

## 1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		3960	
GEF Agency project ID		P116805	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF 4	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		World Bank	
Project name		Capacity Building for Regional Coordination of Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin under the GEF Program for the Congo Basin	
Country/Countries		Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of Congo	
Region		AFR	
Focal area		Land Degradation	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		Strategic Program for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) SFM Strategic Program 4: Strengthening the Policy and Regulatory Framework for Mainstreaming Biodiversity.	
Executing agencies involved		Central Africa Forest Commission COMIFAC	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		None noted.	
Private sector involvement		None noted.	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		May 27, 2011	
Effectiveness date / project start		August 2, 2011	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		June 30, 2013	
Actual date of project completion		June 30, 2015	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.05	0.05
	Co-financing	0.183	
GEF Project Grant		0.85	0.815
Co-financing	IA own		
	Government	0.9	
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	2.12	
	Private sector		
	NGOs/CSOs		
Total GEF funding		0.865	0.865
Total Co-financing		3.2	2.7
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		4	3.57
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		Oct 19, 2015	
Author of TE		Loic Jean Charles Braune,	
TER completion date		December 3, 2015	
TER prepared by		Dania Trespalacios	
TER peer review by (if GEF EO review)		Molly Watts	

## 2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF EO Review
Project Outcomes	MS	S	NA	S
Sustainability of Outcomes	ML	L	NA	ML
M&E Design	NR	NR	NA	S
M&E Implementation	S	NR	NA	UA
Quality of Implementation	NR	S	NA	MS
Quality of Execution	S	S	NA	MS
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report	--	--	--	MU

## 3. Project Objectives

### 3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The Global Environmental Objective is to facilitate the coordination and integration of initiatives related to sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation in the Congo Basin. The six project countries- Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of Congo- together form the world's second largest contiguous block of tropical forest. Immense challenges exist to conserve and sustainably manage these 160 million ha of forest in the Congo Basin, including expanding transport infrastructure, growing regional markets for commodities, growing investments in extractive industries, and increasing population migration. (Request for CEO Endorsement p. 4) The Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) Executive Secretariat oversees the implementation of the Convergence Plan under the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP), and coordinates various regional programs, including the GEF's Congo Basin Strategic Program (CBSP), that accounts for a dozen of both, national and regional operations on sustainable forest management. (Request for CEO Endorsement p. 20) This project will increase the capacity of the COMIFAC Executive Secretariat.

### 3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The Development Objective of this project is to strengthen the Central African Forest Commission's (COMIFAC) capacity for regional coordination, in line with the objectives of COMIFAC's Convergence Plan and with specific focus on the GEF Congo Basin Strategic Program. (PD p. 1) COMIFAC's Executive Secretariat, based in Yaoundé, plays a critical role in the harmonization of national policies on sustainable forest management (SFM), and in promoting regional knowledge creation and sharing. However, COMIFAC's Executive Secretariat faces challenges due to delays and shortfalls in member country contributions, resulting shortfalls in operating budgets, and constraints in overall management and coordination capacity. COMIFAC's capacity for knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation, and communication needs capacity building. Coordination and communication between the COMIFAC headquarters in Yaoundé and the country focal points need to be strengthened, and there is a need for an updated electronic financial management system, formalized arrangements for procurement, systematic record keeping and information sharing with the public. This project would address these immediate constraints and provide targeted capacity building to the COMIFAC Executive Secretariat. (Request for CEO Endorsement p. 5)

3.3 Were there any **changes** in the Global Environmental Objectives, Development Objectives, or other activities during implementation?

**There were no changes** to the Global Environmental and Development Objectives of the project. The TE states that after two restructurings for project extensions, the Development Objective and the project activities were slightly modified to reflect a greater level of precision, but that there were no significant changes in either the Development Objectives or the project activities. (TE p. 3)

#### 4. GEF EO assessment of Outcomes and Sustainability

Please refer to the GEF Terminal Evaluation Review Guidelines for detail on the criteria for ratings. Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

4.1 <b>Relevance</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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The project supports the GEF's Sustainable Forest Management Framework Strategy, specifically the GEF 4 Strategic Program for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin (CBSP). The CBSP aims to support the Congo Basin countries to deliver multiple global environmental benefits across the Congo Basin ecosystem with a portfolio of targeted projects at local, national, and regional level, but coordination is critical to achieve such multiplier effects and the COMIFAC Executive Secretariat plays a key role in this regard. This project will boost the capacity of the COMIFAC Executive Secretariat to serve as a regional coordination mechanism. (Request for CEO Endorsement p. 6) The project would improve the coordination role of the COMIFAC to enhance the impact of the regional, national and local activities under the programmatic umbrella. It will build regional coordination capacities, remove barriers for knowledge exchange, and support synergies and partnerships. As such, it will ensure a more efficient use of the resources dedicated to SFM activities in the Congo Basin. When properly coordinated, the numerous SFM activities in the Congo Basin can significantly reduce the threats on forest of high conservation value and promote sustainable use of forest resources, thus protecting biodiversity and reducing land degradation. (Request for CEO Endorsement p. 7)

The project is consistent with the priorities of the 6 participating countries. The Congo Basin countries recognize the interconnected nature of the Congo Basin from a social, economic, and environmental perspective, and they have demonstrated their commitment for conservation and sustainable management of forest ecosystems in the Yaoundé Declaration in 1999 and the ratification of the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) Treaty in 2005. The COMIFAC Treaty confirmed the high-level political commitment of the Central African countries to promote sustainable management of their forest resources, and confirmed the pivotal role of COMIFAC in harmonizing the sustainable forest management (SFM) approach at the regional level. (Request for CEO Endorsement p. 4) The Congo Basin countries agree that COMIFAC is essential for a regional coordinated approach, and to enhance the political leverage of the Congo Basin countries in international policy forums, such as the UNFCCC, UNCBD, and UNFF. Strengthening the capacity of the COMIFAC Executive Secretariat is consistent with countries' national and regional priorities. (Request for CEO Endorsement p. 7)

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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The TE rates overall project progress as Satisfactory, and states that the project successfully achieved its two planned objectives of (1) building COMIFAC's capacity to better coordinate sustainable forest management activities in the Congo Basin, and (2) actively supporting the implementation of regional programs in connection with the Convergence Plan. (TE p. 2) The TER concurs with this assessment, and rates effectiveness Satisfactory. Table 1 summarizes the project's components, expected outputs, and results.

**Table 1** Project components and expected outputs (Request for CEO Endorsement p. 20-24) and project results (TE p. 5-6)

Components	Expected Outputs	Results
Component 1 Support the coordination, communication, and knowledge management on sustainable forest management (SFM) in the Congo Basin		
Subcomponent 1.1 Strengthen Coordination and Communication	Operationalize the M&E System for the Convergence Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train COMIFAC ES staff, national &amp; regional focal points on M&amp;E system</li> <li>• Train COMIFAC ES staff on coordination, communication, etc.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
	Strengthening Coordination and Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update COMIFAC's communication strategy, including branding, installing audio conference equipment, and increasing COMIFAC's visibility among country audiences.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved.</b>
Subcomponent 1.2 Enhance/Scale up Knowledge Management	Knowledge sharing and cross-fertilization for the Congo Basin Strategic Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support 4 knowledge sharing workshops bringing together practitioners of Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin.</li> <li>• Develop a report on the experiences, lessons and good practices for sustainable forest management. <b>Component added after restructuring</b></li> </ul>	<b>Achieved.</b>
	Installation of a library and information center & virtual access. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a new and updated website for COMIFAC.</li> <li>• Create a library/info center within the COMIFAC ES. <b>Component dropped after restructuring.</b></li> </ul>	<b>Achieved.</b>
Component 2: Reinforce the COMIFAC Executive Secretariat with technical upgrades and improved day to day management effectiveness		
Subcomponent 2.1 Strengthen COMIFAC's day-to-day work effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade electronic and telecommunication equipment, including: a computer network; high speed Internet; equipment for meetings and workshops; telephone network; office furniture; security system and energy back-up system.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved</b>
Subcomponent 2.2 Reinforce COMIFAC's fiduciary capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquire and operationalize an electronic system for accounting, financial management, and institutional management</li> <li>• Train COMIFAC ES staff</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved.</b>
Component 3: Project Management		
Project financial management and procurement, Project monitoring and reporting, Supporting partnerships		<b>Achieved.</b>

The project had several achievements towards meeting Component 1. COMIFAC successfully coordinated 8 workshops in different Congo Basin countries that shared experiences on sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation, and enabled COMIFAC countries to develop synergies for greater conservation. COMIFAC has become more efficient in organizing remote meetings between headquarters and national offices, which has improved their ability to ensure monitoring and evaluation of regional programs, and improve coordination. COMIFAC has consolidated information and analysis on sustainable forest management practices in all of the Congo Basin countries, and created a virtual repository of information that has increased access to data on the Congo Basin countries. COMIFAC has also enabled regular communication of interested stakeholders through a quality web based

platform. (TE p. 2) COMIFAC teams have gained efficiency and visibility through an improved website and portal that increases collaboration with partners. National COMIFAC focal points were trained and received equipment to improve communication and coordination. As a result, COMIFAC presence and visibility has increased. (TE p. 4)

The project has also successfully reached the goals of Component 2. During project implementation, the initial plan to move COMIFAC to a new building changed as negotiations between the hosting Government of Cameroun and COMIFAC ES stalled, thus the plan was changed to upgrading the existing building. As a result of the cost savings of this decision, additional resources were available to upgrade the conference room of COMIFAC and to acquire audio-visual equipment for the different COMIFAC offices both at headquarters and in the region. Instead of a physical library, the plans changed to develop only a web-based knowledge repository portal that would make resources more widely available. Internet connections were made with the Management Unit of the Regional REDD + Project, and improved efficiency in the existing building. (TE p. 2, 3)

Without GEF resources, COMIFAC would have largely remained an institution with a mandate for coordination but with few resources and limited capacity to carry out this function. After this project, COMIFAC is better able to coordinate regional and regular meetings, providing effective monitoring of the Convergence Plan objectives and more readily identify problems or issues. COMIFAC has been able to provide guidance to national offices, and has taken greater initiative in consolidating, hosting and sharing studies, outputs, and analysis in Congo Basin countries. The more regular and cost-effective meetings and coordination built through this project have also enabled COMIFAC to highlight any slippages in the implementation of the Convergence Plan and provide guidance for resolving some issues in a timely manner. (TE p. 8-9) The TE states that the project successfully delivered on all of the project objectives, and that the issues relating to delayed project implementation and project extensions were duly resolved and did not hinder the overall implementation results. (TE p. 3)

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
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The TE rates project efficiency as Satisfactory. (TE p.8) The project did not require additional funds than those initially approved, but two significant extensions were needed. For this moderate shortcoming, efficiency is rated Moderately Satisfactory.

The TE recounts that the project was extended twice, for a total of an additional one year and six months. The project asked for an extension during the mid-term review of 2012, to “ensure achievement of primary outcomes”. The Bank and COMIFAC agreed on an extension of the closing date to June 2013, and subsequently granted a second extension to June 2014. (TE p.2) However, the project was finished in 2015. The TE states that there were several issues related to project implementation that led to delays in achieving project objectives and led to the project closing date extensions. However, the TE does not describe these issues, but only states that these issues were duly resolved and did not hinder overall implementation results. (TE p. 3) In a somewhat contradictory statement, the TE states that the restructuring could be considered opportunistic restructuring rather than a result of any problematic issues. (TE p. 3)

However, the TE recounts that during project implementation, audit reports, procurement, and financial management supervisions were provided on time without major issues or significant

irregularities. At project closure, the remaining money (US\$2,226) was reimbursed to the World Bank with a little delay. The final audit report had minor recommendations. (TE p. 8)

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: <b>Moderately Likely</b>
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The TE rates sustainability project benefits after project completion as Likely. (TE pg. 8) The objective of this project is to ensure that the systems put in place for COMIFAC will remain entirely operational beyond the project's lifetime. (TE p. 3) However, there are significant financial and sociopolitical risks to COMIFAC's future support from its host government and member governments, and there are significant environmental risks that may affect the ability of COMIFAC to have an impact. Therefore, the TER rates overall sustainability as moderately likely.

#### **Financial Sustainability- Moderately Likely**

The TE states that the financial sustainability of COMIFAC remains at substantial risk. COMIFAC faces a recurrent issue of financing because the countries of the Congo Basin do not pay their promised allocations on time. This insecure source of funding is a substantial risk. Although resolving this risk was not part of the scope of this project, and although other donors (GIZ, PFBC) are coordinating the establishment of a sustainable financing system for COMIFAC, at project end, financial sustainability remains moderately unlikely. (TE p. 8)

#### **Sociopolitical Sustainability – Moderately Likely**

The TE generally suggests that the member states are supportive of COMIFAC's mission and goals, and that the region's stakeholders depend on and support COMIFAC's work. However, the TE states that the actual level of co-financing was less than expected, because the Government of Cameroun failed to provide a new building for COMIFAC as planned. Apparently, the negotiations between the Government of Cameroun and COMIFAC stalled. (TE p. 8) Since the government of Cameroun hosts COMIFAC, this dynamic points to future sociopolitical risks.

#### **Sustainability of Institutional Frameworks and Governance - Likely**

COMIFAC was established with a multinational treaty in 2005, and seems to have a well supported legal framework that remains robust. It also serves as an institutional umbrella to various specialized regional collaborative bodies responsible for Protected Areas, Environmental Information, and other issues. (TE p. 4-5) There do not seem to be any threats or risks concerning the sustainability of institutional governance.

#### **Environmental Sustainability – Moderately Likely**

The Request for CEO Endorsement recounts serious challenges to the conservation and sustainable management of Congo Basin forests, including expanding transport infrastructure, growing regional markets for commodities, growing investments in extractive industries, and increasing population migration. (Request for CEO Endorsement p. 4) These risks are not addressed in the TE.

## 5. Processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes

5.1 Co-financing. To what extent was the reported co-financing essential to the achievement of GEF objectives? If there was a difference in the level of expected co-financing and actual co-financing, then what were the reasons for it? Did the extent of materialization of co-financing affect project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The GEF contribution to this project was US \$815,000, the expected co-financing at project start was more than US \$3,000,000. The Request for CEO Endorsement notes that GEF financing would only cover half of the financing needs for equipping COMIFAC's new office- the other half would come from the AfDB and GIZ. (Request for CEO Endorsement p. 24) The actual co-financing that materialized was approximately US \$2,700,000, a bit less than expected due to the Government of Cameroun's failure to provide a new building for COMIFAC. (TE p.8) It is clear that co-financing was essential for the achievement of GEF objectives, and that a more significant lack of co-financing would have negatively affected the project's outcomes.

5.2 Project extensions and/or delays. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons for it? Did the delay affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The original date for the start of the project was 2009, but the project did not start until Aug 2011. Project preparation was delayed due to several reasons: a) the initial clearance process of the project concept was longer than expected, b) the initial milestone calendar did not consider implementation of a PPG grant; c) the absorptive capacity of COMIFAC is currently stretched with a variety of new initiatives, including COMIFAC's coordination role of intensive regional preparation for the UNFCCC COP in Copenhagen in December 2009. (Request for Extension p. 1)

The project was extended twice. The original finishing date was June 2013, but the project finished in June 2015. The project asked for an extension during the mid-term review of 2012, to "ensure achievement of primary outcomes". The Bank and COMIFAC agreed on a 12 month-extension of the closing date to allow planned activities to be fully implemented and achieve expected outcomes. This extension to 30 June 2014 was completed in June 2013, and then another extension was granted until December 31, 2014. (TE p. 2) The TE states that there were several issues related to project implementation that led to delays in achieving project objectives and led to the project closing date extensions. However, the TE does not describe these issues, but only states that these issues were duly resolved and did not hinder overall implementation results. (TE p. 3) In a somewhat contradictory statement, TE states that the restructuring could be considered opportunistic restructuring rather than a result of any problematic issues. (TE p. 3) It is uncertain whether the project delays affected the project's sustainability.

5.3 Country ownership. Assess the extent to which country ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability? Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability, highlighting the causal links:

The TE does not comment on the level of countries' ownership of the project, with the exception of the failure of the Government of Cameroun to provide a new building for COMIFAC. (TE p.8) More information is needed here.

## 6. Assessment of project's Monitoring and Evaluation system

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

6.1 M&E Design at entry	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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The TE does not rate M&E Design. The Request for CEO Endorsement specifies that project monitoring would be conducted in accordance with the project results framework, and would be integrated with the strengthened M&E system of COMIFAC. A discrete budget for M&E was set at US\$ 12,000, which would fund quarterly M&E reports, and Implementation Financial Report. (Request for CEO Endorsement p. 3-4) The Request for CEO Endorsement also includes the project's responses to comments made during the project design, which include the preparation for a project M&E Plan, although few details are provided. (Request for CEO Endorsement p. 16) It seems that the Project Results Framework included measurable and appropriate indicators to measure progress towards results, and that the Project Implementation Plan considered the preparation of annual reports. (Request for CEO Endorsement p. 15, 29)

The Request for CEO Endorsement specifies that Monitoring and Evaluation will be the responsibility of COMIFAC's M&E Officer, and that financial management and monitoring responsibilities will lie with the COMIFAC Chief Financial Officer. Quarterly donor coordination meetings would review the project's progress, and align activities financed by the different partners supporting the COMIFAC ES. The COMIFAC Deputy Executive Secretary would produce a brief report on overall project implementation progress and achieved outputs every three months, accompanied with a financial execution report prepared by the COMIFAC Chief Financial Officer. A final technical and financial report will be prepared for the World Bank and the GEF at the end of the project. A technical and financial audit will be conducted upon completion of the Project. (Request for CEO Endorsement p. 11-12) Based on the information provided in the Request for CEO Endorsement, the TER rates M&E Design at project entry as Satisfactory.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: <b>Unable to Assess</b>
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The TE does not rate M&E implementation. (TE p. 7) The project was implemented between August 2011 and June 2015, however, only two Project Implementation Reports are available to the TER preparer. Both PIRs available to the TER preparer rate M&E as satisfactory. (PIR 2012-2013 p. 4, PIR 2013-2014 p. 5) The TE and PIR poorly report on M&E implementation. The TE states that a midterm review was carried out in October/November 2012, which rated the implementation of the project satisfactory, however, this review was not made available to the TER preparer. (TE p. 2). The reports and evaluations planned for at the start of the project. - quarterly M&E reports, Implementation Financial Report, overall project implementation progress reports every three months- are not mentioned by the TE and not made available to the TER preparer. The TE follows the format of a Project Implementation Report. It does not assess all relevant M&E parameters, it does not report on specific indicators achieved or not achieved, it does not report adequately on the project's M&E design or implementation, and it does a poor job of serving as a final technical and financial report, as required by the Request for CEO Endorsement. (Request for CEO Endorsement p. 3-4, 11-12) It is not possible to conclude whether these documents are missing, or whether they were never completed. A



thorough evaluation of the project's progress measured by specific indicators is not available. Therefore, the TER preparer is unable to assess M&E Implementation.

## 7. Assessment of project implementation and execution

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

<b>7.1 Quality of Project Implementation</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
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The implementing agency for this project was the World Bank. There were significant delays in project planning and initiation, and in project implementation, and the PIRs and TE completed by the World Bank lack important evaluation data. However, the project successfully achieved all expected results. Due to moderate shortcomings, the quality of project implementation is rated Moderately Satisfactory.

The TE rates the World Bank's performance as Satisfactory. (TE p. 8) However, there was a significant delay in project start, originally planned for 2009 and actually begun in 2011. Project preparation was delayed due to several reasons: a) the initial clearance process of the project concept was longer than expected, b) the initial milestone calendar did not consider implementation of a PPG grant; and c) the absorptive capacity of COMIFAC was stretched with new initiatives, including COMIFAC's coordination role for the UNFCCC COP in Copenhagen in December 2009. (Request for Extension p. 1) It seems the World Bank is primarily to blame for these shortcomings, as it is an experienced GEF project implementation agency, and should have better dealt with reasons a and b stated above. There was a significant delay of two years in completing the project: COMIFAC requested two extensions. The World Bank does not fully explain the reasons for these delays, and does not seem to have addressed them properly during the first request for extension, as a second one was called for. Puzzlingly, despite significant project delays, the World Bank rates COMIFAC's implementation as Satisfactory.

<b>7.2 Quality of Project Execution</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
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The executing agency for this project is the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) Executive Secretariat, a political and technical authority for the coordination of preservation and sustainable development of forest ecosystems in Central Africa. The TE states that COMIFAC implemented the project according to the World Bank procedures, and rates overall implementation of activities by COMIFAC as satisfactory. (TE p. 2) It further rates COMIFAC's procurement and project management as moderately satisfactory, and COMIFAC's financial management as satisfactory. (TE p. 7)

The project successfully achieved all of its expected outcomes. However, project was extended twice, and took 18 months longer than initially expected. (TE p. 2) The PIR for 2012-2013 rates project management as moderately satisfactory, and states that delays in the various procurement activities led to the need for an extension of the closing date by 12 months. (PIR 2012-2013 p. 5) The PIR for 2013-2014 rates project management as moderately satisfactory, and again states that delays in the various procurement activities led to the need for an extension of the closing date, this time by 6 months. (PIR 2012-2013 p. 4) Due to two significant delays in project implementation, the quality of project execution is rated Moderately Satisfactory.

## 8. Assessment of Project Impacts

***Note - In instances where information on any impact related topic is not provided in the terminal evaluations, the reviewer should indicate in the relevant sections below that this is indeed the case and identify the information gaps. When providing information on topics related to impact, please cite the page number of the terminal evaluation from where the information is sourced.***

8.1 Environmental Change. Describe the changes in environmental stress and environmental status that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

The TE does not report any changes in environmental stress or status that occurred by the end of the project.

8.2 Socioeconomic change. Describe any changes in human well-being (income, education, health, community relationships, etc.) that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

The TE does not report and changes in human well-being that occurred by project end.

8.3 Capacity and governance changes. Describe notable changes in capacities and governance that can lead to large-scale action (both mass and legislative) bringing about positive environmental change. "Capacities" include awareness, knowledge, skills, infrastructure, and environmental monitoring systems, among others. "Governance" refers to decision-making processes, structures and systems, including access to and use of information, and thus would include laws, administrative bodies, trust-building and conflict resolution processes, information-sharing systems, etc. Indicate how project activities contributed to/ hindered these changes, as well as how contextual factors have influenced these changes.

a) Capacities- The TE reports the following changes in capacity:

- COMIFAC was able to successfully coordinate 8 meetings/workshops in different Congo Basin countries around forest management that consolidated and shared experiences on sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation and enabled COMIFAC countries to learn from one another, develop synergies among the countries for greater conservation and development impacts through forest management initiatives and enhance the coordination of Congo Basin countries at international events. COMIFAC has also been more efficient in organizing meetings remotely between headquarters and national offices through enhanced audio-visual capabilities. This has improved their ability to ensure monitoring and evaluation of regional programs, improve the frequency of coordination as well as disseminate information quickly. Through the support of the grant, COMIFAC has been able to consolidate information and analysis on SFM practices in all of the Congo Basin countries, retain a virtual repository of information on SFM that is accessible to all and has increased access to data on the Congo Basin countries and also maintain regular communication with interested stakeholders virtually through a quality web based platform. (TE p. 2)
- COMIFAC developed and adopted a new logo, which gave it higher visibility at international events, such as the Rio+20. The organization has published and widely distributed

(approximately every four months) newsletters and electronic news releases about important events and has distributed a brochure on progress made and lessons learned at international conferences. Communication media such as calendars and agendas for 2013 and 2014 were published to promote the image of the institution. Similarly, during the African Model Forest Conference held in March 2013, COMIFAC hosted an exhibition stand. (TE p. 5)

- A Report on the experiences, lessons and good practices for sustainable forest management through the implementation of the Convergence Plan was developed. The study provided details from SFM projects from all 10 countries of the Congo Basin and an excellent source of data and information to build on. This report was complementary to the first one released on June 2012 based on the study on the experiences, lessons learnt of the implementation of Agenda 21 and widely distributed during Rio+20. (TE p. 5)
- COMIFAC organized several workshops and conferences to exchange experiences on several topics related to the conservation and sustainable management of forest ecosystems, including: A workshop for an interim review of the stocktaking study on sustainable management of forests and implementation of Agenda 21, May 2012 in Brazzaville; A review and validation workshop on the study of good practices and SFM implementation in Convergence Plan, June 2014 in Douala; A workshop to exchange experiences on forest inventories, December 2013 in Douala; 8th meeting of the working group of the Convention on the Fight against Desertification, June 2014 in Sao Tome and Principe; Workshop of the Working Group of COMIFAC on forest governance in July 2014 in Douala; COMIFAC National Coordinating capacity building workshop, May 2014 in Brazzaville; The special session of the Council of COMIFAC Ministers, November 2013 in N'Djamena; The special session of the COMIFAC Council of Ministers, June 2012 in N'Djamena. (TE p. 5)
- COMIFAC developed a web portal to provide higher visibility for their interventions and to strengthen the image of the institution. Virtual conferencing equipment was acquired and sent to the various CNC member countries in order to enable more effective virtual communication and coordination. Equipment for the existing building was acquired, including a network for the Executive Secretariat and internet connections for the Management Unit of the Regional REDD + Project. COMIFAC upgraded a meeting room and purchase new furniture. . TOMPRO software has been acquired for use in management accounting for both the MSP Project and for the Regional REDD + Project. Training in use of this software was provided to key users. The MSP project (and indeed the REDD+ Project, too) is now using TOMPRO in an efficient manner to prepare financial reports. (TE p. 5-6)
- The second phase of the Convergence Plan for the period 2015-2025 was approved by Ministers at their extraordinary session in July 2014 in Brazzaville, Congo. The Plan has been sent for adoptions to Heads of State of the Congo Basin countries at the forthcoming Summit on Conservation and sustainable management of forest ecosystems. (TE p. 6)

b) Governance - The TE did not report changes in governance.

8.4 Unintended impacts. Describe any impacts not targeted by the project, whether positive or negative, affecting either ecological or social aspects. Indicate the factors that contributed to these unintended impacts occurring.

The TE does not report any unintended impacts.

8.5 Adoption of GEF initiatives at scale. Identify any initiatives (e.g. technologies, approaches, financing instruments, implementing bodies, legal frameworks, information systems) that have been mainstreamed, replicated and/or scaled up by government and other stakeholders by project

end. Include the extent to which this broader adoption has taken place, e.g. if plans and resources have been established but no actual adoption has taken place, or if market change and large-scale environmental benefits have begun to occur. Indicate how project activities and other contextual factors contributed to these taking place. If broader adoption has not taken place as expected, indicate which factors (both project-related and contextual) have hindered this from happening.

There is no evidence of any initiatives that have been mainstreamed, replicated or scaled up.

## **9. Lessons and recommendations**

9.1 Briefly describe the key lessons, good practices, or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report that could have application for other GEF projects.

The TE lists the following lessons learned. (TE p. 7-8)

Technical lessons from Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin:

- The low capacities of local, national and sub-regional actors are a strong limit because it creates a dependence on partners' technical and fiduciary support. While it can help quickly resolve issues and efficiently implement activities, those resources are usually very limited in time and scope and cannot create the consistency that would be necessary for an efficient long term oriented coordination at sub-regional level. The decision to extend the MSP over 3 years was also motivated by this observation that sub-regional coordination needs time if long-lasting effects are expected.
- The time required for the establishment of a viable initiative seems to be often underestimated and therefore it is critical to lay emphasis on the planning stages. Work plans and milestones established at the beginning of a project should include milestones not only in the medium term of the project but also early on. This will provide an indication early in the project life cycle as to whether there are problems that are arising or if things are moving according to schedule. Lack of familiarity with procedures or operations seem to be often quickly remedied if identified quickly.
- Participatory approaches are recommended for the design, management and monitoring of SFM initiatives, to include programs that address not only conservation priorities but also development imperatives of local populations. Participatory approaches should also incorporate practicality and feasibility into the design and as much as possible include local stakeholders in monitoring to encourage understanding and ownership.

Operational lessons for implementing World Bank projects:

- Organizing and coordinating logistics among multiple countries is challenging but important, the level of coordination needed is predictably cumbersome. As a result of this grant it is considerably easier to communicate between national offices as well as with the regional coordination team.
- A focus on strengthening "administrative and financial management" of projects deserves greater attention to allow for more efficient and effective implementation. Understanding the FM and procurement capacities of the implementation unit, and/or carrying training or refreshers on the expected processes to be followed at the outset of a project may help avoid delays in implementation.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE does not include any recommendations. (TE pg.9)

## 10. Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report

A six point rating scale is used for each sub-criteria and overall rating of the terminal evaluation report (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory)

Criteria	GEF EO comments	Rating
To what extent does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?	The TE adequately assesses the achievement of relevant outcomes. However, it does not record the achievement of all indicators, and it does not explicitly comment on the impacts of the project.	<b>MS</b>
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	Some of the ratings of the TE are not well substantiated, and many key categories are not rated. Information is missing, including the extent of country ownership, and the reasons for two significant project extensions. The TE does not present complete evidence.	<b>U</b>
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The TE comments briefly on the sustainability of the overall outcomes. It does not comment on project exit strategy.	<b>MS</b>
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The lessons learned are supported by the evidence, and they are comprehensive.	<b>S</b>
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The TE includes the total project costs, but it does not include the costs by activity.	<b>MU</b>
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The TE reports poorly on M&E implementation. The reports and evaluations planned for at the start of the project. - quarterly M&E reports, Implementation Financial Report, overall project implementation progress reports every three months- are not mentioned by the TE. The TE follows the format of a Project Implementation Report. It does not assess all relevant M&E parameters, it does not report on specific indicators achieved or not achieved, it does not report adequately on the project's M&E design or implementation, and it does a poor job of serving as a final technical and financial report, as required by the Request for CEO Endorsement. It is not possible to conclude whether these documents are missing, or whether they were never completed.	<b>U</b>
<b>Overall TE Rating</b>		<b>MU</b>

$$0.3 \times (a + b) + 0.1 \times (c + d + e + f) = 0.3(6) + 0.1(14) = 1.8 + 1.4 = 3.2$$

## 11. Note any additional sources of information used in the preparation of the terminal evaluation report (excluding PIRs, TEs, and PADs).

No additional sources of information were used in the preparation of this TER, other than PIRs, TE, and PD.