plan, national land use plan development), and other projects (Arc d’Emeraude, Forest Management Verification). It can help reduce the risk to forested wetlands from competing land uses by enhancing government capacity to make informed decisions about land use trade-offs.

68. Although most of the capacity building benefits are non-quantifiable, at local levels conservation measures should yield quantifiable benefits. But these measures are yet to be identified so potential benefits to local populations are unknown. Moreover, there are no data on which to base any kind of estimation of potential benefits. As the project is implemented, data, and information on measures and benefits will become available. At this stage, one can only group the likely benefits as follows: (i) reduced vulnerability and exposure to climate change hazards such as floods, storms, and coastal erosion; (ii) increased off-site benefits such as management of hydrological function and enhancement of biodiversity; and, (iii) socioeconomic benefits from improved protection and productivity of wetland products and services.

69. For the livelihood micro-projects of Component 2.3, the costs and benefits of individual proposals for the investment portfolio (total budgeted US\$1million) will be clearly identified. But as above, the net benefit of this component will only become clear during the course of project implementation.¹³

¹³ Each proposal will be evaluated for financial and economic soundness, prior to sub-project selection by a committee composed of ANPN, DGEPN and project beneficiaries to be established at implementation stage. An Income-Generating Activities Manual provides guidance for proposal selection.

70. Evidence from a similar wetland project. Given the inability to quantify benefits of this project at this stage, it is informative to consider the results of a similar wetland project. The Integrated Management Critical Ecosystems (IMCE) in Rwanda provides an indication of what a project of this type can achieve. GEF provided some US\$4 million for the IMCE project. Its GEO was to *promote the adoption of practices that integrate ecological, economic and social goals into the sustainable management of critical marshland ecosystems*.¹⁴ The project was very similar to the current GEF project in that it focused on national and local capacity development for wetland management, including knowledge acquisition, local community-based wetland management planning, and implementation of community micro-projects.

71. Like the current project, there were no data at the start on which to base an economic analysis. However, by the end of the project, although many of the benefits remained unquantifiable because they concerned capacity development, there were identifiable benefits, some quantifiable, including: 1) Increased access and reliability water supply for 4000 people across 24 villages. 2) Increased agricultural output to some 240 households for incremental output estimated at a present value (PV) of US\$1.3 million. 3) Restored electric power generation with a PV of US\$100 million.

72. National level capacity benefits of the IMCE project not amenable to quantification related to technical and institutional improvements. A national wetland law and decrees were developed and adopted. Biodiversity indicators and a Biodiversity Information System were established to track trends in land use, biodiversity, and other natural resources. A wetland inventory collected information on hydrology, land use, and vegetation cover, which was incorporated into a GIS based information system to enable monitoring and evaluation of wetland areas.

73. Local level capacity benefits related to development of local planning structures, a land cadastre, and skills for sustainable land management and alternative livelihoods. Nine wetland community-based management plans and four watershed plans were completed and under implementation. There was widespread adoption of improved land and water management practices; and a high level of nationwide wetland sensitization was achieved, along with the cessation of wetland conversion.

74. Annex 5 on incremental reasoning provides more information on the nature of the project's institutional strengthening and capacity building, and the associated national and global benefits of the project.

B. Technical

75. The approach of the project is consistent with Goal 1 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan: wise use of wetlands. Guidelines for wise use of wetlands have been formally adopted by the Contracting Parties (CPs) to the Convention: Ramsar Toolkit of wise use Handbooks [4th

¹⁴ This is the revised GEO that was adopted at the mid-term review of the IMCE project.

Edition].¹⁵ The project components mesh with these guidelines, and will benefit from them.

76. For Ramsar, the “wise use” of wetlands is “the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development”. As a CP to the Ramsar Convention, Gabon is obliged to maintain the ecological character of its WII wetlands. Component 1 checks the ecological character of the target WII sites through information generation and the establishment of monitoring capacity. Component 2 will promote ecosystem approaches, consistent with sustainable development, through development of site management plans, and the implementation of those plans. Components 1 and 2 are consistent with priority research actions cited in the Ramsar Handbook 1 (HB-1): the improvement of the knowledge base of wetland functions and values, especially socioeconomic values; and the development of techniques for monitoring ecological change.

77. A Research Coordinator in consultation with DGEPN and ANPN will set the research program of Component 1. Specific research activities will depend upon management needs and priorities, given existing information. The development of the research program should take guidance from the Ramsar Handbooks such as HB-14 Data information needs; HB-15 Wetland Inventory; HB-8 Water-related guidance; HB-9 River basin management; and HB-18 Managing wetlands.

78. The Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) tracks the ecological character of each Ramsar site. The “ecological character” of a site is defined as “the combination of the ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services that characterize the wetland *at a given point in time*.” The research of Component 1 provides information for RIS updates; and guidance on assessing changes in ecological character can be sought from HB-13 Inventory, assessment and monitoring. Component 2 activities engage all wetland stakeholders in priority setting for plan development. ANPN has already done public consultation in two of the selected sites, and can thus build on that experience. Nonetheless, relevant Ramsar guidance is found in HB-7 Participatory skills; HB-16 Impact assessment; and HB-18 Managing wetlands.

79. The DGEPN will undertake Components 3 and 4 that address national institutional needs. Component 3 (Nagoya Protocol) provides the means for eventual benefit sharing in genetic resources; and it raises awareness about yet another value of wetland ecosystems. Going further, the activities of Component 4 (National Ramsar Committee, institutional analysis and framework, national wetlands strategy), raises the profile of wetlands across sectors, which has been identified as critical to achieve the Convention’s wise use goal. Important guidance for the DGEPN is found in HB-2 National wetland policies; HB-3 Laws and institutions; HB-6 CEPA; and HB5 Partnerships.

C. Financial Management

80. The assessment of the DGEPN and ANPN was conducted and concluded that the financial management system of DGEPN and ANPN has some strengths as some staff are

¹⁵ ¹⁵Ramsar Convention Secretariat, 2010. *Wise use of wetlands: Concepts and approaches for the wise use of wetlands*. Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands, 4th edition, Volumes 1-20. Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Gland, Switzerland.

familiar with World Bank financial procedures and have handled a previous Bank's Trust funds financed project (Strengthening Capacity for Managing National Parks and Biodiversity Project-P070232 for ANPN and Capacity Building in Environment Management of Large Infrastructure Projects-P110802 for DGEPN) with last FM performance rated moderately satisfactory. After implementation of below mitigating measures, project's financial arrangements will comply with the Bank's requirements under OP/BP10.00 and considered adequate.

81. The residual FM risk is considered Substantial after implementation of the mitigation measures consisting of, (i) the adoption of the Project Implementation Manual including the manual of financial procedures; (ii) the recruitment of one financial management assistant at DGEPN, (iii) the installation of a computerized information management system to record project's transactions and produce consolidated financial reports, (iv) the recruitment of an external auditor acceptable to the Bank, and (v) the training of financial staff on financial management procedures. The detailed financial management arrangements are described in the FM annex 3.

D. Procurement

82. The assessment of ANPN capacity for the purpose of the project was assessed and found that: (i) the procurement specialist currently on board is qualified, and needs only a refresher training on the use of the new procurement and consultant guidelines dated January 2011; (ii) the procedural manual needs to be updated; (iii) a specific operations manual to guide revenue generating activities needs to be elaborated (iv) the professional members are familiar with the Bank's procurement procedures, and need only an updating on the new procurement and consultant guidelines dated January 2011.

83. The capacity assessment of DGEPN for the purpose of the project found that: (i) although the DGEPN has a recent experience in the implementation of Bank-financed projects, it appeared that DGEPN was exposed to a small operation, and their capacity needs to be strengthened in procurement through the direct assistance from the recently closed project procurement specialist of ANPN and the recruitment of a procurement assistant/specialist. (ii) the procedural manual needs to be updated; (iii) professional staff involved in the project implementation activities and the procurement unit staff members of the DGEPN, to be set up, are unfamiliar with Bank procurement procedures; and (iv) a comprehensive record keeping system needs to be established. Mitigation action plans have been developed for both entities (See details in annex 3).

84. The overall project procurement risk at the time of assessment is high. The satisfactory implementation of the action plan in annex 3 will reasonably bring this overall risk to Moderate.

85. *Procurement Plan.* The first draft of the procurement plan for the first 18 months of the project was elaborated during the preparation mission. It was reviewed during the pre-appraisal mission, and will be subject to discussions during negotiations. At implementation stage, the procurement plan will be updated in agreement with the project team at least annually or as required to reflect the actual project implementation needs and improvements

in institutional capacity. It will be available in the project's database and a summary will be disclosed on the Bank's external website once the project is approved.

E. Social (including Safeguards)

86. *Beneficiaries.* Project beneficiaries include local communities around the wetlands covered by the project, a population of approximately 70,000. These communities will be closely involved with project design and preparation with a particular focus on income-generating activities that the project will finance under sub-component 2.3 to enhance these communities' livelihoods.

87. *Gender.* In the project area, men and women alike are engaged in natural resource harvesting. The most vulnerable groups, especially women and youth, have been identified and have shown strong interest in working with the project. The project will work closely with these target groups to build their entrepreneurial capacity and to support them in the development and implementation of income-generating activities.

88. *OP 4.12.* The project will not result in any land take or compensation related issues associated with the Involuntary Resettlement Policy. However, to be sure that any potential risk of restriction of access to resource use is addressed, given that the project will prepare management plans for selected Ramsar sites, OP/BP 4.12 Involuntary Resettlement has been triggered. To this end, a Process framework was prepared and disclosed in-country and at the Infoshop prior to appraisal.

89. *OP. 4.10.* It is not expected that indigenous people will be affected by project interventions, as none live in the project sites. However, this policy is triggered for precautionary measures, because Gabon belongs to the Congo Basin countries where there are pygmy populations. An Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework will be prepared and disclosed in-country and at the Infoshop before project appraisal.

F. Environment (including Safeguards)

90. This is a category B project. As per its nature, the project is not expected to generate large scale adverse social or environmental impacts. The potential impacts are likely to be small scale and site specific, typical of category B projects. OP/BP 4.01 Environment Assessment has been triggered because under sub component 2.2 the project will build necessary infrastructure to reinforce capacities of local staff to properly implement monitoring activities in the selected sites. Under sub-component 2.3 the project also expects to develop tourism activities. Furthermore, OP/BP 4.04-Natural Habitats has also been triggered because the wetlands ecosystems are undoubtedly critical ecosystems, the project will enhance the quality of the management of these critical ecosystems and reduce risks associated with potential economic development. Given that the project covers national parks, including large mangrove areas, OP 4.36-Forest is also triggered.

91. Accordingly an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was prepared and disclosed in-country and at the Infoshop prior to appraisal.

ANNEX 1: RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND MONITORING

GABON: Sustainable Management of Critical Wetland Ecosystems

PDO/GEO: To enhance protection of biodiversity in selected forested wetlands on the Ramsar list through knowledge creation and development of conservation measures for sustainable wetlands management.

PDO Level Results Indicators*	Core	Unit of Measure	Baseline 2013	Cumulative Target Values **					Frequency	Data source/ Methodology	Responsibility for Data Collection
				Year 2014	Year 2015	Year 3 2016	Year 4 2017	Year 2018			
<i>Indicator 1:</i> Ecosystem services valuations are undertaken for each selected site	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number	0	0	0	1	2	3	Mid-term	Consultant reports	ANPN
<i>Indicator 2:</i> Management plans are prepared for each selected site	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number	0	0	0	1	2	3	Mid-term	Consultant reports	ANPN
<i>Indicator 3:</i> A national wetlands management strategy is developed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number	0	0	0	1	1	1	Project end	Strategy document	DGEPN
INTERMEDIATE RESULTS											
Intermediary Results (Component 1): Improvement of Knowledge and Monitoring of Selected Critical Wetland Ecosystems											
<i>Indicator 1:</i> a research scheme for the three selected Ramsar sites is develop and being implemented	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes/No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Annual	Research agenda	ANPN & DGEPN
<i>Indicator 2:</i> An ecological monitoring system of wetlands is implemented	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes/No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Annual	Ecological monitoring reports	ANPN
Intermediary Results (Component 2): Support to Sustainable Management of Selected Critical Wetland Ecosystems											
<i>Indicator 1:</i> Land area where SLM practices have been adopted as a result of the project	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hectares	0	0	0	5,000	7,000	10,000	Mid term and project end	Progress reports	ANPN
<i>Indicator 2:</i> Forest area under sustainable forestry management (according to forest type) is increased	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hectares	0	0	10,000	15,000	20,000	30,000	Mid term and project end	Progress reports	ANPN
<i>Indicator 3:</i> Scores from Protected Areas Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT)* has increased for selected wetlands sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Value							Mid term and project end	METT reports	ANPN
<i>Scores METT for Monts Birougou site</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Value	36	36	36	40	45	50	Mid term and project end	METT reports	ANPN
<i>Scores METT for Bas Ogooué site</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Value	13	13	13	15	20	25	Mid term and project end	METT reports	ANPN

<i>Scores METT for Sette-Cama</i>		Value	36	36	36	40	45	50	Mid term and project end	METT reports	ANPN
<i>Scores METT for petit Loango</i>		Value	49	49	49	50	55	60	Mid term and project end	METT reports	ANPN
<i>Indicator 4:</i> Direct project beneficiaries (households) of which percentage of women ¹⁶		Value %	0	0	0	50 (10%)	80 (20%)	100 (30%)	Mid term and project end	Progress reports	ANPN
Intermediary results (Component 3): Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol											
<i>Indicator 1:</i> A strategy and action plan for the implementation of the ABS provisions is in place		Yes/No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Mid term and project end	Consultant reports	DGEPN
<i>Indicator 2:</i> Administrative measures and process management tools are in place.		Value	No	No	1	3	6	6	Mid term and project end	Legal Texts	DGEPN
Intermediary Results (Component 4): Strengthen Institutional Framework to support Wetlands Management											
<i>Indicator 1:</i> The National Ramsar Committee is in place and functional		Value	0	0	1	1	1	1	Annual	Ministerial order	DGEPN
<i>Indicator 2:</i> Ramsar Sub-committees at the selected sites are in place and functional		Value	0	0	0	1	2	3	Annual	Ministerial order	DGEPN
<i>Indicator 3:</i> Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) are updated	<input type="checkbox"/>	Value	0	0	3	3	3	3	Mid term	Progress reports	DGEPN
<i>Indicator 4:</i> Environmental audits for extractive industries operating in the selected Ramsar sites are conducted		Value	0	0	1	2	3	4	Annual	Audit reports	DGEPN
<i>Indicator 5:</i> Maps including human settlements, industrial activities and hydrological systems for the selected Ramsar sites are elaborated	<input type="checkbox"/>	Value	0	0	1	2	3	3	Annual	Maps from the ANPN cartography department	ANPN
Intermediary Results (Component 5): Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation											
<i>Indicator 1:</i> Minimum implementation of annual work plan completed		Percentage	0	75	80	90	100	100	Annual	Implementation support & supervision mission reports	DGEPN/ANPN
<i>Indicator 2:</i> Project safeguard instruments are diligently implemented		S, MS, MU, U	0	MS	MS	S	S	S	Annual	Implementation support & supervision mission reports	DGEPN

S: Satisfactory; MS: Moderately Satisfactory; MU: Moderately Satisfactory; U: Unsatisfactory

¹⁶ These direct beneficiaries are the people who will benefit from income generating activities.

ANNEX 2: DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Gabon: Sustainable Management of Critical Ecosystems Project

1. The combined PDO/GEO of the operation is to enhance protection of biodiversity in selected forested wetlands on the Ramsar list through knowledge creation and development of conservation measures for sustainable wetlands management.
2. The PDO/GEO is measured by the following three indicators:
 - a) Indicator one: ecosystem services valuations are undertaken for each selected site.
 - b) Indicator two: management plans are prepared for each selected site.
 - c) Indicator three: a national wetlands management strategy is developed.

Selection of Project Areas

3. The project will focus on three Ramsar sites: Bas Ogooué, Monts Birougou, and Petit Loango/Setté-Cama. These sites were selected by the DGEPN based on: (i) the importance of wetland ecosystem services for local populations, and climate change adaptation and mitigation; (ii) the threats to the wetland ecosystems from competing land uses; and (iii) initiatives already undertaken at the sites. Annex 7 provides the biodiversity assessment of each site.
4. The selection process also prioritized a diverse representation of marine and terrestrial biodiversity. Thus, the three sites chosen represent coastal, alluvial plain, and high interior, heavily forested wetland habitats. Applied to these three sites, the project objective of enhancing protection of forested wetlands through conservation measures for sustainable wetland management aligns with GEF objectives for the Biodiversity (BD1), Land Degradation (LD3), and Sustainable Forest Management/REDD+ (SFM/REDD+1) focal areas.
5. **Bas Ogooué** ((862,700 ha) is a large alluvial plain in the west of the country, with lakes, rivers, riparian marshes, savanna, and dense forest. It constitutes the interior delta of the river Ogooué where rivers and lakes combine to provide a navigable waterway, for goods and people, between the interior towns of Ndjolé, Lambaréné, and Port-Gentil on the coast. The flood plains and the high level of vegetation of the area also provide flood protection to downstream areas. The site is habitat for primates (gorilla, chimpanzee, mandrill), large mammals (hippopotamus, buffalo, elephant, manatee), migrant bird populations, turtles, reptiles (black and Nile crocodiles), and many fish species. Of the three selected sites, Bas Ogooué is the most densely populated, which leads to varying pressures on the wetland areas from fishing, hunting, tourism; and competing land uses such as slash and burn agriculture, and forestry. In collaboration with the Ministry of Water and Forests and the Ministry of Fisheries, WWF has conducted various research, education and awareness activities at this site.
6. **Monts Birougou** (536,800 ha) is a high elevation (800-900 m) forested wetland area interspersed with swamps and savanna. It is an important water tower for Gabon, as it is the source of the Nyanga and Ngounié rivers and their main tributaries. The site is an important breeding and feeding site for different species of freshwater fish. Local people use its ecosystem products for construction, food, and clothing; and the area has cultural and religious value to the

country as a whole. The site contains 20 species of primates including gorilla and chimpanzee; other large mammals include both the forest and savanna elephants. Population density is low, but the site is threatened by forestry and mining activities, and destructive (chemical) fishing practices. Some research and planning has been undertaken in this site because the Monts Birougou WII site contains within its boundaries the Birougou National Park, for which the ANPN has prepared a management plan.

7. **Petit Loango + Setté-Cama.** (480,000 + 220,000 ha) These are in fact two linked Ramsar sites that are treated as one site for the purpose of this project. Both are coastal plain wetlands. Petit Loango is set in a mangrove and rainforest environment important for flood control, sediment capture, and bank stabilization. Setté-Cama is a sand plain important for its fish spawning, feeding, and breeding grounds; and water supply to nearby town of Gamba. The sites are important habitat for large mammals (hippopotamus, elephant, manatee), turtles, birds, amphibians, and reptiles. Both sites benefit from tourism. Both sites have low population density, but both are threatened by nearby oil exploitation. Some research and planning has been done in this site by ANPN, which prepared a management plan for the Loango National Park. The Petit Loango WII site is within the boundary of the Loango National Park, and the Setté Cama WII site falls in its buffer zone.

Project Components

8. **Component 1: Improvement of Knowledge and Monitoring of Selected Critical Wetland Ecosystems (GEF – US\$0.600 million).** This component will generate knowledge on wetlands in Gabon and set up a reliable monitoring system that can produce early warnings on potential alterations of wetland ecosystems. This component is divided into two sub-components.

9. **Sub-Component 1.1: Knowledge creation on wetland ecosystems.** Gabonese wetland ecosystems are poorly understood. The existing scientific literature is fragmented and insufficient, which is highlighted by the succinct descriptions sent to the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention. So far, research work has been conducted in an ad hoc manner, which does not provide a comprehensive understanding of the natural and socioeconomic dynamics of these ecosystems.

10. Forested wetland ecosystems in Gabon, however, provide important services such as water purification for drinking water for large urban centers; fish breeding habitats for the fishing industry; and climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration.

11. This sub-component will support research work on the biological wealth and socioeconomic dimensions of Gabon's wetland ecosystems. This research will identify and quantify the multiple ecosystem services delivered by wetlands. The ultimate goal of this information is to help decision-makers better understand the importance of wetlands and the potential trade-offs with other competing activities in the wetlands (with a specific focus on forested wetlands).

12. Targeted research will focus on three selected Ramsar WII sites: Petit Loango/Setté-Cama, Monts Birougou, and Bas-Ogooué. An international Research Coordinator will be recruited to develop a research program and oversee the research activities of Component 1.

13. Research program development will begin by compiling existing research and information, to identify gaps and priorities for further data and information collection. Of particular relevance are the recent analyses and planning activities by ANPN, who completed management plans for two national parks: Loango and Birougou. Partially contained within the boundaries of these two national parks are two of the three selected WII sites: Petit Loango/Setté-Cama and Monts Birougou. In the third selected WII site – Bas Ogooué – WWF has conducted research to assess the site's status and the threats to its biodiversity. WWF has also done data collection and boundary redefinition. From these sources and others, the research program will compile existing research and information on the three sites.

14. The research program will be based on identified research needs for priority issues in the selected Ramsar WII sites. With guidance from the Ramsar Handbooks,¹⁷ and in consultation with DGEPN and ANPN, the Research Coordinator will prioritize environmental and socioeconomic research for this sub-component. He/she will develop the TOR for individual research activities, which will be undertaken by both national and international research entities. Research activities will involve:

- (a) Diagnostic Studies. The ecological character of the selected wetland sites will be determined through targeted research that builds on existing research. The research recently completed by ANPN for its park management plans will be extended as appropriate to cover the WII sites associated with the respective national park areas. Targeted research in the Bas Ogooué WII site will build on that done by WWF. TOR for the diagnostic studies will entail as appropriate data collection and analysis of the physical, hydrological, biological, and socioeconomic components of the sites, including identification of resource use pressures and conflicts emanating from within the site, and from the larger catchment area.

Research priorities that have already been identified in the ANPN management plans as important to the WII sites within their boundaries may figure in the research program. For example, oil spill risk assessment, threats to the manatee population, and the potential for fish farming are wetland priorities within the management plan of the Loango National Park, which could be prioritized for the research under this sub-component.

- (b) Economic valuation of wetland ecosystem services. The economic worth of the ecosystem services provided to society by intact, naturally functioning wetlands has never been quantified in Gabon. However, the valuation work of this project will benefit from recent (2013) TEEB water and wetlands valuation research supported by the Ramsar Secretariat.¹⁸ The activity will conduct economic valuations of ecosystem services provisioned by the wetland ecosystems in the three WII sites. This exercise will help assess the potential trade-offs between wetland conservation and conversion to 'more valuable' intensive land use. For all three WII sites, research for the economic valuation work will require an inventory of the wetland goods and services directly and indirectly benefiting local populations. For

¹⁷ Ramsar Convention Secretariat, 2010. *Wise use of wetlands: Concepts and approaches for the wise use of wetlands*. Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands, 4th edition, Volumes 1-20. Ramsar Convention Secretariat, Gland, Switzerland.

¹⁸ TEEB. 2013. *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) for Water and Wetlands*. Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) and the Ramsar Secretariat. www.teebweb.org

all three sites, some socioeconomic and wetland use data are available, but where lacunae exist, targeted data capture may be required for the valuations.

- (c) Traditional Uses Research. The traditional uses of natural resources (including medicinal plants) in wetland ecosystems will be documented. This information will inform the Nagoya Protocol (Component 3).

15. The Research Coordinator will also consult with the research coordinator for the AFD Arc d'Emeraude project in the WII sites of Akanda and Pongara. The components of the Arc d'Emeraude project are similar to those of this project (see Table 2 Annex 5). Hence, there are project synergies that will facilitate the development of a national wetland monitoring system (sub-Component 1.2) and the development of a national wetland strategy (Component 4).

16. Sub-Component 1.2: Monitoring system for wetland ecosystems. Article 3.2 of the Ramsar Convention provisions that “Each Contracting Party shall arrange to be informed at the earliest possible time if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory and included in the List has changed, is changing, or is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference.” Such a monitoring system is not in place in Gabon.

17. The objectives of this sub-component are to define and operationalize the most appropriate monitoring system for ecological, physicochemical, and socioeconomic characteristics of the wetlands in Gabon. The ANPN has developed management plans, which include monitoring strategies, for the national park areas that are close to or within this project's selected Ramsar sites. Accordingly, this project will build on the monitoring system work already done by ANPN in Petit Loango and Birougou. It will also benefit from monitoring system development work being done through the AFD project in the Pongara and Akanda Ramsar sites.

18. The Research Coordinator will oversee the development and implementation of a monitoring system for Gabon's Ramsar sites. Informed by the Ramsar Handbooks, the Research Coordinator will work closely with both the DGEPN and ANPN to ensure that the information and data capture of Component 1 facilitates the development of an appropriate monitoring system for the sites. The Research Coordinator will consult with the AFD project in the Akanda and Pongara Ramsar WII sites to share lessons and promote consistency in monitoring system development. The Research Coordinator will also consult with ODDIG¹⁹ for collaborative opportunities for monitoring of industry operations in the sites. The proposed monitoring system will be validated at a DGEPN/ANPN internal workshop. The activities of sub-component 1.2 are thus:

- (a) Wetland Monitoring System. Each selected site requires a monitoring strategy, which collectively builds a national monitoring system. These will be based on the site diagnostic work of Component 1.1 which: i) identifies site-specific threats (fishing or hunting effort/methods, habitat fragmentation, pollution, erosion); ii) evaluates those threats (actual or potential, extent, severity, and irreversibility); and prioritizes them (high, medium, low priority). Based on the diagnostic, potential protective interventions (pollution control, fisheries management, community forestry) will be identified. The associated monitoring strategy will be developed to target what needs to be monitored (pollution levels, fish

¹⁹ Observatoire de promotion, de Développement Durable, des produits et services de l'Industrie du Gabon.

capture methods, forest encroachment, poaching, etc.), and to define the monitoring effort for the particular environmental threats within the different zones of the protected area.

Operationalizing the monitoring strategy requires defining and implementing the appropriate monitoring effort for the site: number and type of monitoring posts (permanent or semi-permanent); types of surveillance (VMS, radio, stationary, walking, water, or vehicle patrols); number of personnel; training (basic survival, equipment use, information collection and reporting, legal procedures, ethical conduct); and provision of appropriate equipment and basic needs (navigational and camping equipment, living quarters). It also requires identifying the authorities and other actors in the site: ANPN, MINEF, DGEPN, police, commercial operators, NGOs and CSO. These entities support the monitoring effort variously through information provision, and monitoring and enforcement back-up.

The collection and transmission of environmental and socioeconomic information from the sites is essential for site management and tracking of the ecological components of the wetlands and their forests. To monitor the national parks, ANPN used MIST software until July 2013, when it adopted the SMART software.²⁰ The SMART system of reporting is flexible enough to include various environmental indicators, which are reported by ecoguards and transmitted to the ANPN. SMART will be the reporting software used for the expanded monitoring system developed by this project.

- (b) Capacity Reinforcement. Technical and human capacity will be an integral part of the activities of this sub-component, to ensure that the wetland monitoring system is functional and sustainable. An evaluation of Gabon's existing environmental monitoring capacity will be done to ensure that the wetland monitoring system is adapted to existing technical and human capacities, and to identify where capacity reinforcement is needed. For example, equipment, and technical and human capacity will need to be strengthened in the selected sites. Similarly, capacity may need reinforcement at the national laboratories providing analyses to DGEPN and/or ANPN.

19. Component 2: Support to Sustainable Management of Selected Critical Wetland Ecosystems (GEF – US\$3.110 million). The development and implementation of planning tools are essential to the proper management of WII, but they cannot yield the expected results if not accompanied with appropriate equipment and human resources on the ground. Component 2 will target this two-fold approach in the selected WII sites: planning tool development with equipped implementation.

20. Sub-Component 2.1: Planning for sustainable management of selected sites. The situations of the Ramsar sites in Gabon are quite varied in terms of legal status, geographical and hydrological features, and typology of pressures. As of today, there is no management plan (or any planning tool) that appropriately defines the modalities to support sustainable management of the wetland ecosystems. Therefore, these tools need to be developed, but in a targeted manner to ensure that the specific challenges and threats of each wetland area are addressed appropriately.

²⁰ The two systems are linked, but the SMART is the newer generation of protected area software, being more comprehensive and flexible than its predecessor, MIST.

21. To that end, guided by the Ramsar Handbooks, and in consultation with other government agencies, development partners and private operators active in the sites, this sub-component will: prepare wetland management plans for the three selected WII sites, based on extensive consultative work in those sites, and the results of research activities undertaken in Component 1.

- (a) Community Consultation. Communities have been consulted on wetland uses and issues to varying degrees in the three selected WII sites. The ANPN conducted extensive community consultation in the course of developing management plans for two national parks. These two parks overlap with two of the selected WII sites: Petit Loango/Setté-Cama and Monts Birougou. At each of these sites, a Comité Consultatif de Gestion Locale (CCGL)²¹ is functioning. Hence, consultation at these sites will build on the working relationships and agreements already established with the community by ANPN.

In the case of the third selected WII site – Bas Ogooué – there has been little contact between local communities and the DGEPN or the ANPN, and there is no local CCGL. Thus, at Bas Ogooué a first priority of the consultation process for management plan development is the establishment of a CCGL.

- (b) Wetland Management Plans. Three management plans for the three selected Ramsar WII sites will be prepared, and implementation will be started. The plans will be informed by the diagnostic work of Component 1, coupled with community consultation to set priorities, rank threats, and develop acceptable management strategies for both.

22. Project implementation will require cross-sector consultation and coordination. The DG of Water and Forests will be consulted for potential collaboration on SFM opportunities in the selected sites. Synergies will be sought with the AFD project in the forestry sector: Forest Management Verification (see Table 2 Annex 5). This AFD project reinforces forestry management capacity, which includes, inter alia, forestry best practices and forest information communication. The DGs of Fisheries and Aquatic Ecosystems will be consulted for input on local fisheries improvement possibilities; and the DG of Agriculture and the agricultural institute IGAD²² will be engaged for input on agricultural production possibilities and opportunities to increase local capacity for SLM.

23. Sub-Component 2.2: Strengthen surveillance capacities in the selected sites. Unless they are included in a national park, most of the existing Ramsar sites do not have adequate monitoring activities, mostly because of insufficient staff on the ground and lack of equipment.

24. The goal of this sub-component is to reinforce the capacity of local people in the three selected WII sites to monitor activities through: (i) the provision of appropriate equipment and infrastructure; (ii) training in surveillance of protected areas; and (iii) engagement of local people through education and awareness raising activities. More specifically, for each of the three WII sites, this sub-component will:

²¹ The CCGL is a forum for dialogue between local people, industrial operators, and park authorities; the goal of which is to achieve equitable natural resource use benefits.

²² Institut Gabonais d'Appui au Développement

- (a) Provide infrastructure and equipment. The capacity of local staff to properly implement monitoring activities on the ground in the selected three sites will be reinforced through (i) the construction of permanent staff quarters; and (ii) the provision of equipment including six terrain-appropriate vehicles, size-appropriate boats for the particular water bodies, uniforms, camping material, navigation equipment (GPS), communication equipment (VHF), camera equipment.
- (b) Train Ecoguards. Local staff will be trained on monitoring activities. ANPN has expertise in training protected area guards; as training was delivered to ecoguards in the National Parks under the previous GEF-financed project, and it proved to be efficient. The conservation software systems SMART already used by the ANPN for the monitoring of the National Parks will be adapted for an expanded network of protected areas.
- (c) Support community monitoring of wetlands. Community engagement in wetland monitoring is critical to achieving management objectives. Through the Comités Consultatif de Gestion Locale (CCGL) in the three selected sites, communication, education, and awareness building activities will be on-going activities. Community engagement for monitoring could involve regular site visits that, for example, deliver technical assistance on sustainable fisheries management; or conduct village seminars and school visits to talk about wetland management objectives, monitoring issues, and resource use conflict resolution. The national park management plans developed by ANPN contain strategies for on-going communication and engagement with local communities.
- (d) Provide for recurrent expenditures. Recurrent operating expenses for the equipment supplied to local staff in the selected Ramar sites will be covered under this sub-component. Eligible recurrent expenditures include petrol, and equipment maintenance.

25. Sub-Component 2.3: Environmental-friendly community-driven activities in wetlands.

Other economic options exist to support sustainable wetlands management. At COP-11 in July 2012, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and UNWTO launched a publication that highlights the considerable value of wetlands for tourism and the economic benefits that tourism can bring for the management of wetland sites.

26. The objective of this sub-component is to help communities adjacent to the selected Ramsar sites develop income-generating activities for sustainable wetland management. As appropriate, this will be done in partnership with local NGOs and CSOs; and in collaboration with other government entities, notably those responsible for tourism development, forestry, fisheries, and agriculture.

27. Eligible livelihood activities for tourism development include: (i) infrastructure (access roads, campsites, docks, boat ramps, watchtowers); and (ii) community or private micro-enterprises including restaurants and concession stands, lodges, artisanal crafts, nature guides, and transport (terrestrial and fluvial). The management plans developed by ANPN for the two national parks that overlap with two of the selected WII areas propose strategies for tourism development. These will provide guidance for tourism development in the associated wetland sites.

28. Other sustainable economic activities eligible for project financing include: (i) fish farming development or improvement of local capture fisheries (equipment, transformation, marketing); (ii) fiber harvesting, apiculture, and plant nurseries; (iii) horticulture; (iv) transformation of agricultural products (cassava, groundnut); (v) Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP) and medicinal herbs product development; (vi) small livestock production (small ruminants, poultry).

29. Micro-projects related to the above eligible types of activities will be selected based on the following criteria: (i) environmental and social sustainability; (ii) ecological interest; (iii) economic sustainability; (iv) proof of land ownership; (v) financial and technical feasibility of the activity; and (vi) proof of beneficiary financial contribution.

30. Thresholds of financing and funds allocation: maximum financing allowances per micro-project are as follows:

- (a) Ceiling for an individual micro-project: 2 million FCFA (US\$4,000);
- (b) Ceiling for a micro-project for a community association: 10 million FCFA (US\$20,000);
- (c) Ceiling for tourism related micro projects involving infrastructure development: 20 million FCFA (US\$40,000).

31. The project is expected to finance development and implementation of about 60 micro-projects over the project duration to benefit about 100 households in the project area.

32. Two categories of micro-project recipients are eligible for the project funds: communities organized in groups (community associations) and individuals. The recipients must satisfy the following criteria: (i) be a resident of a village adjacent to project sites; (ii) have experience in the sector of the proposed micro project; (iii) have a bank account; (iv) provide proof of personal contribution (10% in cash or in-kind for an individual; 5% or in kind for a community association); (v) an official recognition (for community associations); (vi) be a functional community association; and (vii) provide a certificate of residence (individuals).

33. An income-generating activities manual is being developed by the Government to guide the selection, implementation and closure process of income-generating activities.

34. Component 3: Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol (GEF – US\$0.950 million). Gabon has clearly led the way in the Africa region, being the first country to ratify the Nagoya Protocol in May 2011. (Gabon was the twenty-second signatory of the Protocol). Moreover, Gabon has already completed a draft national strategy and plan of action to implement the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS).²³ The objective of this component is, therefore, to consolidate and implement the measures contained in the strategy document, and thereby operationalize the Nagoya Protocol.

²³ National Strategy on Access to Biological and Genetic Resources, and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising out of the Use Thereof. MEESD. Directorate General of the Environment and the Protection of Nature. National Focal Point of the Convention on Biological Diversity. 2012.

35. Led by the National Focal Point for the Nagoya Protocol located in the DGEPN, the activities under this component will:

- (a) Strengthen the capacity of the stakeholders. This involves: i) mapping out the principal actors to define their place and role in the ABS process; ii) organizing Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness (CEPA) sessions on the Nagoya Protocol and the ABS process; and iii) training principal actors in local communities and management personnel in Customs Administration, and the Ministry of Water and Forests, on ABS procedures²⁴
- (b) Develop and validate legislative and administrative measures. The implementation of the Nagoya Protocol requires that each country have an appropriate legal and institutional framework. To that end, this component will: i) develop ABS procedural tools, particularly specimen agreements, the mechanism for access to genetic resources, the process to obtain Prior Informed Consent [PIC] and Mutually Agreed Terms [MAT], the procedural manual for the ABS process for benefit sharing; and ii) the adoption of legislation and regulations to bring the Nagoya Protocol into law with provisions for a dispute resolution mechanism, protection of Traditional Knowledge, Innovation and Practices, and agreements on the transfer of genetic/biological material.
- (c) Implement the institutional framework. The institutional framework for the Nagoya Protocol will: i) create the National Advisory Committee on ABS; ii) establish a Center of Biodiversity Information Exchange, which is a mechanism for sharing ABS information globally; and iii) identify potential biological and genetic resource check points in the operational framework for ABS agreements.

36. Component 4: Strengthen Institutional Framework to support Wetlands Management (GEF – US\$3,326 million). On one hand, the diversity of the Ramsar WII in Gabon requires that local governance mechanisms be adjusted to the specific local circumstances; on the other hand, there is a need to strengthen the overall governance at the national level. This component will establish an institutional framework favorable to the sustainable management of Gabon's WII both at the national and site levels.

37. The National Focal Point for the Ramsar Convention in Gabon is located in DGEPN, and the DGEPN will oversee the research work and institutional coordination associated with activities under Component 4. These activities involve:

- (a) Technical Assistance from the Ramsar Secretariat. A MOU will be established with the Ramsar Secretariat to provide technical support to DGEPN for the development and implementation of a national institutional framework for the management of Gabon's network of Ramsar sites.

²⁴ In accordance with the Nagoya Protocol, Gabon has also developed a National Strategy and Action Plan for the Sustainable Management of Non-Linear Forest Products. The Action Plan is to be implemented by a designated structure, within the Ministry of Water and Forests, for NTFP (fr. PFABO: Produits Forestiers Autres que le Bois d'Œuvre).

- (b) Institutional Analyses. With guidance from the Ramsar Handbooks, analyses will be undertaken to (i) assess the existing policy framework for wetland protection in Gabon; and (ii) assess the institutional structures currently governing each WII site. The studies will propose recommendations to strengthen the policy and institutional frameworks to better achieve wetland protection objectives. The studies will be validated at internal workshops of inter-ministerial government representatives.
- (c) Research Coordinator. A research coordinator will be located in DGEPN. In consultation with ANPN, and the research coordinator for the AFD Arc d’Emeraude project, he/she will develop the research agenda for the three selected Ramsar sites, ensure the implementation of that agenda, and circulate research results to government entities working on strategic issues (climate change, land use planning, ecosystem service accounting), and other implicated development partners.
- (d) Technical Assistance. Capacity at DGEPN will be strengthened by the provision of specialists in environment, a fisheries, and social development. These assistants will provide expertise to both the DGEPN and the ANPN.
- (e) Cartographic capacity. Mapping capacity in DGEPN will be strengthened to generate wetland maps geocoded with environmental and socioeconomic data (obtained in sub-Component 1.1). An evaluation of existing mapping capacity will be undertaken to determine deficiencies in DGEPN. Appropriate mapping software will be acquired, and training in its use will be provided to those tasked with data input and analysis and map generation.
- (f) Environmental Audits. As a basic modality for integrated natural resource management, this component will conduct environmental audits of industrial operations (mining, forestry) operating in and around the three WII sites. These audits will assess to what extent industrial operators are implementing their Environmental Management Plans to mitigate impacts from their operations. For this activity, beneficial collaboration will be sought with ODDIG, the newly established industry monitoring body. Information from these audits will raise awareness about land management issues by informing government, operators, and other wetland stakeholders about industrial pressures on wetlands. This activity will also propose potential remedial actions on the part of operators. Information from the audits will inform the management plans of all three WII sites.
- (g) The National Ramsar Committee. Consultation and workshops will be conducted to achieve an inter-ministerial decree to create a National Ramsar Committee for Gabon. Sub-committees for each Ramsar WII site will also be created. Meetings will be held regularly to raise awareness across government institutions. The role of the Ramsar Committee is to support cross-sectoral understanding and treatment of wetland issues, and supervise the management of the WII network in Gabon and report back to the Convention.
- (h) National Wetland Strategy. Based on the data analysis and information obtained in Component 1, and the priority setting and resource use planning work of Component 2, this activity will develop a national wetlands strategy, in consultation as appropriate, with other government DGs.

- (i) Equipment. This project will provide equipment to enhance the capacity of DGEPN to undertake the necessary consultation, coordination, and supervisory activities of Components 4 and 5. This includes the provision of up to two vehicles and necessary office equipment (computers, printers), as well as their maintenance costs.

38. Component 5: Project Management, Monitoring, and Evaluation (GEF – US\$0.485 million). This component supports the overall daily administration of the project, to ensure that regular monitoring and evaluation is carried out, and results are fed back into decision making on project implementation. As the DGEPN is responsible for the overall administration, coordination, and implementation of the project, Component 5 will support the DGEPN with the recruitment of the following personnel: (i) a specialist/assistant in procurement; (ii) a finance management specialist/assistant; and (iii) a specialist/assistant in monitoring and evaluation. Support to financial management at the DGEPN also includes the acquisition of SAGE accounting software.

39. Government will also provide in-kind contribution of US\$2million to this component to cover salaries of civil servants staff that will implement the project, and to provide office facilities devoted to the project.

40. Although DGEPN is responsible for overall project implementation, the project is jointly executed by the DGEPN and the ANPN because of the respective strengths of the two organizations. The ANPN, with its operational presence in the field, is responsible for the execution of Components 1 and 2. The DGEPN, which contains the focal points for the Ramsar Convention and the Nagoya Protocol, will be responsible for the execution of Component 3 and Component 4.

41. Detailed manuals for the administrative and financial management of the project will guide project implementation.

ANNEX 3: IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Gabon: Sustainable Management of Critical Wetland Ecosystems Project

Project Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

Project administration mechanisms

1. The General Directorate of Environment and the Protection of Nature (DGEPN) under the Ministry of Economy, Employment and Sustainable Development (MEESD) is institutionally responsible for managing the WII network in Gabon, and is the focal point for the Ramsar Convention. Therefore the DGEPN will be responsible for overall project coordination. DGEPN also has experience in managing and implementing an IDF grant, which closed in December 2012, and the Bank has rated the overall implementation of the IDF by DGEPN satisfactory.
2. Given that: (i) some WII sites covered by the project lie within the boundaries or in the buffer zones of the National Parks that are under the responsibility of the *Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux* (ANPN); (ii) the ANPN has capacities in terms of project management based on its experience implementing the GEF-PARCS project, which closed on June 30, 2013; and (iii) its presence on the ground to implement conservation activities, this institution will also play a critical role in project implementation.
3. The project will be therefore jointly executed by the DGEPN and the ANPN because of the respective strengths of the two organizations. The ANPN, with its operational presence in the field, is responsible for the execution of Components 1 and 2. The DGEPN, which contains the focal points for GEF, the Ramsar Convention, and the Nagoya Protocol, will be responsible for the execution of Components 3 and 4. The DGEPN is also responsible for the execution of Component 5, in respect of overall project coordination, for MEESD.
4. The DGEPN and ANPN will also take advantage of implementation assistance from government partners. The integrated natural resource planning nature of this project requires that the DGEPN and ANPN consult with other government services and institutions, which is within the mandate of the DGEPN. National wetland strategy development, local wetland management planning and implementation, and development of revenue generating activities will involve consultation and collaboration with implicated government departments and their local offices. As appropriate, the DGEPN will establish MOUs with other government departments, such as the DG of Forests (for SFM activities in forest concessions within or on the periphery of the selected sites); the DG of Fish and Aquaculture and the DG of Aquatic Ecosystems (for fisheries management and development, and wetland activity planning); and the DG of Agriculture (for assistance with the identification of local agricultural opportunities).²⁵ As the project also foresees the development of local tourism activities, the

²⁵ La Direction Générale des forêts; la Direction Générale de la pêche et de l'aquaculture; la Direction Générale des écosystèmes aquatiques; la Direction Générale of Agriculture, de l'Élevage, de la Pêche et du Développement Rural.

Ministry responsible for tourism will be consulted on Gabon's Tourism Strategy;²⁶ however, the project will capitalize on the considerable tourism development planning already undertaken by the ANPN.

5. Other implementing partners of the project include AFD, which is undertaking parallel activities in the Ramsar wetlands of Akanda and Pongara. Synergies will also be sought with the AFD forestry project to improve capacity for cross-sector natural resource management.²⁷ Various NGOs that have been active in the field for some time, and have worked with ANPN will assist project implementation. These include WWF and WCS, both of whom have been active in Bas Ogooué, Petit Loango, and Setté-Cama; as well as some of Gabon's many local NGOs engaged in community activity development. For the development of sustainable agriculture activity in the selected sites, the agriculture support institute IGAD²⁸ will be consulted.

6. The project will also look for opportunities for productive collaboration with ODDIG²⁹ – the newly established national system for monitoring industrial activities. ODDIG is developing environmental and social indicators of the impacts of industrial operations, in order to improve the environmental and social sustainability of the latter.

7. The following two committees will be established with clear terms of reference before project effectiveness:

- A Steering Committee chaired by the Ministry of Economy, Employment and Sustainable Development and comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Fisheries, Forestry, Mining, Tourism, Agriculture, and any other key actors such as NGOs involved with wetlands issues. The Project Steering Committee will be responsible for: (i) approving policy guidelines and providing overall supervision for project implementation; (ii) approving the annual work plans and budget; (iii) approving the annual procurement plan; and (iv) reviewing the project annual implementation performance and overseeing the implementation of corrective actions, when necessary.
- Technical Committee: This committee is made up of senior technical staff from the ministries of Economy, Employment and Sustainable Development, Fisheries, Forestry, Mining, Tourism, Agriculture and nature conservation NGOs. Development partners with projects in wetlands, national parks, or forestry management can also be represented on this body. This committee will be responsible for providing technical advice to the Steering Committee on project documentation prior to their annual meetings or extraordinary meetings.

8. Detailed implementation and institutional arrangements of the project can be found in the project implementation manual prepared by the Government.

²⁶ Ministre de la Promotion des Investissements, des Travaux Publics, des Transports, de l'Habitat et du tourisme, chargé de l'aménagement du territoire.

²⁷ AFD projects Arc d'Emeraude and Forest Management Verification.

²⁸ Institut Gabonais d'Appui au Développement

²⁹ Observatoire de promotion, de Développement Durable, des produits et services de l'Industrie du Gabon.

Financial Management, Disbursement and Procurement Arrangements

Overview of Project and implementing entity

Country Issues

1. Gabon has embarked on a series of major reforms and initiatives including the adoption of a new organic budget law in 2010³⁰ and a new procurement code on April 2012³¹, the ongoing development of budget management system (Vectis), the outsourcing of public investments program to a Contract Management Agency (ANGT) run by Betchel, and the creation of Finance and Administrative Directorates (DCAF, *Directions Centrales des Affaires Financières*) in line ministries with the view to ease the transition to program-based budgeting approach as well as devolution of budget authority.
2. Against this background, critical challenges in PFM remain as highlighted in the Bank Public Expenditure Review (2012 PER). These challenges relate to (i) the misalignment between public spending and development goals, (ii) the lack of a comprehensive public investment management system to manage the current tripling of the investment budget, (iii) the low capital budget execution on priority sectors, (iv) the poor value-for-money in public spending, and (v) the insufficiencies in the financial report arrangements³². The underlying causes include among others, outdated procurement bidding documents; lack of transparency in the procurement process, lack and/or delay in preparing the planning and budget execution tools (e.g. procurement/commitment/disbursement plans), lack of manual of procedures guiding the elaboration of the financial reports and more generally weak PFM capacities at sectorial level.
3. To improve its economic performance, GoG has requested from the Bank a technical assistance [in a number of areas including Public Financial Management]. To this end, a first Reimbursement Advisory Services (RAS) amounting to USD 2 million was signed and disbursed on November 2011. The PFM activities under this first RAS [P130564] focusing on the improvement of the budget preparation were duly completed and received both client and Bank recognition. They specifically related to (i) the timely elaboration for 2013 annual budget, of procurement, commitment and disbursement plans in key 6 lines ministries, (ii) the development of a manual of procedures for the elaboration of the administrative accounts, and (iii) the piloting of the performance audit in the health sector with the aim to assess the value-for-money of the underlined spending. A second RAS is on-going and will enhance the above results.

³⁰ This is being readapted to comply with CEMAC PFM Directives adopted on December 2011.

³¹ This includes among others, the creation of a Procurement Regulatory Agency (ARMP), the decentralization of the Directorate of Public Procurement in line ministries.

³² Since 2009, the Court of Account is issuing a qualification on the annual financial reports as a result of comprehensiveness in the administrative accounts produced by the Ministry of Budget.

Risk Assessment and Mitigation

Risk	Risk rating	Risk Mitigating Measures Incorporated into Project Design	Risk after mitigation measures	Remarks
Country level Weak capacity in Public Financial Management	H	RAS is ongoing with the aim to improve budget execution and value for money audit performed by SAI with World Bank support	H	
Entity level DGEPN and ANPN have been exposed to World Bank funded procedures through small TF projects	M	Rely on DGEPN and ANPN. Both entities have previous experience in managing World Bank funded projects	M	
Project level Lack of collaboration between DGEPN and ANPN	M	Define a clear mechanism of collaboration in the implementation manual	M	
INHERENT RISK	M		M	
Budgeting Delay in the preparation of PTBA due to late communication of budget information by technical Directorate (DGEPN) involved and ANPN	S	Establish a clear timeline and responsibilities for budget preparation and monitoring in the manual of financial and administrative procedures	S	Preparation
Accounting Accounting transactions not timely recorded at DGEPN due to workload	S	Recruit one financial management assistant at DGEPN	M	Preparation/Implementation
Internal Controls and Internal Audit Risk of ineligible expenditures	S	Include in the project manual of procedures a clear description of role and function that prevent any segregation of duties. Intensive training on FM compliance and procedures issues	S	Preparation/Implementation
Funds Flow Delay in the funds release if <i>Caisse de Dépôt et de Consignations</i> (CDC) hosts the Designated Account as the latter doesn't comply with 8 criteria of disbursement letter.	S	Open 2 Designated Accounts in a commercial bank acceptable to the World Bank. One for activities managed by DGEPN and one for activities managed by ANPN	M	Preparation
Financial Reporting Delay in producing acceptable consolidated IFRs	S	Install a computerized information system at DGEPN and ANPN with consolidation module to record transactions and produce financial statements	M	Preparation/implementation
Auditing Delay in submitting external	M	Recruit an external auditor according to ToR acceptable to	M	Implementation

audit report as experienced with previous TF managed by DGEPN and ANPN		the World Bank Close follow up of recruitment process and get support from the Supreme Audit Institution.		
CONTROL RISK	S		S	
Overall FM risk	S		S	

The overall residual risk rating is deemed **Substantial**.

Strengths

4. DGEPN and ANPN staffs are familiar with World Bank financed projects.

Weaknesses and Action Plan to reinforce the fiduciary arrangements

5. Although having past experience with World Bank's funded project procedures, an approved financial and administrative manual of procedures is not yet in place and the civil servants working at DGEPN may not have a lot of time to dedicate to the project.

Significant Weaknesses or risks	Action	Responsible body	Completion
Lack of acceptable fiduciary manual	Prepare the project implementation manual including fiduciary procedures	DGEPN	Negotiation
Overload work at DGEPN	Recruit a financial management assistant	DGEPN	2 months after effectiveness
Absence of acceptable external audit arrangements	Recruit an external auditor according to ToR acceptable to IBRD	DGEPN	4 months after effectiveness
Lack of computerized accounting system	Install a computerized information system with consolidation module	DGEPN/ANPN	Implementation

6. **Staffing:** DGEPN and ANPN are both staffed with one finance and administrative officer and one accountant who have been exposed to World Bank financed project procedures. These FM staff are civil servants and will be involved in this project management as an example of partial use of country system. The FM staff will record transactions, monitor the compliance of transactions with fiduciary requirements; prepare the Withdrawal Application and financial reports. In addition, one financial management assistant will be hired at DGEPN to reduce the workload resulting from the management of the project and will be in charge of consolidating DGEPN and ANPN financial information. All financial staff will receive training on Bank's financed projects' financial procedures at the launching of the project and periodically. The trainings will be provided by World Bank's FM staff and external consultants.

7. **Budgeting:** Budgeting arrangements will be clearly detailed in the financial manual of procedures and in line with national budget preparation agenda. Consolidated annual work plan and budget of DGEPN and ANPN to be approved by the Steering Committee will describe in a realistic manner, activities to be performed during the year and will be translated into annual budgets. Budget execution will be monitored via a computerized information system and in accordance with the budgeting procedures specified in the manual of procedures. Any variances will be identified in the Quarterly Unaudited Interim Financial Reports (IFRs) and corrective actions taken. Only budgeted expenditures will be committed and incurred, so as to ensure that resources are used within the agreed upon allocations and for the intended purposes.

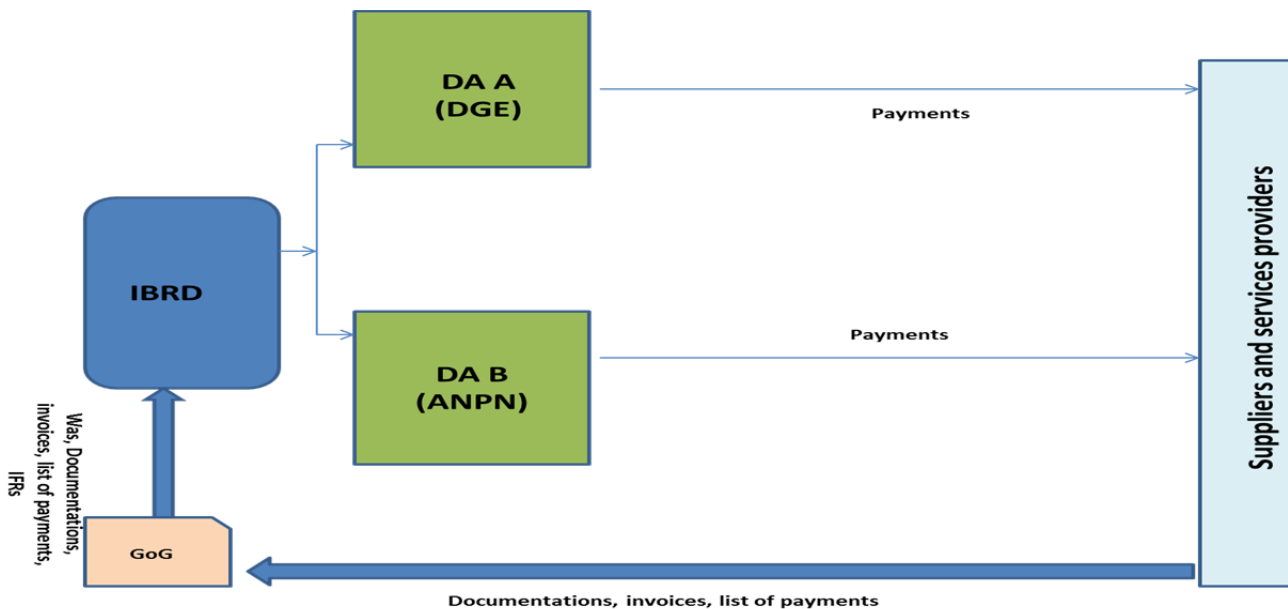
8. **Accounting Policies and Procedures:** A computerized accounting system will be installed (accounting software multi project and multisite) at DGEPN and ANPN to ensure that accounts of the project activities are kept orderly and that the consolidated financial reports are produced timely in accordance with OHADA (*Organisation pour l'Harmonisation du Droit des Affaires en Afrique*) accounting principles – which are in line with the international accounting standards.

9. **Internal Control and Internal Auditing:** Internal control will be described in the manual of financial procedures and will comprise segregation of duties principles. In addition, one financial management assistant will be recruited to handle workload generated by the project. The budget controller '*Contrôleur budgétaire*' of line Ministry and ANPN will be involved according to their respective role as described in national Decret.

Funds Flow and Disbursement Arrangements:

10. *Designated Account.* Two Designated Account (DA) in XAF will be opened in a commercial bank acceptable to the Bank and managed by the joint signature of the FMS and DGEPN. The first DA ("DA-A") will be managed by ANPN and will be used to pay for eligible expenditures under components 1 and 2. The ceiling of DA-A will be set to CFAF 122 million. The second DA ("DA-B") will be managed by DGEPN and will be used to pay for eligible expenditures under components 3, 4 and 5. The ceiling of each DA-B will be set to CFAF 160 million equivalent to four months of expenditure forecast. Upon project effectiveness, each DA will receive an initial advance of up to the ceiling amount and will be replenished regularly through monthly Withdrawal Applications. All WAs will be signed by signatories appointed by the Government (including the director of debt).

11. *Disbursement methods and supporting documentation:* Upon Grant effectiveness, transaction-based disbursements will be used during the first months of project implementation. Thereafter, the option to disburse against submission of quarterly unaudited Interim Financial Report could be considered subject to the quality and timeliness of the IFRs submitted to the Bank and the overall financial management arrangements as assessed in due course. In the case of the use of the report-based disbursement, the ceiling of each DA will be equal to the cash forecast for two quarters for the relevant components as provided in the quarterly unaudited Interim Financial Report. The Project will have the ability to submit WA electronically using the "eDisbursement" module available on the World Bank Group's Client Connection website. The other methods of disbursing the funds (reimbursement, direct payment and special commitment) will also be available to the project



12. **Disbursements by category:** The table below sets out the expenditure categories to be financed out of the Grant proceeds which will finance 100 percent of eligible project expenditures described in the categories set out in the table below. The percentage of expenditures to be financed takes into recognition the prevailing Country Financing Parameters for Gabon.

Components	Amount of the Financing Allocated (expressed in USD)	Percentage of Expenditures to be Financed (inclusive of Taxes)
(1) Goods, works, consultants services, Training under components 1 and component 2	3,660,000	100%
(2) Component 2: Goods, works, consultants services, Training and Operating Costs under components 3, component 4 and component 5	4,811,000	100%
TOTAL AMOUNT	8,471	100%

13. **Financial Reporting and Monitoring:** Consolidated IFRs will be submitted to IBRD within 45 days after the end of each calendar quarter. The IFR will comprise the sources and use of funds and the detailed expenditures by component and the format will be validated during project's negotiations. At the end of each fiscal year, the project will prepare consolidated annual financial statements.

14. DGEPN and ANPN will be the fiduciary entity of components under their responsibilities but DGEPN will be in charge of consolidation of annual work program and financial reports.

15. **Auditing:** The consolidated annual financial statements prepared by DGEPN and ANPN will be audited annually by an independent external auditor. The auditor will provide one single opinion on the annual financial statements in compliance with IFAC Standards on Auditing. In

addition to the audit reports, the external auditors will be expected to prepare a Management Letter giving observations, comments, and providing recommendations for improvements in accounting records, systems, controls and compliance with financial covenants in the Financing agreement. The project will be required to submit to the World Bank, no later than six months after the fiscal year, the audited annual financial statements. Gabon SAI will be involved in external auditor recruitment and will jointly participate in external auditor field mission.

16. **FM Conditions and FM covenants:**

- (i) the recruitment of an external auditor four months after effectiveness,
- (ii) the installation of a computerized information system three months after effectiveness,
- (iii) the adoption of the implementation manual including the manual of financial procedures by negotiation,
- (iv) the recruitment of a financial management assistant two months after effectiveness

17. **Implementation Support Plan:** FM implementation support mission will be consistent with a risk-based approach, and will involve a collaborative approach with the entire Task Team (including procurement specialist). A first implementation support mission will be performed six months after the project effectiveness. Afterwards, the missions will be scheduled by using the AFTFM risk based approach model and will include the following diligences: (i) monitoring of the financial management arrangements during the supervision process at intervals determined by the risk rating assigned to the overall FM Assessment at entry and subsequently during Implementation (ISR); (ii) review of the IFRs; (iii) review of the audit reports and management letters from the external auditors and follow-up on material accountability issues by engaging with the task team leader, Client, and/or Auditors; the quality of the audit also is to be monitored closely to ensure that it covers all relevant aspects and provide enough confidence on the appropriate use of funds by recipients; (iv) physical supervision on the ground; and (v) assistance to build or maintain appropriate financial management capacity.

18. **Conclusions of the FM Assessment:** The residual FM risk is considered Substantial. The proposed financial management arrangements for this project are considered adequate to meet the Bank's minimum fiduciary requirements under OP/BP10.00. The assessment recommends as mitigating measures, the following:

- The recruitment of an external auditor with ToR acceptable to IBRD,
- The installation of a computerized information system with consolidation module,
- The adoption of the implementation manual including the manual of administrative and financial procedures,
- The recruitment of a financial management assistant.

Procurement

Guidelines

19. **Procurement** for the Project will be carried out in accordance with the World Bank "Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works, and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers" dated January, 2011; and "Guidelines:

Selection and Employment of Consultants under IBRD Loans and IDA Credit & Grants by World Bank Borrowers”, dated January, 2011, and the provisions stipulated in the Legal Agreement. Procurement (works, goods and non-consulting services) or Consultant Selection methods, prequalification, estimated costs, prior review requirements, and time-frame will be agreed in the Procurement Plan. The Procurement Plan will be updated at least annually or as required to reflect the actual project implementation. The Bank’s Standard Bidding Documents (SBD) or Gabon National Standard Bidding Documents satisfactory to the Association will be used. To the extent practicable the Bank’s Standard Bidding Documents for works, goods and Standard Requests for Proposals, as well as all standard evaluation forms, will be used throughout project implementation.

20. Advertising. A comprehensive General Procurement Notice (GPN) will be prepared by the Borrower and published in the United Nations Development Business online (UNDB online) following Board Approval, to announce major consulting assignments and any international competitive bidding (ICB). The GPN shall include all ICB for works, goods and non-consulting services contracts and all large consulting contracts (i.e., those estimated to cost US\$300,000 or more). In addition, a specific procurement notice is required for all works and goods to be procured under ICB in UNDB online. Requests for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for consulting services expected to cost more than US\$300,000 shall be advertised in UNDB online. An EOI is required in the national gazette, a national newspaper, or an electronic portal of free access for all consulting firm services regardless of the contract amount. In the case of National Competitive Bidding (NCB), a specific procurement notice will be published in the national gazette, a national newspaper, or an electronic portal of free access. Contract awards will also be published in UNDB, in accordance with the Bank’s Procurement Guidelines (para. 2.60) and Consultants Guidelines (para. 2.31).

21. Requirements for National Competitive Bidding. Works, goods and non-consulting services contracts will use National Competitive Bidding (NCB) procurement methods in accordance with national procedures using Standard Bidding Documents acceptable to the BIRD and subject to the additional requirements:

- In accordance with paragraph 1.16 (e) of the Procurement Guidelines, each bidding document and contract financed out of the proceeds of the financing shall provide that (i) the bidders, suppliers, contractors and their subcontractors, agents, personnel, consultants, service providers, or suppliers shall permit the World Bank as Supervising Entity, at its request, to inspect all accounts, records and other documents relating to the submission of bids and contract performance, and to have said accounts and records audited by auditors appointed by the World Bank/Supervising Entity; and (ii) the deliberate and material violation of such provision may amount to an obstructive practice as defined in paragraph 1.16 (a)(v) of the Procurement Guidelines:
- Invitations to bid shall be advertised in national newspapers with wide circulation.
- The bid evaluation, qualification of bidders and contract award criteria shall be clearly indicated in the bidding documents.
- Bidders shall be given adequate response time (at least four weeks) to submit bids from the date of the invitation to bid or the date of availability of bidding documents, whichever is later.

- Eligible bidders, including foreign bidders, shall be allowed to participate.
- No domestic or CEMAC's regional preference shall be given to domestic or regional contractors, domestically or regionally manufactured goods; and association with national or regional firm shall not be a condition for participation in a bidding process.
- Bids are awarded to the substantially responsive and the lowest evaluated bidder proven this bidder is qualified. No scoring system shall be allowed for the evaluation of bids, and no "blanket" limitation to the number of lots which can be awarded to a bidder shall apply.
- Qualification criteria shall only concern the bidder's capability and resources to perform the contract taking into account objective and measurable factors.

22. **Procurement Environment.** No special exceptions, permits or licenses need to be specified in the Grant Agreement since the procurement code, approved by the President of the Republic in on June 19, 2012 allows World Bank procedures to take precedence over any contrary provisions in local regulations. A decree creating a regulatory body was already issued. However, this institution is not currently operational as its General Director is not yet on board.

23. **Procurement of Works.** Under this project no major procurement of Works is foreseen. Procurement of Works under this project consists mainly at the moment of the construction of surveillance housing for rangers. Civil works costing more than US\$ 5,000,000 equivalent will be procured through ICB. Other works contracts costing less than US\$ 5,000,000 equivalent will use NCB procurement methods in accordance with national procedures using Standard Bidding Document acceptable to IDA and subject to the additional requirements set forth or referred to above in the paragraph above mentioned "Requirements for National Competitive Bidding" of the current annex. Small works estimated to cost less than US\$200,000 equivalent per contract may be procured through shopping, based on price quotation obtained from at least three contractors in response to a written invitation to qualified contractors.

24. **Procurement of Goods and Non Consulting Services.** Under this project no major procurement of Goods or Non-Consulting Services through ICB is foreseen. Procurement of Goods under this project will include: (i) vehicles, (ii) small boats for surveillance, (iii) office equipment, and (iv) acquisition of a GIS for wetlands. Taking into account the level of value added, and manufacturing/production capacity in the country, procurement of goods will be bulked where feasible (of similar nature and need at same time period) into bid packages of at least US\$1 million equivalent, so that they can be procured through suitable methods to secure competitive prices. Goods estimated to cost US\$1 million equivalent and above per contract will be procured through ICB, which will use the Bank's Standard Bidding Documents. For others goods contracts costing less than US\$1 million equivalent, NCB procurement methods will be used in accordance with national procedures using Standard Bidding Document acceptable to Word Bank and subject to the additional requirements set forth or referred to above in paragraph on Requirements for National Competitive Bidding:

- Procurement of goods and non-consulting services, including those of readily available off-the-shelf maintenance of the office electronic equipment and other services such as printing, and editing, which cannot be grouped into bid packages of US\$100,000 or more, may be procured through prudent shopping in conformity with Clause 3.5 of the procurement guidelines.

- Based on country-specific needs and circumstances, shopping thresholds for the purchase of vehicles and fuel may be increased up to US\$500,000, considering the major cars dealers and oil providers are consulted.
- At the beginning of the project, vehicles procurement packages estimated to cost \$200,000 or less can be procured through UNOPS or other UN agencies.

25. Selection of Consultants. Consulting services will be used for the following activities: (i) financial audit; (ii) technical assistance for the coordination of research and monitoring of the surveillance system, (iii) technical assistance on wetlands biological wealth and socio-economic analysis, (iv) environment specialist, (v) social development specialist, (vi) fisheries specialist, (vii) financial management assistant, (viii) procurement specialist/assistant, (ix) M&E assistant, (x) elaboration of wetland strategy, (xi) recruitments of a NGO to assist in the implementation of revenue generating, (xii) recruitment of an NGO to assist DGEPN in the implementation of activities. These consulting services will be procured with the most appropriate method among the following which are allowed by Bank guidelines and included in the approved procurement plan: Quality-and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS), Quality-Based Selection (QBS), Selection under a Fixed Budget (SFB), Least-Cost Selection (LCS):

- Selection based on Consultants' Qualifications (CQS) will be used for assignments that shall not exceed US\$300,000. Single Source selection shall also be used in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 3.9 to 3.13 of the Consultant Guidelines, with World Bank's prior agreement. All terms of reference will be subject to World Bank Prior Review.
- Assignments of Engineering Designs & Contract Supervision in Excess of US\$300,000, and all other technical Assistance assignments above US\$100,000, must be procured on the basis of international short-lists and in accordance with the provisions of the paragraph 2.6 of the consultants' guidelines.
- Consultants for services meeting the requirements of Section V of the consultant guidelines will be selected under the provisions for the Selection of Individual Consultants, through comparison of qualifications among candidates expressing interest in the assignment or approached directly.

26. Community participation in procurement. The Project will finance environmental-friendly community-driven activities in wetlands through sub-projects under the sub-component 2.3. This sub-component will help communities – in partnership with local NGOs – develop revenue generating activities, including potential viable tourism products in selected wetlands, such as activities for tourism development and could include small works and equipment, for example, infrastructure (access roads, campsites, docks, boat ramps, and watch towers). These revenue generating activities are expected to cost less than US\$ 40 000 would be procured with procurement methods according to the paragraph 3.19 of the procurement guidelines and the Section D of the "Guidelines for Simplified Procurement and Disbursement for Community-Based Investments" (March 3, 1998), which are:

- Local shopping for goods.
- Local shopping for work.
- Local call for tenders for goods and works.
- Direct Contracting/Off the shelf purchases

27. A specific operations manual to guide revenue generating activities will be prepared to outline the procedures, standard documents and tools to be used.

28. The procurements will entail minor works and goods to be carried out as part of sub-projects activities. Given its size, the amount and the fact that works and goods for sub-projects are generated by demand and it may not always be practical to prepare detailed procurement plans at the time of negotiations as required under paragraph 1.18. These contracts will be procured, with procedures outlined in the financial agreement and bidding document acceptable to IDA, as further detailed in the specific operations manual for the revenue generating activities under elaboration. They may be procured under the shopping procurement method for works and Goods. Under this procedure, lump sum, fixed price contracts are awarded on the basis of the comparison of at least three quotations solicited in writing from at least qualified domestic contractors and suppliers.

29. The invitation shall include a detailed description of the works or goods, including basic specifications, the required completion date, a basic form of agreement acceptable to IDA, and relevant drawings where applicable. Quotations should be opened at the same time and to the extent possible in the presence of community members. The awards will be made to the contractor or suppliers offering the lowest price quotes and having the experience and resources to complete the contract successfully. In some remote areas, it may be difficult to obtain and compare three quotations. Under such circumstances, direct contracting could be considered when the cost to the community of another procedure would be disproportionately high relative to the value of the procurement itself, and where only one contractor or supplier is available locally. The contractor or supplier can thus be chosen without going through the shopping procedures, provided the costs are in line with the local market rates.

30. Operating Costs financed by the project include, inter alia, utilities and offices supplies, vehicle operation, maintenance and insurance, building and equipment maintenance costs. They will be procured using the project's financial and administrative procedures included in the operation manual and based on the annual work plan and budget. For services (car maintenance, computers maintenance, etc.) to be financed through operating costs, the project will proceed by service contracting for a defined period.

31. Trainings, workshops, seminars, conferences and study tours will be carried out on the basis of approved annual work plans and budget that will identify the general framework of training and similar activities for the year, including the nature of training, study tours, workshops, the number of participants, and cost estimates.

Institutional arrangements for procurement and capacity assessment including risk mitigation measures

32. *Procurement Implementation Arrangement of the Components 1 and 2 by ANPN:* ANPN will be in charge of the implementation of components 1 and 2. To ensure a proper implementation and build on a successful past experience on the World Bank financed project (GEF-PARCS), the project implementation unit will retain key staff with good performance and knowledge of procurement procedures, mainly the procurement specialist.

33. *Procurement capacity assessment of the implementation arrangements of the Components 1 and 2 by the ANPN:* An assessment of the capacity of ANPN for the purpose of the project was carried out on October 18, 2013, and the procurement risk for the implementation of this component is rated as Moderate, because: (i) the procurement specialist currently on

board is qualified, and needs only a refreshing capacity building on the use of the new procurement and consultant guidelines dated January 2011; (ii) the Procedural Manual needs to be updated; (iii) the professional members are familiar with the Bank's procurement procedures, and need only an updating on the new procurement and consultant guidelines dated January 2011.

34. To mitigate the above-mentioned procurement risks, an action plan has been agreed upon whose implementation and monitoring will reduce the procurement residual risk to **Low**.

Action to be undertaken	Timeframe	Responsible body
Elaboration and submission of an 18-month procurement plan to the World Bank	First draft available at pre-appraisal for discussions during appraisal and negotiations	ANPN
Finalize and submit to World Bank for clearance, a satisfactorily version of the operations manual comprising a section on procurement for use by the project	- First at appraisal. - Adoption upon project negotiations	ANPN
Elaboration of a specific operations manual to guide revenue generating activities	By negotiations	ANPN
Retain the procurement specialist of the former World Bank closed project	One month after effectiveness	ANPN
Strengthen the capacity of the procurement specialist and the key professional staff involved in the project implementation activities on the procurement and consultant guidelines dated January, 2011	Three months after the project effectiveness and as needed during project life	ANPN, with the participation of the World Bank procurement staff

35. ***Procurement Implementation Arrangement of the Components 3 to 5 by DGEPN:*** DGEPN will be in charge of implementing Components 3 to 5. The DGEPN will be strengthened by a procurement assistant to enhance its capacity to manage the project.

36. ***Procurement capacity assessment of the Implementation Arrangements of the Components 3 to 5 by DGEPN:*** The assessment of the capacity of the DGEPN for the purpose of the project revealed the following: (i) although the DGEPN has a recent experience in the implementation of Bank-financed projects, it appeared that DGEPN was exposed to a small operation and its capacity needs to be strengthened in procurement through the direct assistance from the recently closed procurement specialist of ANPN and the recruitment of a procurement assistant/specialist; (ii) the procedural manual needs to be updated; (iii) professional staff involved in the project implementation activities and the procurement unit staff members of the DGEPN, to be set up, are unfamiliar with Bank procurement procedures; and (iv) a comprehensive record keeping system needs to be established. The procurement risk rating is high. The mitigation action plan below has been agreed upon. If properly implemented and monitored, the action plan will bring this risk to Moderate.

Action to be undertaken	Timeframe	Responsible body
Elaboration and submission of the first 18-month procurement plan to the World Bank	First draft available at pre-appraisal for discussions during appraisal and negotiations	DGEPN
Finalize and submit to World Bank for clearance, a satisfactorily version of the operations manual comprising a section on procurement for use by the project	- First at negotiations. - Adoption upon project negotiations	DGEPN
Direct assistance from ANPN's recently closed World Bank financed project procurement specialist and the recruitment of a procurement assistant/specialist to be based at DGEPN for the purpose of the project	One month after effectiveness	DGEPN
Strengthen the capacity of the procurement assistant/specialist, the procurement unit staff members and the key professional staff involved in the project implementation activities on the procurement and consultant guidelines dated January, 2011	Three months after the project effectiveness and as needed during project life	DGEPN, with the participation of the World Bank procurement staff

37. **Procurement Plan.** During the preparation mission, a first draft Simplified Procurement Plan for project implementation has been elaborated, providing the basis for the procurement methods, and was available for discussions. This plan, covering the first 18 months of project implementation, was reviewed at pre-appraisal. The final version of this procurement plan will be discussed and agreed upon by the Recipient and the project team at appraisal/negotiations. It will be available in the project's database and a summary will be disclosed on the Bank's external website once the project is approved by the Board. The Procurement Plan will be updated in agreement with the project team annually or as required to reflect the actual project implementation needs and improvement in institutional capacity.

38. **Publication of Results and Debriefing.** Publication of results of the bidding process is required for all ICBs, Limited International Biddings (LIBs), and Direct Contracting. Publication should take place as soon as the no-objection is received, except for Direct Contracting which may be done quarterly and in a simplified format. Publication of results for NCB and Shopping should follow the requirements of the procurement code of Gabon. The disclosure of results is also required for selection of consultants. All consultants competing for the assignment should be informed of the result of the technical evaluation (number of points that each firm received) before the opening of the financial proposals, and at the end of the selection process, the results should be published. The publication of results in the selection of consultants applies to all methods. For CQS and SSS, however, the publication may be done quarterly and in a simplified format. The publication of results may be done through Client Connection. Losing bidders/consultants shall be debriefed on the reasons why they were not awarded the contract if they request explanation.

39. **Fraud and Corruption.** The procuring entity as well as Bidders/Suppliers/Contractors /Services Providers shall observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of contracts financed under the program in accordance with paragraphs 1.14 and 1.15 of the Procurement Guidelines and paragraphs 1.22 and 1.23 of the Consultants Guidelines. The Guidelines on Preventing and Combating Fraud and Corruption in Projects Financed by IBRD

Loans and IDA Credits and Grants”, dated October 15, 2006, and revised in January, 2011, will apply to this project.

40. **Frequency of Procurement Supervision.** The capacity assessment of the implementing agency has recommended supervision missions to visit the field at least two times a year and a post review of procurement actions will be conducted on an annual basis.

Summarized Procurement Plan

41. The main works, goods and non-consulting services to be procured in the project are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: List of Works, Goods and Non-Consulting Services Contract Packages to be Procured

Ref. No.	Description	Estimated Cost (US\$ million)	Procurement Method	Domestic Preference (yes/no)	Review by World Bank (Prior/Post)	Comments/ Completion date
I	Component 1-Improvement of Knowledge and Monitoring of Wetlands Ecosystems					
1.2-A2	Equipment for marking out Ramsar pilot sites	0.1 million	Shopping	No	Post	June 2016
II	Component 2-Support to Sustainable Management of Selected Critical Wetlands ecosystems					
2.2-A	Vehicles	0.36 million	Shopping	No	Post	April 2015
2.2-B	Small boats for surveillance	0.200 million	NCB	No	Post	April 2017
2.2-C	Camping materials	0.15 million	NCB	No	Prior	June 2015 (First NCB for Goods/ANPN)
2.2-D	Construction of surveillance housing for rangers	0.55 million	NCB	No	Prior	December 2016 (First NCB for Works/ANPN).
IV	Component 4-Strengthen Institutional Framework to support Wetlands Management					
4-E	Vehicles	0.12 million	Shopping	No	Post	June 2015
4-F	Office equipment	0.05 million	Shopping	No	Post	June 20
4-H	Acquisition of a GIS for wetlands	0.35 million	NCB	No	Prior	December 2016 (First NCB for Goods)

42. **Prior review thresholds for Works, Goods and Non-consultant services.** Contracts estimated to cost above US\$ 5 million for works and US\$500,000 for goods per contract, the first NCB contracts for works and goods, eventually others as identified in the procurement plan and all Direct Contracting will be subject to prior review by the World Bank.

43. The main consulting assignments of the project are listed in the table 3 below.

Table 3: List of Consulting Assignments with Selection Methods and Time Schedule

Ref. No.	Description of Assignment	Estimated Cost (US\$ million)	Selection Method	Review by World Bank (Prior / Post)	Comments/ Completion date
I	Component 1-Improvement of Knowledge and Monitoring of Wetlands Ecosystems				
1.1-A.	Technical assistance for the research in biological wealth and socio-economic analysis for the wetlands	0.40 million	QCBS	Prior	June 2016
1.2-A1	Elaboration of a capacity building strategy	0.05 million	IC	Post	June 2016
II	Component 2-Support to Sustainable Management of Selected Critical Wetlands ecosystems				
2.3-A	Recruitment of NGO to assist in the implementation of revenue generating activities	0.200 million	QCBS	Prior	June 2016
III	Component 3: Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol				
3-A	Mapping of main stakeholders	0.02 million	IC	Post	June 2015
3-B	Elaboration of management tools	0.20 million	QCBS	Prior	December 2017
3-B	Assistance in the elaboration of legal texts	0.20 million	QCBS	Prior	December 2017
3-C	Elaboration of a web site	0.05 million	CQ	Post	June 2017
IV	Component 4-Strengthen Institutional Framework to support Wetlands Management				
4-B	Diagnostic of the institutional context	0.02 million	IC	Post	June 2015
4-I	Elaboration of the wetlands strategy	0.03 million	IC	Post	June 2016
4-K	Recruitment of NGO for assisting DGEPN in the implementation	0.20 million	QCBS	Prior	June 2017
4-L	Technical assistance for the coordination of research and monitoring of the surveillance system	0.5 million	QCBS	Prior	December 2018
4-M	Administrative assistant to support research	0.09 million	IC	Post	December 2018
4-N	Environment specialist	0.25 million	IC	Prior	December 2018
4-O	Fishing technical assistance	0.096 million	IC	Post	December 2018
4-P	Social Specialist	0.25 million	IC	Prior	December 2018
V	Component 5: Project Management				
5-A-1	Procurement specialist/assistant	0.048 million	IC	Prior	June 2016 (First 2 years contract)
5-A-2.	Accountant assistant	0.048 million	IC	Prior	June 2016 (First 2 years contract)
5-A-3	Monitoring & Evaluation assistant	0.048 million	IC	Prior	June 2016 (First 2 years contract)
5-A-4	Recruitment of the financial auditor	0.05 million	LCS	Prior	December 2014 (First two years)

44. Prior review thresholds for consultant services. Consultant services estimated to cost above US\$200,000 for firms and US\$100,000 for individuals per contract, and Single Source selection of consultants (firms and individuals) will be subject to prior review by the World Bank. Similarly, all audit contracts will be subject to prior review, as will be the first contracts to be awarded in accordance with each selection method of consulting firms and individual consultants, regardless of contract amount. Short Lists of Consultants for Assignments of Engineering Designs & Contract Supervisions estimated to cost less than US\$300,000 and all other Consultancy Assignments whose estimated cost don't exceed US\$100,000 per contract may be composed entirely of national consultants in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 2.7 of the Consultant Guidelines.

Environmental and Social (including safeguards)

Project types and locations.

45. The project is a category B because the potential impacts are likely to be small scale, and site specific; thus could be manageable. The environmental and social safeguards concerns of the proposed project are associated with the activities of sub-components 2.2 (Strengthen surveillance capacities in the selected sites) and 2.3 Environmental-friendly community-driven activities in wetlands).

46. **Environmental Impacts:** The project's environmental impacts are likely to be site-specific, small-scale, non-sensitive and reversible, i.e. typical of category B projects. The project therefore triggers OP/BP 4.01 (Environment Assessment). Infrastructure investments supported by the project (construction of permanent staff quarters) will involve minor civil works with no significant negative environmental or social implications. Expected impacts during these small infrastructure rehabilitation works include: (i) air/dust pollution (contractors activities such as site clearance). This is expected to be minimal and temporary within the wetlands area; (ii) noise and vibration resulting from use and movement of machinery; and (iii) occupational health and safety concerns, as civil construction/rehabilitation workers face the risk of being injured at the work site possibly from moving machinery, unguarded parts of equipment and a disregard for health and safety issues. All these will be manageable as it is expected that the contractors will follow mitigation measures and environmental and social management clauses inserted into their contracts, based on the ESMF.

47. The project also triggers OP/BP 4.04 (natural habitats) for the positive impacts the project is expected to have on natural habitats. Given that the project covers national parks, including large mangrove areas, OP4.36 -Forest is also triggered.

48. **Social Impacts.** It is expected that project interventions will positively impact project's main beneficiaries which are the local communities, that live around the project sites (Bas Ogooué, Monts Birougou and Petit Loango + Setté-Cama), a population of about 70,000. It is expected that the local economy as a whole will benefit from the outside money injected through the supported Income-Generating Activities (IGAs), either from sales on nearby or remote markets, or from increased local consumption of good and services by game-viewing tourists, attracted by the better infrastructure and enhanced fauna resulting from project interventions. Consultations will be carried out with local populations in the target areas and the preparation of

each activity will be based on a participative process that will ensure that all stakeholders will be able to express their views

49. Gender. In the project area, men and women alike are engaged in natural resource harvesting. The most vulnerable groups, especially women and youth, have been identified and have shown strong interest in working with the project. The project will work closely with these target groups to build their entrepreneurial capacity and to support them in the development and implementation of income-generating activities.

50. OP/BP 4.12: As part of social safeguards, OP/BP 4.12 Involuntary Resettlement will be triggered, not because households are expected to be physically resettled, but to be sure that potential risk of restriction of access to resource use in a protected area is addressed. The resulting Process Framework will describe: (i) project components and any activity susceptible to infringe on communities access to natural resources or to cause other possible prejudices to the communities; (ii) potential conflicts and possible claims related to the project; (iii) consultative and participatory definition of eligibility criteria for reparation for loss of livelihood; (iv) definition of measures to support the population in their effort to improve or to reinstate their livelihood infringed upon; (v) financial reparation methods and procedures; and (vi) a monitoring system to ensure that financial reparations are effectively provided by the Government.

51. OP. 4.10. It is not expected that indigenous people will be affected by project interventions, as none live in the project sites. However, this policy is triggered for precautionary measures, because Gabon belongs to the Congo Basin countries where there are pygmy populations. An Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework will be prepared and disclosed in-country and at the Infoshop before project appraisal.

Key Measures to be taken by the Borrower to Address safeguards Policy Issues.

52. The Government has prepared, conducted consultations, reviewed and disclosed two safeguards instruments required under this project: an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) to cover the small-scale rehabilitation of Park infrastructures and the community micro-enterprises, and a Process Framework. OP.4.10 has also been triggered following the pre-appraisal mission. Therefore an Indigenous People Action Plan will also be prepared and disclosed in-country and at the Infoshop before project appraisal.

53. **Mitigation Measures**. The ESMF recommends mitigating measures aimed at ensuring that civil works are executed in an environmentally sound manner; such as sprinkling construction sites with water and limiting construction activities to normal working hours, and notifying the local community in advance if construction activities have to be performed outside these hours. For the about construction of surveillance infrastructure for park rangers, the ESMF also addresses: (i) the sourcing of construction materials and the disposal of construction-related wastes; and (ii) generic rules for contractors and construction workers to follow, including prohibitions on hunting, fishing, wildlife capture, illegal bush-meat purchases, burning of vegetation, washing vehicles or changing lubricants in or near waterways or wetlands, and any inappropriate interactions with local residents, along with transparent penalties for non-compliance.

54. **Capacity for Safeguard Implementation.** The project will recruit an environmental and social specialist consultant that will be responsible for following up safeguards issues during project implementation. The specialist or consultant will be responsible for (i) preparing the TORs for the EMPs if needed and (ii) ensuring that the contractors comply with the recommendations of these studies and environmental and social management clauses (inserted into their contract) during the construction phase. The Bank will provide guidance on the elaboration of the TORs and the DGEPN will be responsible for providing overall quality control through the review and clearance of the EMPs. Specific capacity building on environmental management and environmental assessment will be provided to the technical services departments of the DGEPN, in addition to the key staff of ANPN, and other implementing focal points. In accordance with Bank guidelines, all EA studies will need to be reviewed and cleared by the Bank prior to the commencement of the civil works.

55. **Public Consultations.** The safeguards instruments were prepared after consultation with key stakeholders both at the national and local levels. The proposal in the process framework to establish committees to manage compensation process in the event of conflicts and possible claims was perceived by the populations as an indication that the project might lead to actual resettlement. The objective of the process framework was therefore better clarified during the consultations and in the revised process framework to clear up any possible misunderstanding of its content. The stakeholders also expressed interest in participating in the project annual work plans elaboration process, as well in trainings provided by the project. These concerns were all noted and recommendations were incorporated in the revised safeguard documents accordingly.

ANNEX 4: OPERATIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (ORAF)

GABON: Sustainable Management of Critical Wetlands Ecosystems

Stage: Appraisal

Risks	Rating	Moderate		
Communities living inside or around wetlands do not fully benefit from the wetlands i) extractive industries operating in the wetlands are risks of social tensions due to land use competition.	Risk Management: Project will focus on management plans that are inclusive of diverse stakeholder interests, emphasize different economic values as well promote sustainable natural resources management. A comprehensive valuation of economic services provisioned by the wetlands ecosystems in Gabon will be conducted in order to inform decision-makers on potential conflicting uses and trade-offs			
	Resp: Client	Stage: Implementation	Due Date: Ongoing	Status: In progress
Identified Risks				
Information	Rating:	Low		
The country has been politically stable despite some political and social challenges. The death of long serving President Omar Bongo in June 2009. The contested election of Ali Bongo led to civil unrest but Gabon has emerged from this transition period and is now one of the region’s most stable countries.	Risk Management: The authorities have embarked on major reforms of public financial management (PFM). They adopted, in July 2010, a new organic budget law, which introduces program budgeting and modern principles of financial management. Effective enforcement has been sequenced with a start scheduled for 2015. Capacity in ministries is being strengthened with regard to managing procurement, implementing budget controls and simplifying accounting and payment procedures. The Bank is providing support to the Government through RASs on the Tax System and Public Financial Management.			
	Resp: Bank	Stage: Implementation	Due Date: Ongoing	Status: In progress
Gabon’s weak public finance management and efforts to execute its budget are a concern in particular about the ability to execute the capital budget and the balance between public spending and private spending on priority sectors	Risk Management: The challenge for Gabonese authorities is to translate the economic vision “Gabon Emergent” into practical sector strategies with visible impact. The Government is actively seeking solutions to youth unemployment by partnering with organizations such as the WB and AFD to provide skills training, and involving the private sector in skills matching for jobs. The Bank is supporting the Government’s economic diversification strategy through Economic and Sector Work (ESWs) on Growth and Employment, Skills Development and an IBRD loan on Economic Diversification and Competitiveness.			
	Resp: Bank	Stage: Implementation	Due Date: Ongoing	Status: In progress
Land Social Management: The project is expected to continue to benefit from the wetlands	Risk Management: With oil reserves depleting, reforms will be critical for promoting and diversifying private sector			

expansionary fiscal policy. Nonoil GDP is expected to grow 9.5 percent on average in 2013-2017. Yet, strong economic growth has not been able to absorb the people that enter the labor market, each year.		unions, which continue to squeeze out policy concessions.			
		Resp: Bank	Stage: Implementation	Due Date: Ongoing	Status: In progress
Description: Politics and Governance: The country has been politically stable since independence but some political and social uncertainty arose after the death of long serving President Omar Bongo Ondimba in June 2009. The contested election of his son Ali Bongo Odimba led to civil unrest but Gabon now appears to have overcome this transition period and is likely to remain one of the region's most stable countries.		Risk Management: The authorities have embarked on major reforms of public financial management (PFM). They adopted, in July 2010, a new organic budget law, which introduces program budgeting and modern principles of financial management. Effective enforcement has been sequenced with a start scheduled for 2015. Capacity in ministries is being strengthened with regard to managing procurement, implementing budget controls and simplifying accounting and payment procedures. The Bank is providing support to the Government through RTAs on the Tax System and Public Financial Management.			
		Resp: Bank	Stage: Implementation	Due Date: Ongoing	Status: In progress
3. Implementation Agency Risks	Rating	Low			
3.1 Capacity	Rating:	Low			
Description: The General Directorate of Environment (under the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development) is institutionally responsible of the WII sites and is the focal point for the Ramsar Convention. However, it has much less capacity in terms of project management (including fiduciary and safeguards) than the Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux. (ANPN) which has been implementing a GEF-financed project over the past five years.		Risk Management: The project institutional and organizational structure has been developed to share responsibilities between the two entities based on their respective experiences and strengths as follows: ANPN will be responsible for Components 1 and 2 and DGEPN for Components 3 to 5. This sharing of responsibilities has been done in a participatory manner and should function smoothly at implementation.			
		Resp: Client & Bank	Stage: Implementation	Due Date: Ongoing	Status: In progress
3.2. Governance	Rating:	Low			
Description: Governance performance in Gabon is ranked low but the new Administration has taken steps to change this situation. The ANPN has satisfactorily implemented the PARCS project. The DGEPN has also implemented an IDF project, which familiarized it to the WB procedures. In both cases, the World Bank team has closely monitored the implementation.		Risk Management: The Bank will be vigilant and will maintain a close dialog with the DGEPN and ANPN pointing out such issues when they emerge and demanding that they are addressed and possibly linking them to release of financing.			
		Resp: Bank	Stage: Implementation	Due Date: Ongoing	Status: In progress
3.3. Fraud and Corruption	Rating:	Moderate			
Indexes related to the perception of corruption remain high in Gabon. However, the Government recognizes that improvements in transparency and accountability are critical if Gabon is to compete on a global scale.		Risk Management: Important initiatives are underway including efforts to reform public procurement; creating a commission mandated to fight corruption, the illicit diversion of funds, and capital flight; and hiring an independent auditor to assess the oil companies' performance vis-à-vis the stated agreements, and ensuring that those agreements are beneficial to Gabon. The Bank is providing support to the Government through RTAs to strengthen public financial management, taxation systems, and to examine petroleum and mining codes.			
		Resp: Bank	Stage: Implementation	Due Date: Ongoing	Status: In progress

4. Project Risks		Rating	Low		
4.1. Design					
Description: Risk that project design might not be appropriate to reach PDO and GEO.		Risk Management: The project has been designed in a participatory manner with key stakeholders. The results framework has also been carefully crafted and in a participatory manner to ensure that project activities, inputs, outputs and outcomes are aligned with project objective.			
		Resp: Client & Bank	Stage: Implementation	Due Date: Ongoing	Status: In progress
4.2. Social and Environmental		Rating:	Low		
Description: Risk of significant social and environmental negative impacts.		Risk Management: The nature of the project is to enhance the quality of the management of these critical ecosystems and reduce risks associated with potential economic development. As such the project is expected to have major positive outcomes in terms of environmental sustainability. Social dimensions will be addressed through a very consultative approach that will be part of the preparation of the management plans of selected sites.			
		Resp: Bank	Stage: Implementation	Due Date: Ongoing	Status: In progress
4.3. Program and Donor		Rating:	Low		
Description: Risk of poor coordination with donors intervening in the sector thereby creating a redundancy activities financing.		Risk Management: The project team has been working in close coordination with the French Development Agency (AFD) currently implementing a wetland and forestry projects in Gabon, thereby ensuring synergies among the Bank and AFD interventions in Gabon. This collaboration will be further fostered through joint implementation support missions.			
		Resp: Bank	Stage: Implementation	Due Date: Ongoing	Status: In progress
4.4. Delivery, Monitoring & Sustainability		Rating:	Moderate		
Description: Risks of low capacity at the national and local levels to deliver project results, and to ensure close monitoring and sustainability of project results.		Risk Management: The project will focus specifically on building national capacity for sustainable management of wetlands and monitoring in a way that is complementary to existing natural resource management practices.			
		Resp: Bank	Stage: Implementation	Due Date: Ongoing	Status: In progress
		Resp:	Stage:	Due Date:	Status:
Implementation Risk Rating: Moderate					
Comments: The overall rating is Moderate. The proposed rating is mostly based on the key project risk related to land use competition. Prospects for development of extractive industry activities in wetlands exist and this could create major pressures on the integrity of the wetland ecosystems, jeopardizing in the medium- to long-term their capacity to deliver ecosystem services. While this could certainly create a risk for the operation, it should be highlighted that the mitigation measure is embedded to the design of the operation itself.			The mitigation measures that the project will embed in the project sites management plans are expected to lower this risk significantly at implementation stage.		

ANNEX 5: GEF INCREMENTAL REASONING

Background Context

1. Gabon became a party to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (WII) in 1987. The country has since registered nine sites on its list of WII, covering in total 2.8 million hectares and representing a wide variety of aquatic ecosystems: mangroves, savannas, waterfalls and rapids, lagoons, rivers, lakes, and alluvial plains.
2. Despite the political engagement through the adhesion to the Convention, only limited actions have been taken so far to operationalize the pillars of the Convention. These include the designation of Ramsar sites; the establishment of the Ramsar Focal Point in the Direction Generale de l'Environnement (DGEPN); the submission to the Ramsar Secretariat of a Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) for each designated WII; the designation of an evaluation group (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique (CENAREST); and a government and NGO contact for a communication, education, and public awareness (CEPA). Beyond these institutional prerequisites, activities to implement the Ramsar Convention have stayed in the realm of public awareness, with a workshop for commercial operators in wetlands, and the presentation of a documentary on petroleum production in wetlands.
3. Gabon reported to the Ramsar Secretariat³³ that its greatest obstacle to implementing the Convention is the lack of funding and capacity to undertake the necessary activities. At present, there is no national policy or action plan for wetlands, and no national inventory of wetlands or the species contained therein. Gabon's reported priorities for the Convention are: (1) establishment of the National Inter-ministerial Committee for Ramsar; (2) implementation of management plans for the WII sites; and (3) identification and registration of additional WIIs.
4. Laws protecting nature and environment in Gabon are the Environment Law (1993), the National Parks Law (2007), the Forestry Code (2001), and the Fish and Aquaculture Code (2005).³⁴ There is a National Action Plan for Environment (2000), a National Action Plan for Forestry (1999), and a National Strategy on Biodiversity.³⁵
5. The Environment Law provides general principles for national policy on the protection of the environment. Environmental protection is to be achieved largely by way of impact studies, which commercial operators are regulated to undertake. Thus, the protection of Gabon's wetlands currently relies solely on impact studies and the implementation of impact mitigation plans.

³³ Rapport National sur l'Application de la Convention de Ramsar sur Les Zones Humides. National reports to submit to the 10th Session of the Conference of the Contracted Parties, Romania, June 2012.

³⁴ Loi sur l'Environnement; Loi sur les Parcs Nationaux; Loi portant code forestier ("Code Forestier"); Loi portant code de la pêche et de l'aquaculture ("Code de la Pêche et de l'Aquaculture").

³⁵ Le Plan National d'Action Environnementale; Le Plan d'Action Forestier National; La Stratégie Nationale sur la Biodiversité.

Baseline scenario

6. Inadvertently some of the Gabon's Ramsar WII sites benefit from conservation activities of the ANPN. Five of the nine WII sites are – in whole or in part – also designated as National Parks. To the extent that conservation activities in national park (NP) areas overlap with the WII areas, the latter benefit from government or partner resources. Table 1 below lists Gabon's Ramsar sites and, where applicable, the associated national parks.

7. In all five national parks shown in Table 1, to varying degrees, development or implementation of management plans is underway. For NP Petit Loango, a management plan has been developed, which benefits WII Petit Loango somewhat, but far from entirely since the wetland is more than twice the size of its associated national park. Similarly, the ANPN is developing a management plan for NP Birougou, but the latter represents only 13% of the Monts Birougou WII. The WII site on the river Ivindo is more fortunate, as it is contained within the NP Ivindo, for which a plan has been developed. The WII sites of Akanda and Pongara overlap exactly with the respective national parks, and these areas are currently the focus of conservation work supported by the AFD (Agence Française Développement).³⁶

Table 1: Ramsar WII Sites and Associated National Parks

Ramsar Site	Area (ha)	Created	Associated Nat'l Park	Created	Area (ha)
Wongha-Wongué	380,000	1986			
Petit Loango	480,000	1986	□	2002	155 000
Setté-Cama	220,000	1986			
Akanda	54,000	2007	□	2002	54 000
Pongara	92,969	2007	□	2002	92 900
Monts Birougou	536,800	2007	□	2002	69 000
Bas Ogooué	862,700	2007			
Falls & Rapids on the Ivindo river	132,500	2007	□	2002	300 000
Falls of Mboundou Badouma and Doumé	59,500	2007			

8. The remaining four WII sites, those without an associated national park status, currently do not benefit from any targeted government resources. However, a variety of conservation activities in these WII sites are supported by local and international NGOs.

9. Another AFD project targets improved management of forestry concessions throughout the country: Forestry Management Verification (FMV).³⁷ The goal of the FMV project is to assist Gabon in developing the capacity to effect partnership agreements with importers who demand

³⁶Project Arc d'Émeraude financed through the France-Gabon Debt Relief Agreement –Accord de Conversion de Dettes (ACD).

³⁷ Contrôle de l'Amenagement Forestier (CAF) is the original version of the project name. It is also part of the ACD.

certifiable good governance in forestry.³⁸ All nine provinces will benefit from reinforced capacity in terms of equipment, infrastructure, human resources and training. To the extent that forest concessions fall inside or beside Ramsar sites, these wetlands will benefit from improved forestry surveillance, practices and management. The selected sites for the proposed GEF project are: Petit Loango/Setté-Cama, Bas Ogooué, and Monts Birougou (described in Annex 2). All three of these sites will benefit from the activities of the FMV Project: the FMV First Priority areas include forestry territories in and around the Monts Birougou WII site; Second Priority areas include forestry territories in and around the Bas Ogooué and Petit Loango/Setté WII sites.

10. Table 2 summarizes current activities that directly or indirectly benefit Gabon's network of WII. These are supported by DGEPN, ANPN, AFD, and various local and international NGOs.

Table 2: Activities Directly or Indirectly Benefiting Ramsar WII Sites in Gabon

Organization	Focus Area	Activities
Direction Generale de l'Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature (DGEPN)	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of National Focal Point for Ramsar. • Liaison with the Ramsar Secretariat. • Communication, education, and public awareness (CEPA).
Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux (ANPN)	Birougou National Park Petit Loango National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish management plan for Birougou National Park. • Start implementation of management plan for Petit Loango National Park.
Agence Français Development Project: Arc d'Emeraude de Libreville	Mondah Forest, Akanda National Park, and Pongara National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve knowledge of focus area ecosystems. • Develop and implement a monitoring system for focus area ecosystems. • Reinforce capacity to monitor focus areas (equipment, personnel, infrastructure, technical assistance for fisheries management). • Implement ANPN management plans for national parks. • Construct and launch tourism/educative interpretive center and canopy attraction in Mondah Forest (Raponda Walker Arboretum). • Build capacity for integrated land use planning for Libreville region (Komo estuary and Mondah catchment area).
Agence Français Development Project: Forestry Management Verification	National and Provincial <i>First priority areas:</i> Forestry territories of Ivindo, Minkébé, Birougou. <i>Second priority areas:</i> Forestry territories of Gamba and the Estuaire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce central and decentralized capacity (equipment, infrastructure, quarters, information and communication systems) to permit deployment of more forestry staff nationwide. • Reinforce capacity to implement forestry regulations, best practices, forestry certification programs, etc. • Development of a third-party system of forestry production and practices verification.
World Wildlife Fund	Bas Ogooué WII Site Ndougou Basin Coastal Lagoon (includes Petit Loango/Setté-Cama WII)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess status and threats to biodiversity in focus sites. • Data collection, mapping, and description of focus sites. • Conservation strategy for hippos and manatees. • Rapid assessment of artisanal and small-scale mining in and around protected areas.

³⁸ The Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) initiative in the European Union; the Lacey Act in the United States.

Costs and challenges of the Baseline Scenario

11. The total expenditure related to the baseline scenario has been estimated at US\$37,226,267 all of which is attributable to Government of Gabon investment and in-kind support for environmental activities having synergies with this GEF project. This includes: (i) US\$2 million of Government in-kind contribution to project implementation for salaries of civil servants seconded to the project coordination unit, and office facilities allocated to the project; ii) US\$3,486,267 Government investment in support of the Nagoya Protocol; and (iii) Government investment for the Arc d’Emeraude) and the Forestry Management Verification projects; both are projects financed by the France-Gabon Debt Relief Agreement and implemented by AFD, for a total amount of 31,740,000.

12. The baseline scenario does not allow for the development of a strategic approach to wetland resource management in Gabon, as envisioned by the pillars of the Ramsar convention. As it is, only some of Gabon’s WII areas are “incidentally” benefiting from planning and protection activities.

13. Specific shortcomings of the Baseline Scenario include:

- No national institutional framework for wetland management.
- No inter-ministerial treatment of wetland issues.
- No mainstreaming of wetland issues in national and provincial governments.
- Complete absence of management activities in four WII sites³⁹ and partial absence of site management activities in two WII sites (Monts Birougou, Petit Loango). Hence, 82% of Gabon’s 2.8 million hectares of critical wetland ecosystems does not benefit from any kind of protective activity.
- Continued unplanned urban development and resource exploitation (deforestation, mining, petroleum exploration) in and around unmanaged wetland areas.
- Continued unchecked reliance on commercial operators to adequately account for wetland ecosystem impacts, and to also implement impact mitigation actions for the protection of wetlands.
- No institutional structure (re: Nagoya Protocol) to promote the capture of genetic benefits of biodiversity in wetlands and other ecosystems.

Proposed GEF alternative

14. The GEF alternative to the baseline scenario provides resources to extend the coverage of management activities in Gabon’s wetlands. The project treatment of the three selected sites (not already benefiting from ANPN activities) would bring some degree of planning activity to 1.9 million hectares of WII. In this case, 84% of the country’s WII area would benefit from – *to varying degrees* – national and local management capacity development through information collection and consolidation regarding land use, resources use rights and claims, environmental components, socioeconomic data and analyses, monitoring and control, and management plan development, and plan implementation.

³⁹ These are Wongha-Wongué, Setté-Cama, Bas Ogooué, and Falls of Mboundou Badouma and Doumé Falls (See Table 1 for WII sites not benefiting from the presence of a national park.

15. The GEF alternative starts the process of building a national institutional framework to protect and manage sustainably Gabon's wetlands. The establishment of a national inter-ministerial committee, as envisioned under the Ramsar Convention, will be a first step at mainstreaming wetland issues across sectors and levels of government. The development of a national wetlands strategy will require inter-ministerial collaboration to set wetland management priorities, which will guide land use decisions that affect wetlands.

Linkages with Baseline Activities

16. The GEF alternative meshes well with the baseline activities. Importantly, it addresses government priorities for wetland resources as expressed by the DGEPN to the Ramsar Secretariat. It also capitalizes on the momentum and availability of recent work in wetland areas. The management plans developed by ANPN for the national parks of Birougou and Loango will serve as a basis on which the GEF alternative can build, by extending the scope of inquiry and planning to cover the entire Ramsar sites associated with these two national park areas. The work conducted by the WWF will inform the inquiry and planning activities of the Bas Ogooué WII.

17. The Arc d'Emeraude project in the Akanda and Pongara National Parks, which are also designated Ramsar WII sites, compliments the GEF alternative. The Arc d'Emeraude project unfolds in a manner parallel to the GEF alternative: in selected sites there is knowledge acquisition, establishment of a monitoring system, management planning and implementation, and development of local activities. The GEF alternative project has similar components in three different (WII) sites, but the GEF alternative goes further by establishing a national institutional framework for wetlands management and monitoring. This national framework for management will be bolstered and enriched by the site-specific activities of both projects.

18. The nationwide Forestry Management Verification (FMV) project provides an opportunity for cross-sector collaboration. As forestry concessions overlap with WWI sites, wetland priority setting and planning should inform forestry management and planning, and vice versa. At the national level, project synergies and information could be identified and shared through the Piloting Committee of stakeholders, established by the FMV project, and the National Ramsar Committee established as part of the GEF alternative. The FMV project plans to establish project coordination committees in each province to bring together stakeholders implicated in forest management. Similarly, the GEF alternative will create regional Ramsar sub-committees to inform the national committee. Through these sub-national and national forums, resource use planning and management of natural resources in the Ramsar sites may achieve greater consistency.

Value added by the Proposed GEF Alternative

19. Gabon's wetland ecosystems are critical for the environmental sustainability of much larger landscapes and seascapes – both in Gabon and globally. The local and global benefits expected from the GEF alternative include the following:

Biodiversity Benefits

- Increased information about the endemic species contained in Gabon's wetlands.
- Improved protection of wetland biodiversity through identification of species under threat,

and targeted protection of habitats of species under threat.

- Improved protection of freshwater fish species through implementation of sustainable management of fish stocks that includes improved upstream protection of fish breeding and feeding habitats.
- Reduced depletion of wetland biodiversity potentially important for medicinal, cosmetic, and nutritional purposes, through better management of wetland ecosystems, and through creation of a national structure (the Nagoya protocol) to valorize genetic resources.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Benefits

- Maintenance of wetland services for climate change impact attenuation in terms of protection from coastal erosion from storm and tidal surges, and flood protection from greater precipitation variability and intensity.
- Maintenance of carbon stored in wetlands through better control of extractive land use activities in WII sites.
- Maintenance of carbon storage and sequestration capacity of forested wetland areas through improved management of forestry activities in WII sites.

Land and Water benefits

- Reduced land and water degradation through wetland area management activities that reduce pollution loading and land degradation impacts from commercial activities in wetland areas.
- Reduced water and wetland degradation from inappropriate agricultural practices in wetland areas, through the promotion of sustainable land management practices in WII management plans.

Contribution to GEF Focal Areas

20. Wetlands are extremely rich in biodiversity with a high rate of endemism. The proposed project is consistent with the GEF Strategy for Biodiversity on a number of fronts, as well as several crosscutting capacity development strategic objectives.

21. With its support for the diverse and majestic biodiversity found in Gabon's wetlands, it aligns with **Biodiversity Objective 1 (BD1)** that seeks to "improve sustainability of protected area systems". The project provides for a more diverse representation of marine and terrestrial biodiversity in Gabon's system of protected areas through: (i) enhanced management and monitoring of the overall Ramsar site network in Gabon; (ii) preparation of management plans for the selected sites; and (iii) coverage of unprotected ecosystems. The legal status (and level of protection) of Ramsar sites varies in Gabon. The proposed project on wetlands will bolster protected areas that already encompass wetlands, as well as extend into areas that fall outside of the formal protected areas.

22. Through its integrated landscape approach, the project will also directly contribute to the **Land Degradation Objective 3 (LD3)** that seeks to "reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape". Specifically, under Component 2, the management plans for selected wetlands areas will be based on an inclusive approach that balances the interests of stakeholders with development objectives. Interests include extractive industries and agricultural production, as well as local community use and conservation. The focus on building policies and management practices that integrate the various needs and stakeholders, as well as

the diversity of uses of the wetlands landscape, including associated forest areas, promotes a landscape approach to sustainable land management in a productive and dynamic mosaic. In addition, under Component 1, an economic valuation of wetland economic services will assess the potential trade-offs between wetlands conservation, and conversion to 'more valuable' intensive economic activities. The project is therefore expected to be critical to build the necessary awareness and foster the political engagement for a sustainable and environmentally friendly development path in the critical wetlands ecosystems.

23. Sustainable management of wetlands, as proposed under the project, holds significant potential for supporting forest management and the flow of associated ecosystem services in line with the **SFM/REDD+ Objectives 1 (SFM/REDD+1)** aiming at "reducing pressures on forest resources and generating sustainable flows of ecosystem services". All of the selected sites contain large areas of forested wetlands; and one of the sites (Petit Loango/Sette-Cama) contains mangroves. The project will contribute to reduced pressure on these vulnerable ecosystems. Notably the project will: (i) support the preservation of wetlands under increasing pressures from other competing land-uses; and (ii) conduct audits of extractive industries in and around the selected sites.

Incremental Costs

Table 3 presents the incremental costs of the GEF alternative project, as compared to the baseline scenario. The components of the GEF alternative project are described in more detail in Annex 2 of the project document. The total cost associated with the GEF alternative is estimated at US\$8.471 million.

Table 3: Incremental Cost Matrix

Components	Category	Cost (US\$)	Domestic benefits	Global benefits
1 Improvement of knowledge and monitoring of wetland ecosystems in Gabon	Baseline scenario	GOG: 13,350,000	Institutional capacity for planning, management is strengthened for 2 WII sites; a monitoring system is implemented for both sites.	Increased knowledge about the WII and increased national capacity to protect wetland biodiversity and integrity, allowing ecosystem services to continue flow across borders.
	GEF alternative	13,950,000	Institutional capacity for planning and management is strengthened for an additional 3 WII sites; a monitoring system is implemented for the sites.	
	Increment	600,000		
2 Support to sustainable management of selected critical wetland ecosystems.	Baseline scenario	GOG: 15,971,606	Reinforced local capacity – equipment, planning, monitoring – to manage wetland sites. Local livelihood improvement for local communities through tourism development, and reduction of human pressure on WII resources near Libreville through integrated land use planning for the Libreville region.	Reduced human pressure on fauna and flora and improved conservation of biological resources of global significance
	GEF alternative	19,081,606	The above plus: Reinforced local capacity – equipment, planning, monitoring – to manage an additional 3 WII sites. Local livelihood improvement for rural	Reduced pressure on wetlands of global significance. Stabilized or improved biological diversity in these areas.

Components	Category	Cost (US\$)	Domestic benefits	Global benefits
			communities and reduction of human pressure on WII ecosystems in an additional 3 WII sites outside the Libreville region through increased capacity to monitor wetland use, and the implementation of management plans Draft national plan of action for Gabon's wetlands.	Secured global public goods such as retention of greenhouse gases (GHG), nitrogen fixation, groundwater recharge and biodiversity, and reduced climate change impacts from coastal erosion and flooding.
	Increment	3,110,000		
3	Implementation of Nagoya Protocol	Baseline scenario	GOB: 3,486,267	
		GEF alternative	4,436,267	Institutional structure to implement the Nagoya Protocol and list of implementation opportunities.
				Improved valuation and opportunity to capture the genetic value of biodiversity for the benefit of local peoples. Acknowledgement and awareness of the global value of genetic resources.
	Increment	950,000		
4	Strengthen institutional framework to support wetlands management.	Baseline scenario	GOG: 3,418,344	Institutional framework for wetlands management improved and clarified at both national and local levels. Mainstreaming of wetland concerns through an Inter-ministerial structure that addresses cross-sector wetland management issues and priorities.
		GEF alternative	6,744,344	
	Increment	3,326,000		
5	Project Management	Baseline scenario	GOB: 1,000,000	
		GEF alternative	1,485,000	
	Increment	485,000		
TOTAL	Baseline scenario	\$37,226,267		
	GEF alternative	45,697,267		
	Increment	\$8,471,000		
Requested from GEF		\$8,471,000		

ANNEX 6: IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT PLAN

GABON: Sustainable Management of Critical Wetlands Ecosystems

Strategy and approach for Implementation Support

1. The strategy for implementation support (IS) has been developed based on the nature of the project and its risk profile. It will aim at making implementation support to the client more flexible and efficient, and will focus on implementation of the risk mitigation measures defined in the ORAF.

- **Procurement.** Implementation support will include: (i) providing training to the DGEPN and ANPN staff as needed; (ii) reviewing procurement documents and providing timely feedback to the DGEPN and ANPN; (iii) providing detailed guidance on the Bank's Procurement Guidelines to the DGEPN and ANPN; and (iv) monitoring procurement progress against the detailed Procurement Plan.
- **Financial management.** Supervision will review the project's financial management system at the DGEPN and ANPN, including but not limited to, accounting, reporting and internal controls. Supervision will also cover micro-enterprises on a random sample basis.
- **Environmental and Social Safeguards.** The Bank safeguards specialists in the project task team will supervise the implementation of the ESMF and Process Framework through specific EMPs and ARAPs if necessary and will provide guidance to the DGEPN and ANPN as needed.
- **Anti-Corruption.** The Bank team will supervise the implementation of the agreed Governance and Accountability Framework, and provide guidance in resolving any issues identified.

Implementation Support Plan

2. Most of the Bank team members are based in the region (Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire) and the fiduciary staff in the Cameroon Country office to ensure timely, efficient and effective implementation support to the client. Formal implementation support missions and field visits will be carried out semi-annually. Detailed inputs from the Bank team and partners are outlined below:

- **Technical inputs.** In terms of biodiversity conservation, technical inputs will be provided to the DGEPN and the ANPN by the team environmental economist (consultant) with background in biodiversity and wetlands conservation.
- **Fiduciary requirements and inputs.** Training will be provided by the Bank's financial management specialist and procurement specialist as needed to project staff. Both the financial management and the procurement specialist are based in the country office of Cameroon to provide timely support. Formal supervision of financial management will be carried out semi-annually, while procurement supervision will be carried out on a timely basis as required by the client.

- Based on the outcome of the FM risk assessment, the following implementation support plan is proposed. The objective of the implementation support plan is to ensure that the project maintains a satisfactory financial management system throughout the project's life.

FM Activity	Frequency
Desk reviews	
Interim financial reports review	Quarterly
Audit report review of the project	Annually
Review of other relevant information such as interim internal control systems reports.	Continuous as they become available
On site visits	
Review of overall operation of the FM system	Annual with field visits at the local level (Implementation Support Mission)
Monitoring of actions taken on issues highlighted in audit reports, auditors' management letters, internal audit and other reports	As needed
Transaction reviews (if needed)	As needed
Capacity building support	
FM training sessions	During implementation and as and when needed.

- Financial review of DGEPN and ANPN corporate finance. Input is required from a financial specialist for regular review of DGEPN and ANPN financial status to verify compliance of financial covenants. This exercise will be done through semi-annual review.
- Safeguards. Inputs from an environment specialist and a social specialist are required, though the project's social and environmental impacts are limited and client capacity is generally adequate. Capacity building will be required on environment monitoring and reporting. On the social side, supervision will focus on the implementation of the process framework. Field visits are required on a semi-annual basis. The social and environmental specialists are based in the region (Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire).
- Operation. The TTL will provide timely supervision of all operational aspects through regular VC and audio meetings, as well as ensure coordination with the client and among Bank team members. The TTL will lead two formal field supervisions a year and, as needed, conduct punctual missions to resolve operational issues. To ensure that annual work plans and implementation support and supervision action plans will be carried out as planned, a local short term consultant will be recruited and based in the Libreville country office for daily follow up of project activities with DGEPN and ANPN, he/she will also participate in project and monitoring and evaluation activities in the project sites.

The main focus of implementation support is summarized below.

Time	Focus	Resource Estimate	Partner Role
First 12 months	FM training and supervision	FM specialist 4 SWs	N/A
	Procurement training and supervision	Procurement specialist 4 SWs	N/A
	Social safeguards	Social specialist 2 SWs	N/A
	Environmental training and supervision	Environmental specialist(s) 2 SWs	N/A
	Project implementation support and coordination	TTL/NRM Specialist 4 SWs	N/A
	Biodiversity and wetlands management	Environmental Economist/biodiversity and wetlands Specialist 4 SWs	N/A
	Project implementation & M&E support	M&E consultant CO based 30 SWs	N/A
12-60 months	Biodiversity and wetlands management	Environmental Economist/biodiversity and wetlands Specialist 24 SWs	N/A
	Environment and social monitoring & reporting	Environmental specialist(s) 16 SWs Social specialist 16 SWs	N/A
	Financial management disbursement and reporting	FM specialist 16 SWs	N/A
	Procurement supervision	Procurement specialist 16 SWs	N/A
	Project implementation support and supervision coordination	TTL/NRM Specialist 16 SWs	N/A
	Project implementation support and M&E	M&E consultant CO based 120 SW	N/A

Note: SW – Staff-Week

Staff skill mix required is summarized below.

Skills Needed	Number of Staff Weeks	Number of Trips	Comments
Wetlands management	6 SWs annually	Two	France based
Procurement	4 SWs annually	Fields trips as required.	Country office based
Social specialist	4 SWs annually	Fields trips as required.	Country office based
Environment specialist	4 SWs annually	Fields trips as required.	Country office based
Financial management specialist	4 SWs annually	Fields trips as required.	Country office based
Task team leader/NRM Specialist	4 SWs annually	Two annually	Washington based
Project implementation support and M&E	30 SWs annually	Field trips as required	Country office based

III. Partners

Name	Institution/Country	Role
TBD	Ramsar Convention	Wetlands conservation

ANNEX 7. DESCRIPTIONS OF SELECTED RAMSAR PROJECT SITES⁴⁰

Petit Loango
<i>Location and Size</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 480,000 km² grouping three (previously designated) protected areas: Petit Loango Nature Reserve, and two hunting reserves – Iguéla and Ngové-Ndogo. • Southwest of Gabon in the province of Ogooué Maritime, straddling the borders of the Departments of Etimboué to the north and Ndougou to the south. • City of Gamba 50 km to the south; city of Omboué 70 km to the north. • 5 km north of Ramsar site Setté-Cama. • Coastal sedimentary basin, with average elevations at 25-30 meters, but also with some small hills reaching at most 100 meters.
<i>Summary Description</i>
<p><i>Wildlife Reserve. A mosaic of forest-savanna, characteristic of refugia, and flooded forests and alluvial depressions. A slightly undulating coastal plain with several lakes, dissected by small rivers and temporary and permanent swamps, set in a savanna, mangrove and rainforest environment. The site supports rare and vulnerable species like the hippo, gorilla and elephant, and provides a nesting site for the three threatened turtle species Leatherback, Green, and Hawksbill. Birds, mainly of the Sterna genus, use the sandbanks for breeding. The site plays an important role for flood control, sediment capture and bank stabilization through riverside vegetation. Given the very low population density and the area's classification as a wildlife reserve, the site is scarcely used. The surroundings are used for tourism and for oil exploitation; the latter could constitute a threat in the future, especially if expanded.</i></p> <p><i>Research interests include large mammals (elephant, gorilla, whales), and marine turtles that nest on the beaches.</i></p>
<i>Flora Summary</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 374 tree species; Fabaceae and Euphorbiaceae, common to the Congo basin, dominate. • Mangrove trees include two species of Rhizophora, one of Avicennia and two of Combretaceae. • On firm soil, the primary tree species are Aucoumea klaineana, Saccoglottis gabonensis, Desbordesia glaucescens, Dacryodes buettneri, Pentaclethra macrophylla, Erythrophleum ivorense, Baillonella toxisperma, Irvingia gabonensis, and Mimosa africana. • Secondary species tree species include Musanga cecropioides, Anthocleista schweinfurthii, and Pycnanthus angolensis.
<i>Fauna Summary</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82 reptile species (22 lizards, 3 crocodiles, 46 snakes, 11 turtles) 75 amphibians; 15 bat species; 42 large mammals including elephant, buffalo, hippopotamus, antelope; 84 fish species; 455 birds. • Large mammals include elephants (Loxodonta africana), buffaloes (Syncerus caffer), hippopotamus (Hippopotamus amphibius) and two species of duiker: Cephalophus monticola and Cephalophus sylvicultor. • Main fish species are Tarpon atlanticus, Caranx hippos, Lutjanus dentatus, Liza falcipinnis, Sphyraena afra, and Polydactylus quadrifilis. • Refugia for water birds such as the Egretta alba, Platalea alba, and Pelecanus rufescens. • The beaches are favorite nesting areas for marine turtles, notably, Dermochelys coriacea, the most abundant, Chelonia mydas and Eretmochelys imbricata.
<i>Human Inhabitants</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the site population at 0.2 persons per km² (estimate 2013).

⁴⁰ Descriptions obtained from the Ramsar Secretariat summaries of the WII, and the Ramsar Information Sheets.

Setté-Cama
Location, Elevation, and Size
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 220,000 km², grouping the hunting reserve of Sette-Cama (200,000 ha) and the nature reserve of Plaine Ouanga (20,000 ha). • Southwest of Gabon in the province of Ogooué Maritime, in the Department of Ndougou. • 5 km south of Ramsar site Petit Loango • Town of Gamba is within the site. • Like Petit Loango, Setté Cama is in the coastal sedimentary basin, known as the Gabonese coastal plain, which has average elevations at 25-30 meters, but also with some small hills reaching at most 100 meters. Setté Cama itself reaches elevations of about 20 m.
Summary Description
<p><i>Wildlife Reserve. Located a few kilometers south of Petit Loango, the site comprises a wildlife reserve and a hunting concession. The landscape consists of a slightly undulating sand plain with several lakes, marshes and swamps, interspersed with patches of savanna. The area has significant biodiversity, with 15 species of bats, approximately 80 of amphibians and reptiles, and more than 450 of birds. It is also important for several endangered mammals, including elephant, duikers and hippopotamus. Several fish species use the wetland as spawning, feeding and breeding grounds, while turtles nest along the coast. The site is used by the local population for agriculture and fishing at a low scale, while water is pumped from the lagoon for the supply of the town of Gamba. Oil exploitation has been taking place at the Ndougou lagoon for the past 50 years, with the company putting in place regulatory measures against hunting, as well as other environmental regulations. As in Petit Loango, the area is also used for tourism and for scientific research on mammals, whales and turtles.</i></p> <p><i>The Setté-Cama site belongs to the Ndougou-Nyanga complex. It is permanently flooded and includes the Ndougou lagoon, fed by two large independent hydrological systems commanded by, respectively, the rivers Rembo Ndougou and the river Nyanga. The site, located along the southern coast of Gabon, constitutes two terminal accumulation zones for a large coastal sedimentary basin.</i></p>
Flora Summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 374 tree species; Fabaceae and Euphorbiaceae species, common to the Congo basin, dominate. • Mangrove species include two species of Rhizophora, one species of Avicennia and two species of Combretaceae. • On firm soil, tree species include Aucoumea klaineana, Saccoglottis gabonensis, Desbordesia glaucescens, Dacryodes buettneri, Pentaclethra macrophylla, Erythrophleum ivorense, Baillonella toxisperma, Irvingia gabonensis, Mimosa africana. • Secondary stands are generally composed of Musanga cecropioides, Anthocleista schweinfurthii, and Pycnanthus angolensis.
Fauna Summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Petit Loango
Human Inhabitants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population density in the site at 1 person per km² (estimate 2013). • Town of Gamba with 11,000 inhabitants (estimate 2013). • Industrial operations: Shell Gabon exploiting sites around Gamba.

Bas Ogooué
Location, Elevation, and Size
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 862,700 km² with elevation ranging 158m to 993m. • West of Gabon straddling the provinces of Moyen Ogooué (departments of Ogooué and Lacs et Abanga Bigné) and Ogooué Maritime (department of Bendjé). • Central large urban center is Lambaréné. • The area of Bas Ogooué is a small part of the Ogooué watershed.
Summary Description
<p><i>In the west of the country, Bas Ogooué is a vast alluvial plain (over 70km), containing marshes, lakes, rivers, and sandy banks exposed during the dry season. Luxuriant vegetation covers half of the site in dense forest, riparian marshes, savanna, etc. It supports several threatened species such as gorilla, chimpanzee, elephant, buffalo, mandrills, the African manatee and the hippopotamus. Other noteworthy species include various waterbirds such as Herons, the African cormorant, and falcons, as well as various fish populations like sharks, tilapia, carp, and introduced species such as Heterotis niloticus. As the site is rich in natural resources, it is commonly used by those who inhabit it as well as populations from the surrounding areas and large towns for various purposes, some of which are uncontrolled and lead to detrimental effects on the ecosystem; these range from exploitation of the forest for timber and other forest products, agriculture, hunting, fishing, tourism, livestock rearing, transport of people and goods.</i></p> <p><i>Research on fish species and other biodiversity, as well as education and awareness raising projects are carried out by the Ministries of Water and Forests and of Fisheries in collaboration with the WWF.</i></p>
Flora Summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deltatic lake vegetation with many floating islands of Polygonum species, papyrus arbustive, and reedbeds anchored to Echinochloa grasses in thickets of Alchornea cordifolia. • Tree vegetation with semi-floating thickets of Alchornea cordifolia and Ceiba pentandra. • Dense forest ecosystems include species of picnanthus angolensis, Ficus vogeliana, pterocarpus soyauxii, anthocleista vogelii, hylodendron gabonensis. • Flooded forests of the type igapo are dominated by Anthostema aubryanum. • Forests on firm ground are dominated by Aucoumea Klaineana and Sacoglottis gabonensis. • Other tree species include Dacryodes buettneri, Uapaca guineensis, Sacoglottis gabonensis, Desbordesia glaucescens, Testulea gabonensis, among others. • Savannas ecosystems include savannas of Ctenium and Rhynchelytrum, savannas of Hyparrhenia and/or Pobeguina, and flooded savannas.
Fauna Summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gorilla (Gorilla gorilla), chimpanze (Pan troglodytes), elephant (Loxodonta africana), buffalo (Syncerus caffer), and a large concentration of mandrills (Mandrillus sphinx). • Birds include many migratory water birds, and Pelecanus rufescens, Phalacrocorax africanus, Egretta alba, Ardea purpurea, Nycticorax nycticorax, and Sterna hirundo. • The lagoons of the l'Ogooué basin have populations of Ardea cinerea and Agretta garzetta. Sterna Maxima migrates here at the end of August, as Gabonese coasts are its principle winter location. • Fish species are numerous.
Human Inhabitants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic activities: agriculture, hunting, fishing, tourism, and a small amount of livestock rearing. • Water navigation is very important for moving goods and people between the cities of Ndjolé et Port-Gentil, via Lambaréné. • Estimated population density of provinces containing Bas Ogooué at 6 persons per km² (2013). • Urban populations of Lambaréné and Ndjolé at 40,000 (estimate 2013).

Monts Birougou
<i>Location, Elevation, and Size</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 536,800 ha; elevation varies 800 to 900 meters within the site, and 1022 meters at the periphery • Southern Gabon in the provinces of Ngounié and Ogooué-Lolo. • South of the Chaillu forest refuge • Closest urban centers are Malinga and Mbigou to the west (Ngounié Province) and Dienda, Pana et Koulamoutou to the east (l'Ogooué-lolo province).
<i>Summary Description</i>
<p><i>Being the source of the Nyanga and Ngounié rivers, and their main tributaries, the Mont Birougou site is considered a water tower of the country. The region most difficult to access in the country, with a high degree of endemism.</i></p> <p><i>The site comprises forests, swamps, savanna, falls, caves, valleys, and mountainous zones between 800 and 900m. Forest ecosystems are varied: mountainous, sub-mountainous, marshy, seasonally flooded, secondary, white sand, and grassy. The woody and non-woody products of the forests provide resources for feeding, building, clothing and construction of artistic objects. The diversity of the site gives it a rich flora as well as one of the most remarkable faunas in Africa. Primates are dominant, with about 20 different species found in the Birougou Mountains. The endangered Gorilla (<i>Gorilla g.gorilla</i>), chimpanzee (<i>Pan troglodytes</i>), the vulnerable sun-tailed monkey (<i>Cercopithecus solatus</i>), mandril (<i>Mandrillus sphinx</i>), the West African dwarf crocodile (<i>Osteolaemus tetraspis</i>), the forest elephant (<i>Loxodonta africana cyclotis</i>) and the savanna elephant (<i>Loxodonta africana africana</i>), amongst others, are found here. The area is noted for its cultural and religious value in the country. Fishing with chemical products, over-exploitation of forest and mining practiced on the outskirts pose a threat.</i></p> <p><i>Research in the site has been limited to preliminary inventories of flora and fauna.</i></p>
<i>Flora Summary</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dense forest vegetation, of average humidity. Trees species include Aucoumea klaineana, Burseraceae, Gheombi, Sindoropsis, Dacryodes buettneri, Tetraberlinia bifoliolata, Dialium pachyphyllum, et Pterocarpus soyauxii. Pycnanthus angolensis, and Alstonia boonei.
<i>Fauna Summary</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primates are dominant in the forest – almost 20 species of primates are found in Monts Birougou including Mandrilus sphinx, Colobus satanas, Gorilla gorilla, chimpanzee, Colobus satanas, and Cercopithecus solatus, among others. • Elephant species include Loxodonta africana cyclotis, which cohabits the forest zone with the savanna elephant sub-species Loxodonta africana africana. • Buffalo in forest and secondary forest ecosystems include Syncerus caffer nanus, Guib harnaché Tragelaphus scriptus, and Hyemoschus aquaticus. • Duiker species are many, including Cephalophus callipygus, C. dorsalis, C. leucogaster, C. sylvicultor C. ogilbyi crusalbum, and C. monticola (the species most threatened by poaching). • Other antelopes include Tragelaphus scriptus, Tragelaphus spekii, and Tragelaphus euryceros. • Tree dwelling mammals include various bat species, and tree hyrax Dendrohyrax arboreus. • A preliminary inventory of reptilian fauna listed 50 species, including 2 crocodiles, 2 chelonii, 14 lacertiliens and 32 ophidiens representing 15 families et 39 genres. Reptiles like the Varanus niloticus (Varan), le dwarf crocodile (Osteolaemus tetraspis), the Seba Python (Python sebae), and typically cited as representative of the area. • The inventory of fauna in the Monts Birougou is only partially done.
<i>Human Inhabitants</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average population density of the provinces containing the Monts Birougou WII site is 3 persons per km² (estimate 2013).

ANNEX 8: TEAM COMPOSITION

World Bank staff and consultants who worked on the project:

Name	Title	Unit
Africa Olojoba	Sr. Environmental Specialist	MNSEE
Serge Menang	Sr. Environmental Specialist	AFTN1
Issa Maman-Sani	Sr. Environmental Specialist	AFTN3
Lucienne Mbaipor	Sr. Social Development Specialist	AFTCS
Eric Adda	Financial Management Specialist	AFTMW
Messan Kouami	Sr. Procurement Specialist	AFTPW
Maya Abi Karam	Counsel	LEGAM
Aissatou Diallo	Senior Finance Officer	CTRLA
Juliana Victor-Ahuchogu	Sr. M&E Specialist	AFTDE
Cynthia Cartier	Consultant/Economist	AFTN1
Bachavi Ganyi	Consultant	AFTN1
Pascal Ilboudo	Consultant	AFTN1
Virginie Vaseopoulos	Sr. Program Assistant	AFTEN
Sona Vanecia Boga	Program Assistant	AFMGA
Kignopron Coulibaly	Program Assistant	AFTN1
Come Rebaudet	Junior Consultant	AFTN1
Salimata Follea	NRM Specialist & TTL	AFTN1