



1. Project Data

Project ID

P157249

Project Name

GA-Wildlife & human-elephant conflict mgt

Country

Gabon

Practice Area(Lead)

Environment, Natural Resources & the Blue Economy

L/C/TF Number(s)

TF-A3107

Closing Date (Original)

31-Dec-2021

Total Project Cost (USD)

9,055,017.77

Bank Approval Date

02-Sep-2016

Closing Date (Actual)

31-Jan-2023

IBRD/IDA (USD)
Grants (USD)

Original Commitment

9,055,046.00

9,055,046.00

Revised Commitment

9,055,046.00

9,055,046.00

Actual

9,055,046.00

9,055,017.77

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The Project Development Objective (PDO) of the "Wildlife & human-elephant conflict management" project, as stated in the PAD (page 7, PAD1693), is identical to the project goal stated under Schedule I of the GEF Grant Agreement 2016 (Annex II of the document) that is, "to reduce elephant poaching and human-elephant conflicts in the target zones."

The PDO will be parsed, for this review and as done in the ICR, as follows:



- To reduce elephant poaching in the target zones
- To reduce human-elephant conflicts in the target zones

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

No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

Component 1: Support to the National Ivory Action Plan implementation (at appraisal: US\$1.14 million; at closing: US\$1.14 million). This component focused on developing the national tools and measures for elephant management through the implementation of the National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP). The NIAP entailed (i) increasing knowledge on elephant populations, their movement and Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC), (ii) strengthening enforcement of wildlife protection laws; and (iii) communication and public awareness about elephant poaching/ivory trafficking and its negative impacts. The improved HEC knowledge were to help the Government and communities to identify the most effective means to reduce Human-Elephant Conflict. Strengthened law enforcement aimed at contributing to poaching reduction thereby reducing elephant migration into areas that may contain human settlements. The communication and public awareness campaigns helped communities understand the long-term negative implications of elephant poaching.

Component 2: Support for integrated landscape management and mitigation of human-elephant conflicts (HEC) (at appraisal: US\$5.88 million; at closing: US\$5.88 million). This component aimed at enhancing surveillance inside the target zones (four national parks) through the implementation of the National Parks Agency (ANPN)-designed parks' management plans, involving all stakeholders. The design called for the two implementation agencies (ANPN and the National Parks Agency and Directorate General for Fauna and Protected Areas (DGFAP)) to increase surveillance and develop management plans for elephant corridors to reduce poaching. Corridor management planning would provide an essential element to reducing HEC through land use planning that would ensure that human settlements were outside the identified corridors. The component also focused on strengthening the Local Management Consultative Committees' (CCGL) capacity to co-manage local resources and provide communities with opportunities for enhanced livelihood. New HEC mitigation techniques were to be tested and evaluated to provide workable and sustainable options to communities. Women would benefit from HEC protection due to expected increases in farm yields, along with small infrastructure improvements that would alleviate daily tasks and improve access to local markets. There is a discrepancy between the PAD and what was encountered during implementation. In the PAD women were anticipated to be the main beneficiaries, as it was believed that more women than men were living in the area. This turned out not to be the case; more men than women lived in the area and hence the percentage of male and female beneficiaries changed.

Component 3: Transboundary parks co-management (Mayumba-Conkouati) (Gabon-Congo) (at appraisal: US\$1.20 million; at closing: US\$1.20 million). This component focused on enhancing the co-management of the transboundary areas of the Mayumba National Park (Gabon) and Conkouati National Park (Congo) for better surveillance of elephant movements across the Gabon and Congo border. Activities



under this component looked to enhance Gabonese patrols and rehabilitate surveillance outposts on the Gabon side of the border; as well as facilitate information exchange and mixed patrols (Gabonese and Congolese) across the border.

Component 4: Project coordination, monitoring and evaluation (At appraisal US\$0.84 million; at closing: US\$0.83 million). This component aimed at providing overall project management and coordination with other donor projects that included similar activities in different areas of the country. The four national parks targeted by the project; were Moukalaba Doudou, Loango, Mayumba and Waka, all located in the southwest quadrant of the country. The project was to complement a similar project financed by the French Development Agency ("Agence Française de Développement", AFD), which focused on the national parks in the northeast of the country, as well as projects financed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), which both had on-going anti-poaching activities in some of the project's target zones.

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

Project cost. At appraisal the overall project cost was US\$ 9,055,046. Actual project cost was US\$ 9,050,000. The project disbursed 99.9% of the budget at appraisal.

Financing. The project was financed by a grant from the Global Environment Fund (GEF)(TF-A3107), in the amount of US\$ 9,055,046.

Borrower Contribution. There was no borrower contribution.

Dates: The project was approved on September 2, 2016, and became effective four months later, on January 4th, 2017. The mid-term review took place in June 2020, although it had been planned for September 2019. The ICR does not report on the reason for this delayed MTR. The original closing date was December 31st, 2021 and the actual closing date was January 31st, 2023, i.e. a 13 month extension.

A restructuring was approved on the 2nd of October 2021, in order to extend the closing date by 13 months to allow time for achievement of the results (only 46% of the funds was disbursed by MTR in June 2020). The extension aimed at the following: (i) enable finalization of the construction of the surveillance antenna in Doussala at the Gabon/Congo border; (ii) organizing the Mayumba - Conkouati cross-border park workshop in Pointe Noire; (iii) undertaking surveillance and anti-poaching missions in the four parks and on the border; and (iv) installing the electric fence in the Waka park.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

Context at appraisal

Gabon is a resource-rich country, endowed with extraordinary biodiversity and rich deposits of manganese and iron ore. It is the fifth-largest oil producer in Sub-Saharan Africa and one of Africa's few middle-income countries. The country's growth rate was approximately 2.1 percent at the time of appraisal



(in 2016) but dropped over the next year to a low of .05 percent before experiencing a steady rise until the Covid-19 pandemic hit in 2020. One of Africa's most urbanized countries, Gabon, has more than 85 percent of its population living in urban areas. Despite being a middle-income country, about a third of Gabon's population lives in poverty. In rural areas, the poverty rate is double that found in urban areas (approximately 60 vs 30 percent).

Gabon's natural resource wealth was threatened, with wildlife populations declining and forests illegally exploited. Elephant populations were targeted for their ivory. In 2016, forest elephants were declining at about 9 percent per year. Elephant poaching was particularly problematic in the Northeast, where Gabon shares borders with Cameroon and the Republic of the Congo. The poaching problem can be addressed through the corridors the elephants create as they move away from the poaching practices. The French Development Agency (AFD) covered the Northeast, and this project covered the Southwest. Gabon's elephants attempted to migrate away from poaching areas, and as rural human communities continued to expand, elephant and human populations were increasingly coming into contact, creating Human-elephant conflict, as elephants damage crops and villages and sometimes kill people. Farmers were not protected against crop loss, and their approaches to elephant deterrence were ineffective.

Given the species mobility across jurisdictions, it was decided at appraisal that the following two institutions would be required to coordinate their activities to fulfill their respective mandates within the context of the project: the National Parks Agency (ANPN) and the Directorate General for Fauna and Protected Areas (DGFAP), which is within the Ministry of Forest, Environment, Natural Resources, overseeing biodiversity protection outside the national parks.

Consistency with Country Strategy

In 2009, the government launched a new economic vision (Emerging Gabon (2009-2025) aimed at modernizing and diversifying the country's economy and transforming it into an emerging one by 2025. The strategic plan (*Plan Stratégique Gabon Emergent*—PSGE) was built on three pillars (industrial Gabon, Green Gabon, and Gabon Services). At appraisal, the PDO was falling within the overall purview of *Gabon Vert* in its approach to better understanding and managing some of Gabon's important biodiversity, potential support to wildlife tourism, and enhancing food security within communities by reducing Human-Elephant conflict (ICR, page 6).

At appraisal, the PDO was also aligned with the international strategies Gabon adheres to, such as the Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development (GWP) and the GEF-6 Strategy. The ICR does not provide information on alignment with these strategies at closing.

Consistency with Bank Strategies

The PDO contributed to the Bank's twin goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity through its interventions that impact sustainable agricultural development and increase rural incomes (once elephants are guided back to their natural corridors). It is also aligned with the CPS for Gabon. The Performance and Learning Review (PLR) (report # 95842-GA, March 9, 2016) extended the Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) from FY2012-2016 to FY2012-2018. The PDO aligns well with the PLR's third pillar on "Human Development and Environmental Sustainability," contributing to its fifth outcome of "improved transparency and sustainability in natural resource management." As stated in the CPS (para. 77), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) resources will continue to support the conservation of biological



diversity in Gabon through investments in selected national parks and the strengthening of the management of the parks network, other protected areas, and production forests, and other ecosystems. (PAD, page 4).

The current CPF for Gabon (FY22-FY27, report 174105-GA) prioritizes increasing private investment in non-oil sectors and recognizes the importance of developing a blue and green economy to help reduce climate risks, halt the loss of natural capital and the country's rich biodiversity. Promoting blue and green jobs in key sectors such as fisheries, forestry, and ecotourism are expected to support long-term reduction in poverty and increased employment. The PDO's focus on reducing the poaching of elephants directly links to the need to protect the country's biodiversity and natural capital, particularly for the possibility of building an eco-tourism sector. The PDO is well aligned to two of the CPF's "priorities of intervention," i.e., "increased private sector investment in non-oil sectors" (forestry being one of them) and "stronger governance in service delivery" (for which better management of parks contributes). A range of recent issues have put additional pressure on food security in the country, and the project PDO's focus on reducing elephant poaching and HEC is also expected to have an effect on safeguarding farms and crops, contributing to improved access to food both directly within farming communities and in the larger markets (ICR page 13).

The project supported Objective 2 of the GEF 6 Biodiversity Strategy: to reduce threats to globally significant biodiversity and continues to be relevant to Objective 1 of the current GEF 8 Biodiversity Strategy - To improve conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of natural ecosystems (ICR page 21).

Previous Bank experience

The ICR mentions that the Bank had built on the past experiences of GEF-funded projects focused on biodiversity and wetland protection, but without specifying further (ICR, page 60). It also states that experiences with HEC mitigation techniques in South Asia and East Africa were reviewed for possible replication in Gabon (ICR, page 68). The project team also ensured coordination with the GEF-funded Sustainable Management of Critical Wetland Ecosystems (P143914), which became effective about a year prior to this project and had one overlapping target zone.

PDO's level of ambition

The PDO was pitched at an appropriate level. Both the objectives were interlinked. The objective "To reduce human-elephant conflicts in the target zones" is a consequence of the first objective, "To reduce elephant poaching in the target zones," as the reduction of HEC is linked to and depends on the reduction of elephant poaching. The ICR also reported on the project's impact on improved livelihoods as a long-term impact.

Overall, the relevance of objectives is rated as High.

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)



OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

To reduce elephant poaching in the target zones

Rationale

Theory of Change (ToC)

The PAD did not outline the project's ToC, but the ICR reconstructed it (pages 8 and 9). The activities regarding training, hiring, setting up of databases and management tools (inputs), the increased resources on patrols and surveillance posts (inputs), the increased resources for the lab (input), and the activities to support community livelihoods (inputs) were expected to contribute to better management of the corridors (output) and the increased capacity of institutions of communities (output) to manage and protect the land used by the communities. These outputs ultimately lessen poaching pressure on elephants (outcome) and fewer occasions for HEC (outcome).

The ToC follows a clear logic, having as its ultimate goals reduced poaching and reduced HEC. The ICR also reported on important outcomes that involve improved livelihoods (increased incomes from crops, improved access to roads, markets, and schools) as a consequence of the reduced poaching and reduced HEC, even though these were not reflected in the Results Framework.

Outputs

- 403 people were trained in wildlife crime prevention (disaggregated by type of trainees), exceeding the target of 310. These were police officers, eco-guards, customs staff, Water & Forests staff, Judiciary staff, Gendarmerie, and Navy Officers.
- 100% of the targeted zone was covered by wildlife patrols, achieving the target of 100% coverage.

The project scored 82 in the Protected Area Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (PAMETT), exceeding the target of 74. PAMETT is an open-source, widely-used system for assessing protected areas' health, ecosystems, and biodiversity. A baseline data set was established at the beginning of the project and assessed regularly. The score measures the effectiveness of the overall management of the parks, observing criteria such as staffing, budgets, legal status, threats, incursions, planning, and conservation. This contributes to the improved management of the elephant corridors and their surveillance.

- The project reached 14,223 annual person-days of patrolling in national parks, not achieving the target of 26,564. The achievement of the indicator was affected by the two suspensions of disbursements from the Gabon portfolio in 2021 (the Government's lapsed loans led to the suspension of disbursements by the Bank twice from mid-March to mid-July 2021 and again from December 2021 to March 2022).
- 65 annual awareness-raising campaigns were undertaken by the Local Management Consultative Committee, far exceeding the target of 8.
- 18 operators in the target zones had a management plan for wildlife under implementation, achieving the target of 18. A surface of 766,427 ha was brought under enhanced biodiversity protection,



exceeding the target of 701,000 ha (area of the National Parks of Moukalaba-Doudou, Loango, and Mayumba). A protected area is considered under enhanced biodiversity protection when its PAMETT score reaches 75% or more (characteristic of a highly functional management system). The adequate management of the 18 private concessions and the increased protected surface is part of achieving an integrated landscape management approach, leading to reduced poaching.

- 60% of the border area was covered by patrols, exceeding the target of 50%. The target was exceeded due to acquiring field equipment, vehicles, and motorcycles.
- The project reached 58 joint patrols in the national parks of Mayumba (Gabon) and Conkouati (Congo), exceeding the target of 50 joint patrols.

Outcomes

The following are the outcome-level indicators for PDO1.

- The proportion of illegally killed elephants (PIKE) in targeted national parks was reported to be 0% at completion, exceeding the target of 10%. It is calculated by dividing the number of illegally killed elephants by the number of deceased elephants. This PDO indicator was met in 2021, the year before project completion, with only 8 illegally killed elephants. However, in 2022, in the final year of project implementation, zero illegally killed elephants were achieved,
- 15 corridor management plans (i.e., 5 plans for each of the 3 corridors) were developed, achieving the target of 15. Corridor management planning is essential to reducing HEC through land use planning, ensuring human settlements are outside the identified corridor. A plan is considered developed when it has undergone the following stages: (1) ToR consultancy, design of the scientific protocol and installation of camera traps; (2) data collection, analysis, and interpretation; (3) identification and mapping of corridors; (4) threat assessment, specifics for each corridor, draft management plan, submission for internal consolidation; (5) validation of the report.

The project achieved the objective of reducing the proportion of illegally killed elephants. There were shortcomings in the achievement of the indicator related to annual person-days of patrolling. The achievement of the objective is rated as substantial.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

To reduce human-elephant conflicts in the target zones

Rationale

The Theory of Change for this objective is the same as for the first objective, given that the reduction of elephant poaching (Objective 1) is expected to lead to the reduction of HEC (Objective 2).



All outputs reported under the first objective are also valid for the second objective, given that they lead to reduced poaching, which in turn leads to a reduction in human-elephant conflict, as it is the poaching that diverts the elephants from their natural corridors, bringing them to areas populated and causing human-elephant conflict.

Outcomes

- 47 incidents of human-elephant conflicts were reported in the target zones, exceeding the target of 107.
- 70.5 % of the target beneficiaries were satisfied with the project interventions, achieving the target of 70%.
- The ICR states that only 45.3% of female target beneficiaries were satisfied with the project interventions, not achieving the target of 80%.
- The number of direct project beneficiaries was 5,285, exceeding the target was 4,150.
- The percentage of female beneficiaries was 47.4% at closure, not achieving the target of 60%. The target was high at appraisal, as it was anticipated that more women than men would live in the targeted areas. This turned out not to be the case.

The target for the main indicator under this objective, measuring the number of reported incidents of human-elephant conflicts was exceeded at closing. The ICR notes that between 2017 and 2020, reported incidents of HEC were recorded above the desired targets given that the project registered complaints that were received across the country rather than just in project targeted parks. The data was corrected in 2021 when only 79 out of the 107 target were registered.

The ICR reported on the following additional achievements, not captured in the Results Framework and hence without target values:

- Additional agricultural income to households due to reduced HEC was about 80,000 FCFA per month (or about US\$134), which represents close to a 40% increase in monthly income in these areas (ICR, page 55, data reported by the PIU)
- The purchase of a river barge helped certain communities to access markets, medical services and the school. The barge allowed the transport of crops, equipment, and vehicles across the river.
- The rehabilitation of roads improved park patrolling and facilitated communities' access to larger markets and to potable water (page 20, ICR).
- The project facilitated a participatory process of selection of an electric fence aiming at mitigating HEC. The fence proved efficient, and the participatory process empowered the local population and promoted ownership.
- In Doussala, the construction of the surveillance post provided direct employment for local community members while the water boreholes drilled at the site provided the nearby community with potable water.

The ICR did not provide a satisfactory explanation as to why the level of satisfaction for women was low. The ICR notes that this may be due to the two activities that could not be completed particularly adversely affected women (i.e., the 150 km road rehabilitation in Waka Park; two hydraulic pumps aimed at supporting the local population). The road would have provided women with greater access to markets and the pumps would have particularly supported women who are generally responsible for water collection.



The rating is Substantial with minor shortcomings on the outcome indicators, regarding the women's level of satisfaction.

Rating
Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

The overall rating is Substantial, given that the project substantially achieved both the objectives.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

An economic analysis was not conducted at the design stage. Thus, the economic analysis of the project at closing has no reference for comparison. Nevertheless, the efficiency of selected interventions was analyzed, and their cost was compared with the average of GEF projects.

For PDO 1 (to reduce elephant poaching in target zones), according to the reports by the CITES Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Program, the number of elephant carcasses, as well as the number of illegally killed elephants, was reduced during project implementation from 51 and 47 in 2016 respectively to 20 and 5 in 2020. Considering that the 2020 poacher prices for raw tusks were between US\$79-98 per kg, the benefits of the prevented killings were between US\$36,972-86,632, with at least US\$308,880 to US\$583,440 of avoided trades (or benefits), taking the reference of market prices elsewhere, like e.g., in China, Vietnam and Kenya. (ICR page 21).

For PDO 2 (to reduce HEC in target zones), the additional estimated agricultural income to the household due to reduced elephant intrusions in crops is about 80,000 FCFA per month (approximately US\$134). According to the Anker Living Wage Reference Value for rural Gabon in 2021, the average monthly income is FCFA 200,770 (equivalent to US\$ 369) with a 95% confidence interval ranging from FCFA 185,077 to FCFA 217,738. Thus, a monthly income increase of FCFA 80,000 is considerable for the rural population. The cost of the local interventions on prevention of the HEC is US\$1.0 million, and the NPV is estimated at US\$ 0.76 million with a discount rate of 6 percent (ICR, page 23).

Cost-effectiveness. The project area under enhanced biodiversity protection at the time of project closure was 738,387 ha, with a cost-effectiveness of about \$12 per ha, which is compatible with similar GEF projects and with the average cost. According to the GEF Independent Evaluation Office report ("Evaluation of GEF Support



to Sustainable Forest Management, GEF/E/C.62/02 May 25, 2022), the average cost per ha in medium-sized protected areas projects was slightly above \$11 per ha.

Operational and administrative efficiency

Several obstacles delayed the implementation of project activities: there was a delay in the setup of the PIU, a temporary suspension of disbursements (the Government's lapsed loans led to the suspension of disbursements by the Bank twice from mid-March to mid-July 2021, and again from December 2021 to March 2022), the freezing of the designated account, some institutional changes and the COVID19 pandemic. Also, some of the activities proved to be more challenging to implement than expected (like, e.g., the cross-border patrolling with Congo, given the needed collaboration with the patrols of a bordering country), and the lack of availability of funds, when needed, stalled other activities (some critical infrastructures like water pumps and roads). The extension of 13 months allowed for most results to be achieved by project completion.

Despite the lack of an economic analysis at appraisal, sufficient data is presented to assess the project's cost-effectiveness. Efficiency is rated Substantial.

Efficiency Rating

Substantial

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		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

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

6. Outcome

The Substantial Relevance, Substantial Efficacy and Substantial Efficiency give an outcome of Satisfactory.

a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome



The following risks to development outcomes are identified:

Financial risk: The project's operational costs are significant and critical to maintaining the patrolling team functioning and financing the fuel and equipment maintenance. The continuation of the good results on reduced killings of elephants very much depends on the patrolling efforts, and it is unclear to what degree the government would be able to take on the financial responsibility. This puts one of the main project outcomes at risk.

Political/institutional risk: Some patrolling improvements have taken place thanks to the institutional collaboration among border countries to patrol jointly or coordinately (i.e., the participation of Congolese rangers). Should the current cooperative relation change, the collaboration for this activity would be at risk.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The Bank preparation team identified key donor partners such as AFD, USFWS, the EU, and WWF Netherlands and ensured collaboration and coordination with projects underway, to ensure complementarity. The team also ensured coordination with the GEF-funded Sustainable Management of Critical Wetland Ecosystems (P143914), which became effective about a year prior to the Wildlife Management and Human-Elephant Conflicts Project (GeFaCHE) and had one overlapping target zone. The need for coordination and synergy in project activities was translated into specific tasks assigned to the project coordinator to be accomplished early in the project.

Particular attention was paid to ensuring local participation to understand the best issues regarding implementing environmental and social safeguards. Work with local communities, including indigenous populations (the Indigenous Peoples Plan was developed and shared with local communities). The design allowed for pilot activities, such as methods to deter elephants from destroying crops and moving through human settlements, to be tested in the early stages of the project (fence designs). This approach contributed to seeking buy-in among stakeholders. The design allowed for the identification of the best adaptable technology in a participatory way, helping ensure ownership on the part of beneficiaries.

The World Bank team identified most risks appropriately during the preparation phase and mitigation measures were put in place, particularly those related directly to HEC (e.g., soliciting farmer feedback on HEC mitigation approaches). Mitigation measures to ensure good cooperation between the two implementing agencies, DGFAP and ANPN, consisted of getting their full involvement during preparation, assigning one agency as overall coordinator and ensuring field activities were completed jointly and in a complementary manner based on each agency's mandate. A validation workshop was held in early 2016 organized and implemented by the two implementing agencies. These measures proved successful in ensuring strong cooperation throughout the project.

Overall, the quality at entry is rated as Satisfactory.



Quality-at-Entry Rating

Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

The project struggled during implementation, but close communication with and support to the PIU allowed the problems to be resolved. In particular, difficulties arose in cross-border surveillance that needed to engage the Congolese rangers and ensure the necessary co-financing for the joint patrols. The Bank supervision team worked closely with the PIU to establish consultations with Congolese authorities to improve this area. The detailed analysis of progress during the MTR (June 2020) provided the basis for deciding to extend the project by 13 months.

Where possible, regional experts were employed to support the ease of supervision. The fact that there was only one main TTL during project preparation and implementation facilitated a strong and trusting relationship with the PIU. The WB also ensured that training was provided throughout the project period – both early interventions on operations and ongoing training on safeguards – to ensure the PIU could meet the changing operational and reporting needs. The coordinating work of the Project Steering Committee ensured ongoing collaboration among the two main national institutions involved (ANPN and DGFAP).

Overall, the quality of Supervision is rated as Satisfactory.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The PDO-level indicators are adequate to measure the PDO. The project was designed to use existing data sources and tools that were in use for wildlife and park management at that time: the SMART reporting tool and the Protected Area Management Effectiveness Tracking tool (PMETT). Data from administrative records, such as complaints of elephant destruction submitted to DGFAP, chief conservators' reports of destruction by elephants, and reports of training providers, would also be used. Field surveys would capture the perception of satisfaction with project interventions. Project and activity records were established to estimate direct project beneficiaries.

Practical aspects of measuring, monitoring, and verifying results were considered and laid out in the results framework. It was planned that the project would not use a dedicated/stand-alone M&E system and that the M&E function would be assumed by ANPN, which had the overall responsibility and coordinating role in M&E for the project. The ANPN would ensure monitoring and facilitate data collection, analysis, and



presentation of project results and communicate these to the task team. A dedicated and qualified M&E officer was in place (PAD, page 18).

The M&E design contemplated that several users would benefit from the M&E system: decision-makers in ANPN and DGFAP as well as stakeholders outside of the Government sector in park and wildlife management, including local and international NGOs, development partners, and the international community (PAD, page 14).

b. M&E Implementation

There were no significant M&E issues during implementation and monitoring reports were regularly shared with the task team. An M&E specialist was hired and performed satisfactorily throughout the project. The ability to monitor the project was enhanced by increasing the budget for supervision, given the long distances between sites and the longer than usual time required for field supervision. In addition, field missions involved key personnel, safeguards, financial, etc. in addition to the M&E specialists to ensure a range of issues could be identified in the field. Finally, data collection was enhanced by collaborating with ANPN and DGFAP as they collected the key data on PIKE, PAMETT, etc. in the field.

Regarding the PDO indicators on number of beneficiaries (and percentage of which female) and their level of satisfaction; although the M&E design had foreseen field surveys to capture this information, the MTR that took place in June 2020 revealed a lack of available data for the first 3 years of the project. Conversations with the team revealed that the survey results came too late in project implementation for the team to be able to react to them.

c. M&E Utilization

The M&E system was used for regular reporting on project progress and helped to identify difficulties with implementation on several occasions, allowing the PIU and WB team to develop appropriate solutions. For example, delays caused by a suspension of disbursements (GoG loans issue) and other supply chain issues caused substantial problems with the construction of the Doussala surveillance post (antenna). Through close monitoring, the project team was able to identify where bottlenecks were in the supply and deal with these and other issues (such as quality of transport).

The databases and maps developed and maintained for the project on HEC events, elephant movements, elephants killed by poaching and the genetics data developed through the laboratory contributed to the effectiveness of surveillance activities, reduction in incidences of wildlife-based crime and contributed to the state of knowledge regionally regarding efforts to reduce wildlife crime throughout the region. The team collaborated with on-the-ground implementing agencies to ensure close tracking of implementation as well as important field-level data. Beyond the day-to-day monitoring of the project activities, the M&E system also provided important information for future projects in this country and region through its work in corridor and wildlife mapping, strengthening of the natural resource database and enhancing genetics data.



M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was classified as a category B project under the World Bank's environmental and social safeguards policies. The anticipated impacts were small-scale, site-specific, and could be mitigated. The project triggered four World Bank safeguards policies, namely: OP/BP 4.01 "Environmental assessment" and OP/BP 4.04 "Natural Habitats"; OP/BP 4.12 "Involuntary Resettlement" and OP/BP 4.10 "Indigenous People". The project complied with the four policies.

The project prepared the Environment and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and disclosed it in-country on March 18, 2016, and on the Bank Infoshop website on March 21, 2016. Process Framework and Indigenous Peoples Action Plan were disclosed in-country and at the Infoshop in March 2016.

There were difficulties in validating environmental assessments in a timely manner due to a lack of staff and budget at the Directorate General for the Environment. However, despite these delays, the team identified issues early and created solutions (involving a safeguards specialist on field missions). The entire PIU team was also trained in the Bank's new Environmental and Social Framework during the project implementation period, so staff could better understand its implications for the project. Finally, the PIU was responsive to staff and beneficiary needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, developing and implementing a COVID-19 contingency plan to ensure their safety.

Infrastructure works required environmental and social impact assessments, which were duly prepared. The following works were involved: the rehabilitation works linking Mourindi to Doussala for the access of the neighboring communities east of the Moukalaba-Doudou Park (40 km), the construction of the Doussala surveillance antenna, and the construction of two hydraulic boreholes. For the latter, works were finalized and delivered in September 2022; safeguards policies were complied with as the work site remained clean, and occupational safety and health and hygiene measures were rigorously respected. Waste from the construction site was well managed.

A plan for vulnerable populations was prepared, and all its activities were planned and budgeted. A Grievance Redress Mechanism was developed in a timely manner and remained functional throughout project implementation. World Bank environmental and social safeguards specialists provided PIU training on environmental and social safeguards and trained technicians from the ANPN and the General Directorate for the Environment and Nature Protection (DGEPN). Safeguard missions were conducted to support implementation during the project's lifetime, and mission findings were recorded in the Aide Memoires.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial Management: The project initially encountered challenges with the setup of the financial system until the integrated project management software was in place. Also, the Government's financial



constraints led to the suspension of disbursements by the Bank from mid-March to mid-July 2021. At the beginning of 2022, the project ensured that the interim financial reports and non-audits were prepared and submitted by the agreed-upon deadlines in the financing agreements. They were all deemed acceptable by the World Bank. The provisional audit reports were submitted on time by the end of each fiscal year. The PIU recruited staff and contractors, e.g., auditors, to undertake the necessary reports and get back on track after delays. The financial management system was sound and ensured effective monitoring of activities and available resources until project closure. The Bank team had a senior FM specialist based in the World Bank office in Yaoundé, Cameroon, who carried out regular implementation support missions. The ICR provides no information about independent audits and whether there were any qualified opinions.

Procurement: The procurement performance was consistently rated as Satisfactory. No irregularities were observed. All procurements under the TF were under the post-review category, except the PIU personnel recruitment that the Bank previously reviewed. All the planned procurement activities were accomplished. Before the grant closure, contracts (goods, works, services) under the project were completed on time, and payments to contractors and documents were updated/uploaded in systematic tracking in the STEP.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

The genetics laboratory that was enhance during the project to track elephants through the analysis of the ivory (thanks to an integrated management information system) has been operating after project closure. It has become the regional center of excellence for genetic assessment from ivory samples and the main database of elephants across the region. Both Nigeria and Cameroon have requested the services of this lab. It is key in the fight against elephant poaching, as it enhances compliance with the international conventions. The genetic analysis of the ivory informs regional intelligent networks and are used as credible evidence in investigations of cases and legal proceedings. The lab is also a very good example for multiple donor groups collaborating and pooling their resources.

d. Other

11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Substantial	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

12. Lessons



The following are the IEG lessons:

Planning the surveys and tracking tools early in the implementation may help measure beneficiary satisfaction as a project outcome. In this project, the surveys to assess satisfaction took place too late (towards the project's end), and no time was left to react, resulting in low results for women's satisfaction.

Pooling resources and finding synergies with other donors may contribute to the sustainability of outcomes. From the design phase, this project counted on ongoing projects that were synergetic in their interventions. The pooling of resources for the lab has proven successful in reaching sustainable outcomes and providing a platform for future cooperation in the same area.

The following are the most relevant lessons extracted from the ICR (rephrased):

Clear delimitation of roles and responsibilities during the design phase may contribute to effective inter-agency cooperation during implementation. In this project, despite the challenges of inter-agency cooperation and past difficulties, ANPN and DGFAP worked well together to ensure the implementation of activities in their respective zones of responsibility. From the outset, the project emphasized the full participation of both agencies, which improved overall project ownership and interventions.

The use of a specific gender methodology during implementation may contribute to ensuring the success of a project that has a strong gender focus and goals. The project did not meet its targets regarding female beneficiaries' satisfaction and had issues reaching them in remote areas. Further efforts and tools can help to engage with communities more deeply in remote areas. This can be done regularly by social specialists. Activities could be adapted to the challenges at play in these communities. Time, budget, and staffing needs for more challenging areas must be assessed carefully, and help from local NGOs could be sought to improve the adaptation of gender-focused interventions.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

Quality of Evidence. The ICR presents a complete analysis of evidence, thoroughly assigning the relevant indicators of the RF to the respective project objectives and explaining clearly the nuances of results between both. The quality of evidence is substantial, based on the satisfaction surveys, MTR, and ICR mission.

Quality of Analysis. There is a clear link between the narrative, the ratings, and the evidence. The ToC is made explicit and depicted graphically in detail. The economic efficiency is analyzed comprehensively, despite the lack of economic analysis at the appraisal that could serve as a reference. The safeguards and M&E components are exceptionally detailed, and key information is provided when presenting the key factors during preparation and implementation. The ICR reports candidly on the shortcomings of the project. A weakness is



the lack of adequate explanation of the low results on some PDO-level indicators (female beneficiaries and their level of satisfaction).

The ICR is results-oriented. The discussion on achievements adequately balances reporting on the achievement of outcome indicators and what the project achieved. It provides a transparent, accurate, and substantiated set of observations regarding the RF and each indicator.

Furthermore, the ICR provides comprehensive coverage of the implementation experience. It follows the guidelines and seeks to triangulate data to reach conclusions (using the survey assessments and the independent evaluations). The lessons are clear and well-explained with concrete project examples.

Overall, the quality of the ICR is rated as Substantial.

a. Quality of ICR Rating
Substantial