



Report Number: ICRR0022256

1. Project Data

Project ID

P083813

Project Name

GEF Financing for DRC PREPAN

Country

Congo, Democratic Republic of

Practice Area(Lead)

Environment, Natural Resources & the Blue Economy

L/C/TF Number(s)

IDA-H8980

Closing Date (Original)

31-Dec-2018

Total Project Cost (USD)

21,613,132.04

Bank Approval Date

12-Dec-2013

Closing Date (Actual)

31-Dec-2019

IBRD/IDA (USD)
Grants (USD)

Original Commitment

3,000,000.00

0.00

Revised Commitment

3,000,000.00

0.00

Actual

2,762,488.76

0.00

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Project ID

P127437

Project Name

GEF Financing for DRC PREPAN (P127437)

L/C/TF Number(s)
Closing Date (Original)
Total Project Cost (USD)

18864614.92

Bank Approval Date
Closing Date (Actual)



02-Apr-2009

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	0.00	18,916,363.00
Revised Commitment	0.00	18,864,614.92
Actual	0.00	18,864,614.92

2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

According to the PAD (page 5), the Project Development Objective (PDO) was as follows: “enhanced ICCN capacity for management of targeted protected areas.” The Global Environmental Objective (GEO) was the same.

According to the Financing Agreement signed on February 1, 2014 (Schedule 1, page 6), the objective of the project was “to enhance the Project Implementing Entity's capacity to manage targeted Protected Areas.”

The above two objectives were identical as the Project Implementing Entity was the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature: ICCN) being responsible for nature conservation and rehabilitation of protected areas under the Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism.

IEG adopts the formulation of the objective in the Financing Agreement.

b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?

No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

The project had four components, of which Components 1-3 were designed at appraisal and Component 4 was added by the additional financing. The planned, revised, and actual costs for components are based on the ICR (para. 14-17 and Table 1, page 13).

1: Support to Institutional Rehabilitation (Planned: US\$1.3 million. Revised: US\$3.59 million. Actual: US\$5.12 million, which was 143 percent of the revised cost). This component consisted of the provision of equipment, technical assistance and training, and financing of operating costs to support the long term capacity rehabilitation of the ICCN by: (i) rebuilding functional financial and administrative management



capacity, including procurement; (ii) strengthening its capacity for coordination among conservation stakeholders, communication and awareness campaigns, monitoring and evaluation, and social impact management; and (iii) contributing to the development of a sustainable funding strategy.

2: Support to National Parks (Planned: US\$4.5 million. Revised: US\$8.65 million, Actual: US\$8.19 million, which was 95 percent of the revised cost). This component consisted of the provision of equipment, technical assistance and training, financing of operating costs, and carrying out of works, to support rehabilitation of the Garamba National Park and the Virunga National Park's Mikenso sector by: (i) restoring the Project Implementing Entity's site-level basic human and material capacity; (ii) strengthening partnerships with non-governmental organizations; (iii) protecting and stabilizing the populations of key flagship species; (iv) supporting local consultations, participatory processes, and increased local participation in income generating activities, such as hunting zone management and ecotourism, as well as other community development activities; and (v) monitoring of safeguards and implementation of mitigation measures under the project. The additional financing extended support to a third PA in Kahuzi Biega. There was also a parallel financing of US\$26 million from Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) (ICR, para. 15).

3: Technical Studies and Consultations (Planned: US\$1.2 million. Revised: US\$0.5 million. Actual: US\$0.44 million, which was 88 percent of the revised cost). This component consisted of the provision of equipment, technical assistance and training, and financing of operating costs, to strengthen ICCN's capacity to identify potential new PAs by: (i) technical studies, data analysis, stakeholder consultations and participatory mapping at the national level; and (ii) in consultation with national and international NGOs as well as university organizations, studies, consultations, and participatory mapping in two pilot areas. The additional financing supported technical studies and initiatives needed for the ICCN to continue efforts to manage and extend the protected area network, particularly to the Lomami and Itombwe parks.

4: Okapi Fund Establishment and Capitalization (Planned: 0. Revised: US\$8.9 million. Actual: US\$7.8 million, which was 88 percent of the revised cost). This new component was introduced under the GEF-5 Additional Financing (AF) for the establishment of the Conservation Trust Fund, the "Okapi Fund," in order to ensure long-term sustainable financing of the country's park network. There was also a parallel financing of US\$19.2 million from KfW (ICR, para. 17).

e. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates

Project Cost: The estimated project cost was US\$13.5 million (PAD, page 60). The revised cost at AF restructuring was US\$21.64 million (ICR, Table 1, page 13). The actual project cost was US\$21.63 million (99 percent of the revised cost) (ICR, page 2).

Financing: At appraisal, the project was expected to be financed with the GEF financing of US\$7 million and the Government contribution (in-kind) of US\$6.5 million (PAD, page 60). During implementation, Additional Financing (AF) of an IDA grant of SDR2.0 million (US\$3.0 million equivalent) and a GEF-5 grant of US\$11.64 million were approved by the Board of the World Bank in November 2013, expanding activities under Components 1 and 2 as well as establishing the new Component 4. At project closing, the actual project cost was financed by GEF financing of US\$18.87 million and IDA financing of US\$2.76 million (ICR, page 2).

Dates: The project was approved on April 2, 2009, and became effective on September 25, 2009. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) was completed on February 20, 2012. The Additional Financing (AF) for the project



was approved on December 12, 2013, and became effective on June 30, 2014. The project was closed on December 31, 2019, one year after the AF's original closing date of December 31, 2018.

Restructuring: There were four restructurings. The first two restructurings were conducted in 2013 to institute Additional Financing, reallocate funds between disbursement categories, revise the PDO Outcome Indicators, and add Intermediate Result Indicators. The third restructuring was conducted in 2018 to amend the required conditions for capitalization of the Okapi Fund in the legal agreement. The project duration was also extended to enable the ICCN to support the operational costs of the Okapi Fund. The final restructuring was conducted in 2019 to remove unnecessary disbursement conditions for the capitalization that persisted in the legal agreement due to the lack of time in the restructuring in 2018.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

Country and Sector Context. Known as the most biologically rich country in Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) ranked fifth in the world for plant and animal diversity, and first in Africa for numbers of mammals and birds. However, poor governance, armed conflict, and political turmoil caused economic decline, leading to insufficient management of natural resources. The government agency responsible for administering the Protected Areas (PAs) was the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN). They faced challenges to secure a budget and an investment and were in need of support to ensure they could deliver against their mandate. There were 7 national parks and 57 nature and hunting reserves, most of them were considered as "paper parks" which existed in policy, but lacked effective management in the field due to inadequate facilities or infrastructure (ICR, para 2). To address the issue and contribute to more sustainable and equitable management of forests, the government established a multi-donor sector-wide program, called a National Forest and Nature Conservation Program. The Bank supported the program in coordination with other donors, through a series of initiatives including this project. The objective of the project sought to address the country's main issues on biodiversity conservation under anticipated pressures on the environment following post-war economic development. Specifically this involved: (i) the government agency responsible for administering PAs lacked institutional capacity at all levels; (ii) priority PAs faced threats to ecological integrity by human activities that had to be addressed in the short and medium term (i.e. poaching, collecting fuel woods, and hunting for bushmeats); and (iii) the PA system and its coverage were insufficient (ICR, para 9).

Relevance to Bank Assistance Strategies. At appraisal, the project aligned with the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) 2008-2011. The forest reform agenda, which included the rehabilitation of protected areas and support to indigenous peoples, was an integral part of the CAS. The project was consistent with key elements of the CAS, with respect to natural resource management, community-driven development, and improved governance and institutional strengthening. At project closing, the project remained relevant to the Country Partnership Framework 2019-2024, which aimed to improve the management of forests and other natural resources for sustainable growth and increased resilience.

Relevance to Government Strategies. At appraisal, the project objective was in line with the Government's reform agenda for the forest and nature conservation sector published in 2002. This agenda aimed at removing the legacy of past mismanagement and at setting the stage for sustainable management of its natural resource endowment. It was reflected in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) adopted in



2006. It was also an important pillar of the Government's Reconstruction and Recovery Program (2004) and Governance Contract (2007). At project closing, the project objective remained relevant to the government strategies and programs.

Prior Sector Experience. The previous biodiversity projects in the country mainly focused on emergency support, aiming for lowering the rate of biodiversity erosion until security and financial conditions improve. This project was designed to enable the ICCN to establish a longer-term management strategy in the post-war environment.

Clarity of the Objective. The meaning of “enhanced capacity to manage targeted Protected Areas” in the objective was unclear, as it was not fully articulated which specific institutional capacity of the ICCN was targeted by the project. There was only a brief description in the PAD (para 25) which implied links between the original three components and the objective. Particularly, in the field level, what capacity of the ICCN was targeted with an aim to improve the management of the national parks could have been described more in detail, in order to clarify the logical link between the planned activities and the intended intermediate outcome under Component 2.

Institutional Capacity and Realism. The Project Implementation Entity, the ICCN, had no previous experience with a Bank project. The PAD (page 16) assessed that there was a risk of implementation delays due to the lack of capacities of the ICCN on procurement and financial management. To mitigate the risk, the Central Coordination Office (Bureau Central de Coordination: BCECO) of the Ministry of Finance provided oversight and training to the ICCN's procurement unit until the project's mid-term, while Component 1 aimed to rebuild the ICCN's financial and procurement directorate. Nevertheless, the mitigation measures were insufficient and the project experienced implementation delays.

The project objective aligned with the country and sector context and the strategies of the government and the Bank. On the other hand, the objective was vague in its' logical link between the planned activities and the intended outcome, as described in Section 4. The objective was also not fully aligned with the institutional capacity and realism of the targeted institution, which affected efficiency (as described in Section 5) and the risk to development outcome (Section 7). In addition, the presumption that it was possible for the ICCN to ensure protected areas were maintained was overly ambitious given the limited resources and capacity of the organization. The small envelope of funds was intended to have a catalytic effect on change and this seems unrealistic given the huge needs of the organization and its ability to operationalize protection of PAs. Thus, the relevance of objective is rated modest.

Rating

Modest

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective



To enhance the Project Implementing Entity's capacity to manage targeted Protected Areas

Rationale

Theory of Change: The project's theory of change had three paths which were aligned with the three original components and the three issues on biodiversity conservation. The first path was focused on strengthening institutional capacities of the ICCN for financial management and administration at the central level. This was intended to assist the ICCN to secure basic budgets for post-project activities, and to develop a strategy on sustainable financing mechanisms for the national PA system. These outputs aimed to achieve an intermediate outcome of the **institutionally strengthened ICCN to better manage the park network**. The second path was about providing infrastructure, equipment, and training to the three key PAs and engaging communities in the buffer zones to ensure their support to improve outcomes. The expectation was improvements in the PAs' Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores, access to community infrastructure and social services by local people, and implementation of environmental and social safeguards. Supporting two botanical gardens would enhance ecotourism, contributing to the financial sustainability of the ICCN. These outputs were intended to achieve an intermediate outcome of **improved management of selected national parks**. Critical assumptions here included: (1) competencies of the conservation NGOs which were contracted to implement the field activities would be transferred to the ICCN, and (2) monitoring by the ICCN would be carried out on schedule. The third path was to support technical studies and consultations that would support the ICCN to identify new protected areas and achieve an intermediate outcome of **strengthened national PA systems**. In addition to the three path improvements, the additional financing supported the Okapi Fund, in terms of its legalization and capacity building. This was intended to lead to intermediate outcomes of the **establishment and capitalization of the Okapi Fund**.

The critical overall assumption here was that there was a strong will within the government and the ICCN for change. The outcome would contribute to the long-term outcomes of establishing a national parks system adequate to preserve biodiversity with active participation of local stakeholders, and enabling the Okapi Fund to cover shortfalls in government budgets allocated for biodiversity protection.

Outputs / Intermediate Outcomes:

Component 1: Support to Institutional Rehabilitation

Financial Management

- The ICCN's management agreements were not published, not meeting the target. According to the monitoring manual, the ICCN was expected to publish all agreements, contracts and protocols concluded with its public and private partners for the financing of all centralized and decentralized operations of the ICCN. The ICCN circulated key documents to the Bank and development partners, but did not disclose them to the public.
- The internal audit unit was strengthened with the support from the audit consultant.
- New systems for computerized accounting and asset management were installed, accompanied by training (ICR, page 42).

Administration

- ICCN staff at the national and the field level were evaluated on the basis of their job descriptions, but the target was only met between 2015 and 2016. Training on the adoption of personnel performance management tools was provided by the project to human resources managers in the



ICCN. The staff evaluations were conducted to receive performance bonuses that were financed by KfW. After the financial support was ended in the second quarter of 2016, no evaluations were conducted. To what extent and how sustainably the HR capacities of the ICCN was improved through the project remains uncertain with little evidence illustrating changes in capacity.

- An administrative manual was developed for the first time.

Component 2: Support to National Parks

Management of the National Parks

- The METT scores for project PAs were increased from the baseline of 50 to the achievement of 61, exceeding the target of 59 (ICR, page 37). The Virunga National Park (Mikeno Sector) increased its METT score from the baseline of 39 to the achievement of 58, meeting the target of 58 (Ibid). The Garamba National Park increased its METT score from the baseline of 39 to the achievement of 68, exceeding the target of 60 (Ibid).
- No area was brought under enhanced biodiversity protection, therefore the target was not met. An enhancement in biodiversity protection in a protected area was to be measured by an upward transition between the METT categories (ICR, page 38), but there is no evidence that this occurred. No PAs were able to make the transition.
- The two targeted botanical gardens (Botanique de Kisantu and Kinshasa) produced annual reports and business plans that were deemed satisfactory to the Bank, though no descriptions on the implementation of the business plans was provided.
- Infrastructure, vehicles, equipment, and training required to operate the national parks and the botanical gardens were provided by the conservation NGOs that were contracted to implement the field activities (ICR, Annex 1.B., pages 42-43). The logical link between these outputs and the intermediate outcome of improvement in management of the national parks was not clear and thus while there were additional resources, it is not clear how these were aligned to the designated theory of change in driving PA improvements and reform to the ICCN.

Community Engagement

- In Virunga, the project supported the construction of 23 houses for the pygmy community around the national park. However, the houses were partially occupied due to the pygmy community's dissatisfaction with the houses (ICR, para 67). Equipment and uniforms were provided for 300 community guards. School tuition fees were paid for 176 pygmy children as well as uniforms provided. The project helped with the legal requirements for the creation of the Nyabirehe Pygmy Association, completion of the boundary work on the acquired land, and registration of legal documents (cadastres and land titles). The project provided medical equipment to a health center, which will benefit both the local community and the pygmy population.
- In Garamba, the project strengthened the capacities of the Community Conservation Committees to better monitor, document, and produce and disseminate reports on governance of natural resources, local development, and conflict management. Environmental education was also provided to 8,000 people from the community. The project provided support to the running of a dispensary for the benefit of the local community and the families of the park staff.



- In Kahuzi-Biega NP, the project financed a process to amend the conflicts in the area and seek compensation for the hardships experienced by the indigenous peoples due to the creation of the park, which contributed to the Presidency's Bukavu declaration to restore security in the area.
- The project engaged rural populations to increase participation in decision-making processes, access to community infrastructure and social services, and alternative livelihoods (ICR, para 63). The original intermediate result indicator on the increased use of community infrastructure by local people in targeted protected areas was dropped due to measurability issues (ICR, page 59).

Environmental and social safeguards

- There was no achievement on an improvement in implementation of environmental and social safeguards by the project that was measured or recorded.

Component 3: Technical Studies and Consultations

- Technical studies for the two new protected areas were made, meeting the target. The following studies were prepared: (i) Resettlement Action Plan for the population of Obenge in Lomami National Park and (ii) socio-economic study at the Itombwe National Reserve. Both of them were formally established by decrees (ICR, para 50).

Component 4: The Okapi Fund Establishment and Capitalization

- No disbursement programmed by the Okapi Fund Board was made, thus not meeting the target. The delay in legalization of the Okapi Fund affected implementation of the subsequent planned activities. At project closing, it was expected that, after the Fund accumulated sufficient return on its investments in several years, it would start making disbursements to additional protected areas, such as the national parks in Lomami and Itombwe.

Overall

- Direct project beneficiaries were 8,410, not meeting the target of 13,511 (62 percent of the target). Of which, female beneficiaries were 25 percent, not meeting the target of 35.5 percent.

Outcomes:

Referring to the theory of change above, the intermediate outcome on **the ICCN's overall institutional capacity strengthened at central level** was partially achieved with direct support from the external partners, which is likely to be unsustainable. While the intermediate outcome on **the management of national parks improved**, it is unclear whether and to what extent the project activities improved the management of PAs. The achievement of the intermediate outcome on **the strengthened national PA network** was not fully reported, as the utilization of the technical studies and consultations conducted under the project was uncertain. The intermediate outcome on **the establishment and capitalization of the Okapi Fund** was achieved just before the end of the project, but no disbursement from the Fund nor ODA funding to the Fund was made.

Achievements of the four intended outcomes were as follows:



1. The ICCN institutionally strengthened to better manage the park network

- The ICCN's annual internal audits were not published, not meeting the target. Some internal audits were conducted and sent to the Bank and other key partners such as KfW and the European Union.
- No improvement on institutional capacities for administration, coordination, advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation was measured. During implementation, the ICCN's capacity was increased by external support, with an uncertainty on its sustainability after project closing (ICR, para 64). The outcome showed modest achievement, as indicated in the interviews and evidences provided by the ICCN (ICR, para 39).

2. Selected national parks better managed

- Populations of bio-indicator species (i.e. rhino, elephant, giraffe, hippo, and gorilla) were not fully stable in Garamba and Mikeno, not meeting the target. The poaching by armed guerrilla groups was the main driver of declines in populations of elephants and hippos. In Garamba, the poaching caused the elephant population to be declined to less than one third in 10 years (from 3,696 in 2007 to 1,181 in 2017), and the hippo population to be declined by half in 5 years (from 2,814 in 2012 to 1,400 in 2017) (ICR, page 35). The populations of giraffe in Garamba and that of elephant and gorilla in Mikeno were relatively stable. The inventories of species in savannah like Garamba and Virunga (Mikeno) were carried out by using planes. The relevance of the PDO indicator to measure the outcome could be questionable. The stability of the population of bio-indicator species did not contribute to increasing the ICCN's capacity for management of protected areas, but rather to the METT score (ICR, para 81). To what extent the results were attributable to the project was also uncertain.
- No improvement on financial and operational management of the PAs attributable to the project was measured. Though there were elements related to financial and operational management of the PAs included in the METT, no disaggregated data was provided.

3. The national PA network strengthened

- The Lomami National Park and the Itombwe National Reserve were formally established by decrees, based on the technical studies conducted under the project (ICR, para 50).

4. The Okapi Fund established and capitalized

- No ODA funding for conservation was directed to the Okapi Fund, not meeting the target of 25 percent of the overall conservation ODA for the country to be directed to the Fund. The legalization of the Fund was delayed until the end of the project due to the prolonged political procedures. On the positive side, the Okapi Fund showed a potential as a tool to mobilize and leverage private sector financing to the national parks, especially Virunga (ICR, para 65).

The expected outcomes on the ICCN's capacity building at the national and field level were not achieved. The outcome on the expansion of the national PA network was progressed to some extent. The outcome on the Okapi Fund was not achieved, though it suggested an unintended potential for resource mobilization in the future. Overall, the achievement of objectives is rated negligible.



Rating
Negligible

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

As discussed above, the overall efficacy is rated negligible.

Overall Efficacy Rating
Negligible

Primary Reason
Low achievement

5. Efficiency

Economic Analysis:

At appraisal, no efficiency analysis was conducted due to insufficient data to assess economic benefits from improved management of protected areas and conservation of biodiversity (ICR, para. 56). At approval of the Additional Financing (AF), the project's Economic Internal Rate of Return (EIRR) over a 20-year period was estimated at 18 percent, with an NPV of US\$8.67 million using a discount rate of 10 percent (ICR, para. 57). At project closing, the EIRR over a 20-year period was estimated at 11 percent, with an NPV of US\$0.96 million using a discount rate of 10 percent (ICR, para. 57). The estimates of the EIRR and the NPV at closing were lower than those at approval of the AF mainly due to the delay in the operationalization and capitalization of the Okapi Fund as described below.

When a discount rate of 6.5 percent was used, the NPV at closing became US\$7.23 million, closer to the NPV estimated at the AF approval (ICR, para. 57). The discount rate of 6.5 percent was in line with the World Bank Guidance for discount rate for Economic Analysis, as well as based on the Ramsey formula in welfare economics, which stated that the discount rate could be taken as twice the expected long-term average growth rate in per capita income. The latest available data on annual growth rate of the DRC's real GDP per capita was 3.25 percent from 2014 to 2017 (ICR, para. 58).

Aspects of Design and Implementation that Affected Efficiency:

The operationalization of the Okapi Fund was delayed from September 2014 to December 2017, due to a confusion regarding which authority should issue the decree to establish the fund and the delay in the general election. The capitalization of the Okapi Fund happened on December 31, 2019, the same date of project closing. Due to the delay, the Okapi Fund was unable to financially support the two National Parks (NPs) from 2015 as expected. This lowered the PV of the two NPs in the NPV calculation at closing and the foregone opportunity of other contributions expected to be directed to the fund. The project duration was over 10 years, as it faced challenging implementation conditions such as armed conflicts and Ebola outbreaks.



There was no cost overrun for the overall cost. The cost for Component 1 on strengthening institutional capacities at ICCN was more than 40 percent higher than the revised cost at AF (ICR, para 60). The ICCN received abundant external support on Component 1 regarding monitoring and evaluation, procurement, safeguards, and financial management. Nevertheless, there were delays in signing procurement contracts. The increased costs were covered by the reduced expenditures for setting up the Okapi Fund, which was more than 75 percent lower than the estimate (Ibid).

The EIRR and NPV at project closing were lower than those estimated at the AF approval due to the inefficiencies caused by the design and implementation aspects. The delay in establishing the Okapi Fund resulted in the project duration extension and costed the project in revenues and forgone opportunities for donor funding, ultimately affecting the development outcome of the project. Overall, efficiency is rated modest.

Efficiency Rating

Modest

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	11.00	0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome

The relevance of objective was modest, as the alignment of the objective with the strategies of the government and the Bank assistance in a superficial manner did not fully consider the objective's relevance to the development problems and the institutional capacity and realism. The efficacy was negligible, as three of the four outcomes were not achieved and one outcome only showed marginal progress. The efficiency was modest, as the EIRR and NPV at project closing were lower than those estimated at the AF approval due to the inefficiencies caused by the design and implementation aspects. Thus the overall outcome rating is unsatisfactory.

a. **Outcome Rating**
Unsatisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome



Institutional capacity risk: The degree of improvement in the capacity of the ICCN at project closing remains a concern, as the external support which upscaled the capacity was discontinued after the project. The ICCN's lack of funding issues remains a problem and the intention to institute new financing streams is unlikely to reach fruition. On the positive side, Virunga, one of the targeted Protected Areas, has obtained a stable flow of private funds to carry out its operations due to the Okapi Fund. However, with continuing conflict from rebel groups and periodic emergence of viral diseases, the gains at the national parks remains precarious.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

Strategic relevance was well considered to align with the strategies of the government and the Bank assistance. The development issues of the sector were identified, but the objective and the results framework did not fully illustrate the logical link to achieve the intended outcome. The issue related to the legal and political procedure to operationalize the Okapi Fund was not identified during the preparation of the additional funding.

The arrangement to entrust the management team in the ICCN General Directorate and not a separate PMU to be responsible for the implementation and M&E was inappropriate given the low levels of commitment by the government and the ICCN at appraisal. The ICCN relied on 91 percent of its budget being drawn from external sources due to the weak budgetary support from the government (ICR, para 72). In addition, weak government support also meant continuing problems with low salaries and poor morale amongst ICCN employees, which resulted in delays in monitoring and evaluation in the early years of the project implementation. Moreover, the low level of government commitment at appraisal caused the project to reallocate the project funding to supplement the ICCN's core operational funding by tagging its support to strengthen financial sustainability of the ICCN in the long term.

Strategic relevance was ensured, while the technical and fiduciary aspects were not adequately considered at entry. The level of commitment by the government and the implementing agency could have been more comprehensively assessed and integrated into the project design. Overall, the quality at entry is rated moderately unsatisfactory.

Quality-at-Entry Rating
Moderately Unsatisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

The Bank team's supervision to ensure the project's compliance with safeguards were not adequate. The monitoring of safeguards faced challenges due to the lack of human resources in the ICCN, as described in Section 10 a. While the Bank team conducted regular supervision missions, the Bank's safeguards specialists were not always available to participate in missions to provide guidance. The field visits were also limited given conflict in the area of the North Kivu province, which negatively impacted the efficiency of



support. The MTR mission, which was undertaken in November 2012, identified fundamental capacity gaps in the ICCN. Following the MTR, the restructuring was conducted to reallocate resources between components and improve the indicators, but it is not clear whether this actually improved the goals of the project or simply instituted a different set of targets. However, the restructuring was not sufficient to fully address the implementing agency's issues with staffing adequacy and quality.

The implementation was affected by a number of factors outside of the control of the Bank, including the armed conflicts and the Ebola outbreak. Even considering those factors, the supervision by the Bank was not sufficient to address the issues at the design stage on fiduciary arrangements and safeguards compliance. Overall, the quality of supervision is rated moderately unsatisfactory.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Moderately Unsatisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Moderately Unsatisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The vagueness regarding which institutional capacity was targeted in the objectives affected the focus on the development outcome. No theory of change was presented explicitly in the PAD (ICR, para 9), thus it was not clearly reflected in the results framework. The theory of change in the ICR (page 9) did not thoroughly explore the logical links between the inputs, the outputs, and the outcomes. The logical flow from the intermediate results indicators to the PDO indicators were not explicit, except for PDO indicator 1. Institutional capacity enhancement and behavior change under the project was not measured by the designed indicators. The results framework and the indicators were revised at the first restructuring and at appraisal of the additional financing, as summarized in Annex 7 of the ICR. However, the above design issues were not fully addressed.

b. M&E Implementation

The ICCN's M&E reports were not adequate in terms of the timing of production and the quality. The M&E matrix was not developed until one year after the project start. The first proper monitoring report was received in February 2014, covering progress up to June 30, 2012 (ICR, para 82). The monitoring manual for the project with detailed indicator tracking sheets was completed only in June 2015, causing poor reporting on monitoring indicators (ICR, para 76). An M&E consultant was hired by the ICCN in 2017, two years before project closing. The original PDO indicator on the regular production of the ICCN's M&E reports with data on social impacts was dropped at the first restructuring without any alternative (ICR, page 57). Security threats posed a challenge in obtaining data from the field, which might have been addressed by using local NGOs, drones, and/or videoconferencing solutions (ICR, para



97). Data collection in these FCV environments is always difficult, but there is little evidence of creative approaches being instituted to fill data gaps.

c. M&E Utilization

M&E data was not used in a meaningful way to foster change or provide course corrections. The project had difficulties measuring the progress towards the achievement of objective. On top of that, the lack of operational budget and weak institutional buy-in posed challenges to utilization of M&E data.

Due to the shortcomings with the design of the results framework and indicators, as well as the inadequate implementation and utilization of monitoring over several years of the project, the quality of M&E is rated modest.

M&E Quality Rating

Modest

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was categorized Category A at appraisal and project closing. Six safeguard policies were triggered throughout the project: OP/BP/GP 4.01 (Environmental assessment), OP/BP 4.04 (Natural Habitats), OP 4.10 (Indigenous Peoples), OP 4.11 (Physical Cultural Resources), OP/BP 4.12 (Involuntary Resettlement), and OP/BP 4.36 (Forests).

Environmental safeguards: In line with OP/BP/GP 4.01, a socio-environmental impact assessment was carried out, and a social-environmental management plan was integrated into the project design. The project was expected to have a positive impact in relation to OP/BP 4.04 and OP/BP 4.36 upon successful completion, and no mitigation measure was identified at appraisal (PAD, para 86, para 93). Environmental safeguards were monitored closely only when an environmental specialist was in position from the end of 2015 to early 2017. The absence of the environmental specialist negatively affected project's environmental risk, as the potential environmental risk was not minimized when the project constructed and rehabilitated infrastructure under Component 2.

Social safeguards: To mitigate OP 4.10, OP 4.11, and OP/BP 4.12, a Stakeholder Participation Plan, an Indigenous Peoples Development Plan, a Resettlement Policy Framework, and a Resettlement Process Framework were prepared. The implementation of the mitigation measures was not adequate due to difficulties in recruiting and retaining a social specialist. For OP/BP 4.12, upgraded safeguard frameworks were developed more than one year after the project start.

Grievance: The Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) was requested by the ICCN only in 2017 (ICR, para 86). No comprehensive list of complaints and their resolution was submitted by the ICCN, though the indigenous people and local communities reported to have contacted the ICCN regarding grievances in Lomami, Kahuzi-Biega NP, and Virunga. The resolution of a complaint communicated by United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO: Mission de



L'Organisation des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo) in 2010 was not documented clearly in the ISRs. Human rights abuses by park rangers were not detected by the commission set up by the ICCN, while the abuses were pointed out by the American Bar Association. After following up on the issue, the task team concluded that it was not a direct consequence of the project nor within the project boundary, thus no resolution was prepared. Another incident of a fatality of a Pygmy in the Kahuzi-Biega was concluded as not being linked to the activities of the project, as a result of an investigation.

According to the ICR (para 86), although there were no known breaches in environmental and social safeguard compliance by the project, unreported cases might have existed, considering that the FCV contexts and the shortcomings in monitoring the safeguards especially regarding the GRM.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial Management: The financial management unit for the project was set up in the ICCN, whose performance was low in terms of the responsiveness and the quality of reports. The ICCN also relied on the support from the firm contracted under the project funded by KfW. Recruitment of internal and external auditors, however, were concluded almost two years after the approval of the project. Low staff morale caused by the salary differences between the government staff and the consultants, as well as the availability of motivation payments for ICCN staff.

Procurement: The Central Coordination Office of the Ministry of Finance was responsible for an oversight of procurement for the project until the procurement responsibility was transferred to the ICCN's new procurement unit in the mid-term. A procurement specialist was engaged in the ICCN in January 2013. The ICCN struggled to carry out procurement tasks in a timely manner due to lack of organization, which led to delays in signing contracts and affected the implementation efficiency.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

Positive:

The Okapi Fund showed a potential as a tool to mobilize and leverage private sector financing to the national parks, especially Virunga (ICR, para 65).

Negative:

The ICR mission observed that the 23 houses constructed for the pygmy community around the Virunga National Park were only partially occupied, and several pygmies voiced dissatisfaction with the houses, specifically the inside temperature and the concrete floors (ICR, para 67). The houses were owned by a pygmy association, which was able to lease empty houses to other local community members or use them for other purposes, such as schools, shops, and pharmacies. As the houses were more attractive to the non-indigenous community, the houses may have created possibilities of conflicts between the pygmy community and the other local community.



d. Other

N/A

11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	The relevance of objective was modest. The efficacy was negligible, as three of the four outcomes were not achieved and one outcome showed only modest progress.
Bank Performance	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	The supervision by the Bank was not sufficient to address the issues at the design stage on fiduciary arrangements and safeguards compliance. There were also clear shortcomings in the supervision and response to the project's challenges during implementation.
Quality of M&E	Modest	Modest	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

12. Lessons

The lessons that may be used for the future interventions are excerpted from the ICR and presented below with editions.

1. Adopting the Project Management Unit (PMU) model with mechanisms to transfer capacity to the implementing agency can ensure sustainability of a project in fragile and low-capacity environment. Instead of the PMU model, the project entrusted the project management to the ICCN General Directorate with technical support from consultants funded by development partners. Such arrangements ended up in disruptions in cohesion and skills transfer due to the salary gap between the consultants and the government staff.

2. Engaging communities around protected areas needs to align with the theory of change, in order to induce behavior changes for biodiversity conservation. The PAD (page 52) indicated that fuel wood cutting by local communities as one of the challenges for the protected areas. Awareness raising and behavior changes to reduce stresses to the protected areas were not clearly



indicated in the theory of change for the project (ICR, page 9). It caused the project to attempt to address community needs which might not contribute to biodiversity conservation.

3. Ensuring strong government buy-in from the beginning can support smooth establishment of a Conservation Trust Fund (CTF). Though the Okapi Fund was set up in the United Kingdom as a registered charity in late 2013, the decree to establish the fund was not issued until late 2017 due to the prolonged political processes for legislation. In future projects that might carry a CTF component, ensuring that there is strong buy-in from the beginning might ensure a more seamless transition to the new conservation model.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR provides a detailed overview of the project. The narrative supports the ratings and available evidence. It is candid, concise, and focused on the development results. The quality of evidence and analysis is generally aligned to the messages outlined in the ICR. The ICR provided clear lessons based on evidence outlined in the ICR. On the other hand, the relevance section could have provided more details on what development problem the project sought to address, where this development problem sat with the Bank's contribution, and how this problem was specifically addressed through the project. To that end, the project's theory of change could have more thoroughly provided logical links between the outputs/intermediate outcomes, the outcomes, and the project development objective. Overall, the quality of the ICR is rated as substantial.

a. Quality of ICR Rating

Substantial