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PROJECT TERMINAL EVALUATION

“SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE MBÉ RIVER FORESTED WATERSHED THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PAYMENTS FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (PES) MECHANISM”

UNDP PIMS 4183

GEF ID 3761

GEF FOCAL AREA: BIODIVERSITY

STRATEGIC PROGRAM OF GEF 4:

BD SO1-SP3 ‘STRENGTHENING NETWORKS OF TERRESTRIAL PAS’

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER: MINISTRY OF FORESTS, SEA AND ENVIRONMENT (EX MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, NATURE PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT) / DIRECTION OF ENVIRONMENT

REGION: AFRICA
COUNTRY: GABON

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	African Development Bank
AFA	Administrative and Financial Assistant
ASL	Authorized Spending Limit
AWP	Annual Workplan
BD	Biological Diversity
CBSP	GEF Strategic Program for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin
CENAREST	<i>Centre National de Recherches Scientifiques et Technologiques</i>
CEO ER	Chief Executive Officer Endorsement Request
CO	Country Office
COMIFAC	Central African Forest Commission (<i>Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale</i>)
CPAET	Provisional Agreement for Planning - Operations - Transformation
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DGE	Directorate General for the Environment
EA	Executing Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EOP	End of Project
ES	Environmental/Ecosystem Services
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GRAINE	<i>Gabonaise des Réalisations Agricoles et des Initiatives des Nationaux</i> (agriculture development program)
IA	Implementing Agency
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LF	Logical Framework
LPAC	Local Project Appraisal Committee
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool for PAs
MFSE	Ministry of Forests, Sea and Environment
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NEX	National Execution Modality
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NPC	National Project Coordinator
NPMA	National Parks Management Agency
NP	National Park
NPD	National Project Director
PA	Protected Area
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PIF	Project Identification File
PIMS	Project Information Management System
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PNC	Project National Coordinator
POPP	Programme & Operations Policies and Procedures
ProDoc	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PTA	Principal Technical Advisor
RTA	Region-based Technical Advisor
SEEG	Energy and Water Company of Gabon (<i>Société d'Énergie et d'Eau du Gabon</i>)
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time related
SP	Strategic Program
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TF	Trust Fund
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TOR	Terms of Reference
TT	Tracking Tool
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UN RC/UNDP RR	United Nations Resident Coordinator / UNDP Resident Representative
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Summary Table

Table 1. Project Information Board

Project Title:	Sustainable Management of the Mbé River Forested Watershed through the Development of a Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) Mechanism		
Project GEF ID	3761	Date of PIF Approval	Sept 15, 2008
Atlas Business Unit, Award №, Project ID	00061912, 00079015, 3761	Date of GEF CEO Approval	March 23, 2011
Country	GABON	Date of ProDoc signature	May 7, 2012
Region	AFRICA	Date of hiring of the project coordinator	May 7, 2012
GEF Focal Area	Biodiversity	Date of Inception Workshop	Oct 2, 2012
Trust Fund [GEF TF, LDCF, SCCF, NPIF]	GEF TF	Expected date of operational closure	Oct 31, 2017
GEF Focal Area Strategic Objective	GEF 4 SP 2. Unlocking the potential of Protected Areas	If revised, new date proposed	Dec 31, 2017
Executing Agency / Implementation Partner	UNDP / Ministry of Forests, Sea and Environment (MFSE)		
Other Partners	WCS		
Financial arrangement	<u>At endorsement (millions USD)</u>	<u>Project end (millions USD) *</u>	
[1] GEF Funding:	859,090	809,430	
[2] UNDP Funding:	100,000	100,000	
[3] Government:	1,400,000 (in-kind)	82,000 (in-kind)	
[4] Other Partners: WCS	480,000 (in-kind)	12,000 (in-kind)	
[5] Total Cofinancing [2 + 3 + 4]:	1,980,000	194,000	
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1 + 5]	2,839,090	1,003,430	

Project Description

While the Mbé River watershed is one of the most biologically diverse sites in Central Africa, it also has a substantial economic importance for Gabon as it provides electricity for 60% of the country's population and ecosystem services such as regulating water flows, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity. These services - which are presently freely accessible - are threatened by non-compliant logging, mining and hunting activities conducted by various actors within the watershed and by planned large-scale farming development through a national investment project. Approximately one third of the Mbé River watershed is included in the Monts de Cristal National Park. Logging activities occupy about 90% of the unprotected area.

The long-term solution sought by this project for the conservation of the Mbé watershed's biodiversity and ecosystem services was to develop a sustainable funding mechanism to secure the long-term protection of the forest ecosystems in the Mbé River watershed and to ensure that sufficient financial resources were available to cover management costs for the National Park, and remunerate the various actors (including local communities) that help in maintaining environmental services and preserving biodiversity. Specifically, the project was designed to remove barriers to the establishment and operation of a funding mechanism by strengthening the enabling environment in Gabon for payments for ecological services (PES) and developing a PES scheme to be implemented in a later stage (i.e. after the project).

Summary of the project progress

After 5 years of implementation, including an 18-month no-cost extension, this project has a very low rate of technical achievement while financial resources have been fully utilized. By the end of the project, as detailed in the Table 6 on Project Progress towards achieving the objective and expected outcomes, the PES scheme not ready for implementation.

At this stage, there is no clear or definitive identification of the following:

- PES scheme providers and beneficiaries.
- Opportunity costs associated with changes in practices or operating modes as part of the implementation of the PES scheme.

- A clear set of criteria, and a procedure to define eligible activities, expected benefits, and level / mode of payment or compensation practices for different land and resource users to generate environmental benefits,
- Demonstrated acceptance of the adopted scheme by all stakeholders and evidence of their willingness to participate.
- The mechanism to transfer payments from buyers to sellers.
- The procedure to enforce the application the contracts.
- The indicators and methodology to monitor performance of the contracts to ensure that the scheme effectively achieves its conservation and environmental objectives.
- The institutional structure capable of managing the funds generated in the PES mechanism and monitoring its implementation and outcomes.

Table 3 in section 4.5 presents the dates of the main stages of project preparation and implementation. A number of factors explain this weak performance, without justifying it:

- The late and slow start of the project, including significant delays in the actual start of implementation linked to administrative and institutional obstacles. This involved: (i) questioning the complementarity of the roles of the Project Coordination Unit and the WCS Technical Assistant by the UNDP RR who was then head of UNDP CO in Gabon, and its consequences on the effective start of activities (one-year period to establish a contract between the Technical Assistant, WCS, and the DGE), (ii) slow implementation of activities related to the cumbersome process for disbursing funds activity-by-activity imposed by the UNDP management modalities until June 2016, and (iii) a 3-year delay for setting up the Project Steering Committee, and the inadequacy of its terms of reference leading to insufficient strategic guidance by this supervisory body, especially in its early stages.
- The inexperience of the stakeholders involved in implementation of the project with regard to PES, and insufficient expertise provided by the technical assistance in the specific area of PES (the recruitment of an international PES expert was foreseen in the ProDoc but did not take place, and required PES expertise was not provided by WCS as expected in the ProDoc and under their contract).
- The low technical and management capacity and insufficient availability of the Project Management Coordination Unit, including of the CTA, resulting in a lack of clear vision and overall project planning.
- Late and very limited use of the national and international consulting experts that were foreseen in the ProDoc. TNC (not foreseen in the ProDoc) was only contracted by the end of 2015, and short-term individual consultants for biodiversity and socioeconomic studies were contracted by mid 2017.
- Insufficient supervision and guidance from UNDP at the country office level as well as at the regional office level for monitoring progress in timely and quality delivery, communicating and enforcing UNDP and GEF standards in financial and operational management.
- The departure of the Programme Officer from the UNDP CO (who was dedicated to supervising the project) at the end of 2014, replaced by a succession of Programme Officers for short periods, which did not allow for proper project technical supervision by UNDP.

Limitations due to the project design. The fact that the implementation of a pilot phase to test the PES scheme in the Mbé watershed as foreseen in the project design at PIF stage was dropped and replaced by a component focusing only on the design of the PES scheme, prevents any testing of the potential of the PES mechanism as a sustainable source of revenues. The monitoring and demonstration of the linked environmental and economic benefits due to improved resource management within the watershed is no longer possible and the project lost much of its potential to persuade potential buyers and providers to get involved in this scheme and to generate lessons. Pilot testing is an integral part of the development of a PES scheme as it is indispensable to verify hypotheses on the conservation and ES benefits expected from prescribed land and resource use changes as the links between land use changes and watershed services are complex and vary with forest types and development stages. By designing a PES scheme without implementing it and without ensuring that an adequate framework is in place to enable its possible operationalization (which both constitute the project's objective), this project was unlikely to deliver on conservation outcomes and have a measurable impact on biodiversity. Only the awareness raised through meetings convening Government Officers and Local Authorities, where the potential of the PES mechanism to raise revenues was put forward, was likely to produce some beneficial impacts such as delaying the development of intensive agriculture in the watershed. Also, without any support for sustainable livelihoods and to reduce Human-Wildlife Conflicts, the awareness activities with local communities were not likely to reduce significantly pressures on biodiversity at their level.

Main achievements

Awareness. One output of the project is the awareness and information of local communities and the establishment of local committees, although with very mixed success. Interviews with local community members revealed a sense of abandonment by the project, and confusion in the conveyed messages: i) in understanding the role of local committees relative to that of committees created for PA participatory management, ii) the concept of PES, the role that is expected of them, and the benefits they can derive from it. The fact that no tangible support was provided to help local communities improve their living conditions and to cope with the threats of wildlife is discouraging, as the people who have agreed to participate in the project quickly regain their skepticism and gradually resume their hunting activities.

Presentations on the project progress and the PES scheme to the PSC and during the multi-stakeholder meetings increased awareness of local authorities, which contributed to hold back a large intensive farming development planned as part of a Governmental investment project. It also raised the interest of Government officials who plan to integrate the PES concept in the future developments.

Valuation of ecosystem services. An important output is the study conducted on the basis of a hydrological model produced through the technical support provided through TNC, which provided new knowledge on the valuation of ecosystem services. The model was used to predict the impact of various scenarios of land and resource management practices on water quantity and quality including the National Park, and estimate their costs. The results identified the practices providing the highest ES benefits for investment which provide a basis for planning sustainable land and resource use in the Mbé watershed to optimize hydrological services. One great benefit of this model is that it has produced figures on the value of ecosystem services, the costs of unsustainable practices of land and resource use, and the benefits associated with conservation in the National Park and the adoption of improved practices, which helped raise stakeholders' awareness with more convincing arguments than conceptual demonstrations.

Development of the PES scheme. Yet, to develop a PES scheme, this study should have been completed by several other outputs that have not been undertaken. Namely, the question of the identification of buyers and providers or suppliers is not yet resolved. To design the payment mechanism and negotiate contracts, essential aspects still need to be studied and discussed with project stakeholders: determination of payment levels, transfer of payments from buyers to sellers, unit and timing of the payments, monitoring and enforcement of contract performance. Fauna and flora inventories provide baseline data for a few potential indicator species, but fully developed protocols still have to be developed. The PES scheme is clearly not ready for implementation.

Capacity building. As part of developing capacities to develop, implement and monitor a PES scheme in the context of Gabon, the project successfully organized an experience-sharing tour that was attended by 5 people including 2 PCU staff (PC and AFA) who are also Government officers, one representative of local communities, one representative of TNC, and a UNDP CO Programme Officer, to learn from a successful PES experience in Kenya. Another study tour in Costa Rica was attended by the Project Coordinator in 2014. However, best practices learned during these tours are poorly documented.

Evaluation Rating Table

Table 2. Evaluation Rating Table (Refer to Annex 8 for the TE rating scales)

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	rating	2. IA& EA Execution	rating
M&E design at entry	MS	Quality of UNDP Implementation	MU
M&E Plan Implementation	U	Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	MU
Overall quality of M&E	MU	Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	MU
3. Assessment of Outcomes	rating	4. Sustainability	rating
Relevance	MS	Financial resources:	MU
Effectiveness	MU	Socio-economic:	MU
Efficiency	U	Institutional framework and governance:	MU
Overall Project Outcome Rating	U	Environmental :	ML
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	MU

Summary of recommendations and lessons

	Recommendations	Resp. entity
Design		
1	Project design / Coherence of the project document. Ensure coherence of the project document following revisions, namely strategic ones involving significant changes in project outcomes, to ensure expected results, described activities, benefits at global, national and local levels, and indicators are coherent and remain relevant to the project's intervention.	UNDP – all levels, Government
2	Project design / Translation of the project document. It is crucial to invest adequate resources to allow the recruitment of qualified translators able to guarantee a high-quality technical translation, and to have the translation validated by a technical expert familiar with the project's field of activity, as well as to have the translated version signed to authenticate its validity as a reference document just like the English version. Poor translations are misleading and can potentially lead to erroneous understanding of the project purpose, inadequate planning, ineffective interventions and inefficient use of resources.	UNDP, Project development team
Implementation		
3	Quality assurance role - Even under the NIM implementation modalities, UNDP at country and regional levels must ensure that project implementation arrangements and expenditures comply with UNDP rules and that funds are used for agreed purposes.	UNDP – all levels
4	Participatory planning and evaluation for adaptive management: In a project implemented by several entities, joint planning and reviews are essential to develop a common vision of project directions and priorities. The effectiveness of the annual planning process would have been greatly improved by involving all the parties concerned by the implementation of the project, including the different project partners, the relevant directorates within MSFE, concerned prefects, and staff in charge of managing the PA, to review the project's achievements and draw lessons to integrate them in the new annual workplan. Such participation would have consolidated and improved the transparency of planning and budgeting processes while contributing to capacity development of the partners involved in these exercises. Such planning meetings can take place in the concerned prefectures to facilitate the participation of local partners and village community representatives.	Project staff MSFE
5	Capacity for results-based management. It is recommended that UNDP, at the national and regional levels, ensures that Project Managers are able to implement results-based management, through requiring previous experience as part of the TORs or at least, by requiring project staff in charge of coordinating the project to attend targeted trainings in the first months of the project implementation, and providing continuous support as needed during implementation.	UNDP CO
6	Financial management. It would have been necessary to exert increased and sustained vigilance and scrutiny over planned expenditures in the annual work plan that accompanies the Authorized Spending Limit request to ensure that limited project financial resources are not used for other purposes than those planned and are no longer available for interventions planned in the ProDoc, especially when country-level technical support (i.e. by the Programme Officer) is disrupted or interrupted. Several cues should have attracted attention at the regional level and called for closer supervision.	UNDP RTA, Regional Program Assistant
Monitoring and evaluation		
7	M&E /Evaluations and audits. It is recommended that UNDP organizes annual project audits and reviews/evaluations in accordance with the initial M&E plan in the ProDoc. The objectives of a mid-term review include assessing the project's degree of achievement, and making recommendations to improve the project's performance and its chances of achieving the agreed results during the remaining period. Among other aspects, this review would have examined and made recommendations to improve the management arrangements, the implementation strategy, the monitoring and evaluation system, and the risk factors that may affect the sustainability of the results. The recommendations would certainly have addressed many of the issues raised in this evaluation and their implementation would have improved the overall performance of the project.	UNDP
Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits under component 2		
8	Recommendations for i) designing and ii) operationalizing a long-term ecological monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the PES system on the maintenance and improvement of ES within a watershed: 1. The selection of indicators, the development of taxonomic identification tools and protocols specific to the selected indicators, the establishment of permanent sampling stations described according to their geographical position, their exposure to pressure factors (eg roads, gold panning, deforestation, intensive agriculture) and their physical and biological parameters, the identification (or the creation) of a permanent database secured in an institution to collate collected data. 2. The operationalization of the long-term ecological monitoring system should include: i) the establishment of collaborative arrangements with scientific partners and on-site environmental	Government

	Recommendations	Resp. entity
	associations, as well as with local communities; ii) practical trainings on monitoring protocols and measurement of indicators; iii) coordination of contributions for the measurement of indicators and their integration into databases; iv) integration of existing data; v) monitoring of pressure factors on biodiversity and ecosystems; vi) and recording and exploiting data to support adaptive management of resource use in the Mbé watershed.	
Actions to mitigate potential negative impacts due to the project implementation		
9	It is recommended that UNDP, Government and WCS representatives undertake a short mission within the villages along the road in the Mbé watershed to communicate with local community members whose participation was sought during project implementation, to thank them for their involvement and interest, to inform them of the project closure and that the results showed that their agricultural activities had a limited impact on the hydrological services in the watershed, and to clarify that no financial mechanism was set-up through the project and that they have not been left out of it.	UNDP, Government and WCS
10	The government of Gabon is tackling human-elephant conflicts through the project implemented by the National Agency for National Parks in four national parks of Southwestern Gabon as part of the GEF-funded WB-supported Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development. One of the intended outcomes is increased community engagement to live with, manage, and benefit from wildlife as indicated by reduced human-wildlife conflict incidents and benefits perceived by communities from sustainable natural resource management activities and enterprises, namely wildlife tourism. It is recommended that the Government and partners mobilize additional resources to expand their current efforts and apply successful approaches in the buffer zone of the Monts de Cristal NP to provide tangible support to the village communities who suffer repeated invasions of elephants near their homes and the destruction of their crops and help them to improve their living conditions and to cope with the threats of wildlife.	Government and partners

Lessons

Midterm review. At the mid-point of a project, the accumulation of implementation issues, including a Project Steering Committee that remains to be established, multiple delays in setting up the project management unit (including the recruitment of WCS as Chief Technical Advisor), in recruiting experts and in starting-up activities - significant changes in the implementation arrangements - repeated ratings in the unsatisfactory range for the annual project implementation reviews (PIRs) and the poor quality of these reports, should have triggered some sort of warning to require that a mid-term review is conducted to identify issues and solutions to increase the chances of meeting intended outcomes or of making progress by the end of its implementation cycle.

Financial management. It would have been necessary to exert increased and sustained vigilance and scrutiny over planned expenditures in the annual work plan that accompanies the Authorized Spending Limit request to ensure that limited project financial resources are not used for other purposes than those planned and are no longer available for interventions planned in the ProDoc, especially when country-level technical support (i.e. by the Program Officer) is disrupted or interrupted. Several cues should have attracted attention at the regional level and called for closer supervision.

Communication. One great benefit of the use of the hydrological model is that it has produced figures on the value of ecosystem services, the costs of unsustainable practices of land and resource use, and the benefits associated with conservation in the National Park and the adoption of improved practices, which helped raise stakeholders' awareness with more convincing arguments that conceptual demonstrations on the concept of PES.

Identification of buyers and providers in a PES scheme. The design of a PES scheme linking beneficiaries of the watershed services with the providers to ensure upstream forest protection seemed at first fairly straightforward: Water quality (low sedimentation load), quantity and flow regulation were identified as the environmental services; SEEG (hydroelectric dam company) was identified as the beneficiaries (buyers), while the local communities, the National Park, the forestry and mining concessions were identified as the providers (sellers). Studies have shown that the impact by local communities and gold miners were negligible and that the NP had a positive impact on ES so that little improvement of ES can be expected from adapting practices at those levels. It was found that the forestry concessions had the most impact through clearing the forest for roads, skid trails and loading areas in inappropriate locations in relation to the river, but such proscribed practices are taking place due to ineffective enforcement by the Forest Directorate and inappropriate validation of the concessions management plans. It does not seem appropriate to compensate foresters to adopt legitimate practices. While SEEG has been involved from the very beginning of the design of this project, it turns out that its role as a concessionary (investing in a limited timeframe) entails limitations to its role as beneficiary or willingness to be the one who pays. Indeed, at the time of the TE mission, the maintenance of SEEG in the short term was

seriously questioned. The identification of providers and buyers should follow a prior assessment of the effective impact of the various resource users on the ES and include considerations on the tenure issue.

In order to successfully negotiate agreements in a PES scheme that bind resource users and beneficiaries of the ecosystem services affected by these uses, the issues must be perceived by the different actors on similar time scales. In this project, the fact that the State, SEEG, local communities, forest concessionaires, artisanal miners perceive their investments and their profits over significantly different time scales makes the negotiation process more complex. Some users have a short-term focus whereas investment to improve land use and ecosystem services in the watershed requires a timeframe of decades. For example, local communities enjoy permanent use rights under the laws of Gabon. According to the Forest Code, forestry companies' exploitation rights are framed by temporary 3-year agreements to develop management plans that, once validated, allow the establishment of 20-year agreements. However, many concessions are non-compliant. SEEG's use right under the terms of a 20-year concession agreement (1997-2017) has been replaced by a 5-year agreement (2017-2022). This greater precariousness modifies the investment prospects for SEEG which was perceived as the beneficiary or 'buyer' in the PES scheme envisaged for the Mbé catchment area.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

A final project evaluation is a learning exercise and an integral part of the project's monitoring and evaluation cycle, which includes accountability, informed decision-making and experiential learning. The final evaluation provides a detailed and systematic account of the performance of the project that is about to be completed with an assessment of its design, relevance, implementation process, and achievements with respect to the project objectives approved by the GEF, UNDP and the Government of Gabon, and considering any changes in expected results agreed upon during project implementation. While the progress reports have presented the project's results in terms of mainly operational results, the terminal evaluation also assesses achievements in terms of development results, their chances of sustainability and their replication potential. The objectives of a final evaluation include promoting accountability and transparency, evaluating and communicating the project's degree of achievement, and synthesizing lessons that can help to improve the selection, design and implementation of future activities. The results of this assessment will also contribute to the GEF Evaluation Office database to report on the effectiveness of its operations in achieving global environmental benefits.

1.2 Scope and Methodology

In accordance with UNDP-GEF monitoring and evaluation policies and procedures, all medium and full-size projects must undergo an independent¹ final evaluation by the end of their implementation cycle. The terminal evaluation was planned to meet the requirements of the terms of reference (Annex 1) as well as the most recent GEF guidelines for terminal project evaluations².

The evaluation was conducted using a participatory and consultative approach, in collaboration with the UNDP country office (CO), project implementing partners, government representatives, the project team, and key stakeholders. The GEF operational focal point was not available for a meeting. The evaluation is based on information acquired through the following tasks:

- Review of project documents. All relevant sources of information were reviewed, such as project document, annual workplans, budgets and progress reports, GEF tracking tools, technical reports produced by the project, and any other documentation that was deemed useful for this evidence-based evaluation. The list of documents examined is presented in Appendix 9.
- Meetings with the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), Steering Committee members, the UNDP members in charge of supporting the project, implementing partners, as well as other partners who contributed to the project, in order to collect the information required to assess the project development, its implementation (including financial and administrative management) and its achievements. The list of persons interviewed is provided in Annex 4. The programme of meetings in Libreville and on the intervention site are included in Annexes 2 and 3.
- A 3-day visit to the Mbé River watershed on intervention sites of the project, to meet and have interviews with the authorities, local communities and local committees, as well as to note the project achievements. The itinerary of the field visits and the list of people met are attached as Annex 3.
- Interview guides have been prepared to guide semi-structured interviews and systematize the collection of relevant information on outcome indicators and management issues. They are annexed (5, 6 and 7) to this report.

Formulation of the project. The project formulation review focuses on the design of the results framework or logical framework, assumptions and risks, the consideration of learnings from other projects, linkages with other interventions in the same sector, stakeholder participation planning, the replication approach, and management arrangements. The logical framework review assesses the relevance of indicators and their targets and whether they incorporate disaggregated indicators to highlight the effects on women's development and empowerment.

Implementation of the project. The project implementation and adaptive management approach affecting the performance of the project are reviewed on the following aspects: work planning, financing and co-financing, monitoring and internal evaluation of the project, the commitment of stakeholders, reporting, and communication. The key financial

¹ The independence of the terminal evaluation process is related to the fact that the evaluation consultants were not involved in any stage of project design or implementation.

² Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results, Chapter 7, pg. 163; Global Environment Facility Evaluation Office. 2008. Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations. Evaluation Document No. 3

aspects of the project are assessed and, as needed, explained, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized, and variances between planned and actual expenditures.

Project results. Results are assessed for their relevance (to national priorities and GEF / UNDP programs), effectiveness and impact (against expected results), efficiency (taking into account inputs), likelihood of sustainability, and impact - and rated according to the scales provided in Annex 8. The sustainability of the results is understood as the probability that the beneficial effects will be maintained after the end of the project. The sustainability assessment is based on the four dimensions of risk that are likely to affect the persistence of project outcomes: i) financial, ii) socio-political, iii) institutional and governance, and iv) environmental. Assessments made using the relevant GEF Tracking Tools are reviewed and compared to assessments made during project preparation.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons learned. Based on this analytical work, the evaluation presents a synthesis of the main observations concerning the implementation of the project, recommendations to optimize the project results and promote its sustainability, and learnings useful for future projects.

1.3 Structure of the evaluation report

The TE report presents a summary of the main elements of the evaluation (progress, ratings, conclusions and recommendations), introduces the evaluation and presents its methodology (Section 1), describes the project and the context that led to its development presenting its strategy, implementation modalities and stakeholders (Section 2). Section 3 contains the findings of the TE where the design implementation and progress towards the results are presented and evaluated. The conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned are contained in Section 4 and Section 5 includes a set of appendices which present the tools and details of the TE.

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

2.1 Project start and duration

The project Sustainable Management of the Mbé River Watershed Through the Development of a Payment Mechanism for Ecosystem Services (PES) officially started in May 2012 (date of signature). Scheduled for a period of 4 years, it has been implemented over a period of 5.5 years.

2.2 Problems that the project sought to address: targeted threats and barriers

Threats to biodiversity in the Mbé watershed are related to logging, mining, hunting and farming activities. Logging concessions occupy most of the watershed area outside the Monts de Cristal NP. Logging and forest clearing for roads and log landing areas makes the soils vulnerable to erosion, especially on steep slopes and near rivers, leading to increased sedimentation and a reduction in water quality. Although concession holders are required to have a management plan within 3 years of obtaining a temporary permit, few companies abide by the law due to the high costs in developing the management plans, and insufficient capacity to validate their implementation and enforce the forestry regulations. Artisanal gold mining mainly practiced by miners from outside of the region is impacting biodiversity and watershed services mainly through increased sediment load in rivers and pollution. This type of exploitation is often carried out in biologically sensitive zones due to inadequate consultation with relevant wildlife / protected areas authorities prior to permitting, weak political support for retracting mining permits in favor of biodiversity conservation, and lack of capacity to enforce environmental regulations, including requirements for EIAs. Subsistence and commercial hunting is mainly carried out by local villagers and workers of the forestry, mining and hydroelectric companies. For the local communities living in the watershed who have little access to alternatives, bushmeat is an important source of protein and revenue. Weak property rights for wildlife resources and weak law enforcement in the park and periphery, wildlife resources are virtually in a situation of open access. Local populations carry out small scale subsistence farming mainly for manioc and bananas, but there is threat that commercial agriculture will further develop in the region as part of large national investment programs. Since environmental protection remains largely funded by short term interventions from external donors, there is a high risk that this situation will lead to increased pressure on biodiversity and environmental services. To manage these threats, the Government of Gabon sought to reverse the trend of biodiversity and ecosystem services degradation by setting the enabling conditions for developing PES and implementing a pilot PES experiment in the Mbé River watershed to secure long-term financing for environmental protection and biodiversity conservation of the Mbé watershed.

The project sought to lift the **barriers** to the implementation of these solutions at the national level as well as in the Mbé river basin that are due to inadequate legal framework and institutional capacities for an effective PES scheme to be

piloted and replicated, including overlapping jurisdictions among the various government agencies responsible for environmental protection, lack of clarity of land and resource use rights, inadequate law enforcement and institutional capacity to regulate the various activities in the watershed, lack of a system for landscape planning to reconcile various land uses with the protection of nationally and globally important biodiversity and environmental services, and lack of recognition of the role of the National Park, local communities, and other resource users in providing or protecting ecosystem services such as electricity production and water provision.

The second component of the project was designed to lift the barriers that prevent putting in place a mechanism based on payments for the maintenance of ecosystem services in the watershed, including limited knowledge of the ecological and economic values of the watershed and of the services it provides, and of the impacts of different land uses and land use changes on the provision of the watershed services in different ecosystems, paucity of hydrological data to define a baseline for the watershed services as part of the setting up of an effective monitoring system, lack of technical skills for better stewardship, and lack of capacity for business planning and for negotiating appropriate forms of contracts.

2.3 Immediate and development objectives of the project / Expected results

Project goal. The project's goal is that biodiversity and environmental services of Mbé watershed are protected and livelihood of dependent communities improved through an increased awareness and valorisation of the environmental services provided by the watershed.

Project objective. The project objective, as per the ProDoc, is:

“To design a sustainable financing mechanism for long-term protection of the Mbé River forested watershed, while strengthening the legal, policy and institutional framework necessary to ensure its adoption and successful implementation”.

In the ProDoc, the project strategy is structured into 2 components: the first one being focused on the establishment of adequate legal and institutional frameworks to design, implement, manage and monitor a PES scheme in the Mbé watershed, and the second one, on the design of a PES pilot scheme including a monitoring plan.

Outcome 1: Legal, policy and institutional framework provide enabling support for—and key institutions have improved capacity to design, manage, implement, monitor and learn lessons from—a PES scheme for the Mbé watershed, through the following outputs:

- 1.1 *Proposal for harmonization of national sectoral policies and legislation developed to support the implementation of PES scheme*
- 1.2 *Proposals for land use rights are developed to form a sound basis for designing a PES scheme.*
- 1.3 *Effective coordination and information exchange structures developed that promote cross-sectoral information sharing and synergies among government agencies and key stakeholders with the ultimate view to establishing a PES institution/governance*
- 1.4 *Staff of government agencies and other partner / support agencies trained in key aspects of PES including design, - implementation and monitoring*
- 1.5 *Lessons learned/gained from the design process are disseminated and transferred to other watersheds in the country and Congo Basin*

Outcome 2: A pilot PES scheme that rewards the maintenance, improvement or adoption of conservation-friendly land uses, together with an associated monitoring plan, are designed.

The achievement of this outcome was expected to follow from these outputs:

- 2.1 *An education and persuasion process put in place to gain the support of important stakeholders, e.g. governments, private business and land owners*
- 2.2 *Ecosystem services in the Mbé watershed are defined, measured and assessed, including an assessment of the impacts of different land uses.*
- 2.3: *Production with participation of all major stakeholders, of detailed PES schemes proposals tailored to the Gabon socioeconomic context*
- 2.4 *A business plan developed to improve financial security and options for MBÉ watershed*
- 2.5 *Guidelines and criteria for contracts between buyers and sellers developed and contracts negotiated and drafted.*
- 2.6 *A proposal of a system for distribution of benefits designed and proposed to key stakeholders*
- 2.7 *Monitoring systems for biodiversity, water quality using biological indicators established*
- 2.8 *Methodologies for monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of PES in Mbé developed*

2.4 Baseline indicators established

In the Strategic Results Framework of the ProDoc, the value “none” was indicated as the baseline for all 15 indicators. This could suggest that none of them had been measured during the project preparation phase or that the baseline value was “0”. This is hardly surprising since most indicators are in fact operational indicators or actual outputs expected from the project. It is then likely that the baseline value is “none”.

Unfortunately -and surprisingly- the scores of the tracking tools, METT, BD SO2 TT and Financial Scorecard, have not been used as objective- or outcome-level indicators, even though baselines were known prior to the project start, as they had been completed during the project preparation and results were available (appended to the CEO ER).

2.5 Timeline of project preparation and implementation

The dates of key milestones of the project presented in Table 3 highlight several important gaps in its implementation:

- 3 years and 7 months have elapsed between the approval of the PIF and the signature of the ProDoc. Such a gap inevitably leads to changes in the context of the project implementation, the baseline situation (ongoing projects identified as co-financing and for establishing collaborations), and commitments from partners.
- Although the National Project Coordinator was hired on the same day of the signing of the project document (May 2012), the inception workshop only took place 5 months later, and the contract with WCS - as the Technical assistant of the project- was signed more than 13 months later. The year 2012 saw very few achievements besides the launching workshop in Libreville despite the full-time presence of the three members of the coordination unit. No other technical team has been recruited for field interventions, technical support being provided by WCS already working on the site for several years.
- The establishment of the steering committee should have preceded the launching workshop. Yet, it was established in July 2015, 3 years and 7 months after the start of the project, and less than a year before the planned closure of the project - thus depriving the project of the body responsible for providing overall and strategic guidance and direction during most of its implementation.
- The ProDoc had foreseen recruiting several national and international consultants to provide specific technical expertise during the project implementation. The hydrology expert was recruited through TNC in November 2015, 6 months before the planned project closure. The national consultants to conduct biodiversity and socioeconomic surveys were recruited in May 2017, a few months before the rescheduled project closure. The data and knowledge produced through these consultations should have been available much earlier to be used as inputs to activities in later stages of the project.

Overall, the timeline shows that the project has had a very slow start, attributable both to the limited experience of the coordination team in implementing a UNDP-supported GEF-financed project and to the delays caused by the questioning of the project implementation arrangements by UNDP CO authorities, specifically regarding the redundancy of project implementation staff between the coordination unit and WCS, and negotiation to reduce the overhead cost rate imposed on the project by WCS. Despite a 15-month project extension, several tasks were not conducted.

Table 3. Timeline of main stages of project preparation and implementation

PIF approval	Sept 15, 2008
GEF CEO endorsement	March 23, 2011
Local Project Appraisal Committee	November 23, 2011
ProDoc signature	May 7, 2012
Recruitment of the Project Coordinator and Assistant Project Coordinator	May 7, 2012
Inception workshop	October 2, 2012
Contract between DGE and WCS as the Project Technical Advisor	June 22, 2013
Letter to UNDP RR clarifying the roles of PCU and WCS	October 11, 2013
First disbursement to WCS	March 20, 2014
Creation of the Project Steering Committee (PSC)	July 22, 2015
Recruitment of the Hydrology expert (TNC)	November 12, 2015
1 st meeting of the PSC	December 16, 2015
Expected date of closure (4 years after the signature of the ProDoc)	May 31, 2016
Recruitment of the national experts to conduct biodiversity and socioeconomic surveys	May 2017
Revised closure after approval of a 15-month no-cost extension	October 31, 2017
Planned date of terminal evaluation	Nov-Dec 2017

2.6 Main stakeholders

Stakeholders are those who have been or are likely to be affected by the project or its activities, those who participated or contributed to the project, and those who otherwise have an interest in the project results. The stakeholder analysis conducted during the PPG phase identified the stakeholders who were using resources in the forest ecosystem who were thus potential '*service providers*' and those who benefit from the services provided by the forest ecosystem, the potential '*service buyers*'. In this context, a stakeholder analysis conducted as part of the PPG phase allowed the identification of main stakeholders and of their role in the project implementation, as follows:

- Village communities, users of natural resources within the watershed, and the associations and committees that represent them: their involvement was expected to contribute actively to implementing project activities including resource protection, alternative income development (ecotourism, organic agriculture), and raising awareness. Local community representatives were involved in meetings to share information about the project and strengthen their awareness regarding hunting regulations. A woman, president of a local environmental association, was invited to participate to the knowledge-sharing trip to Kenya.
- Local authority representatives (prefects) were expected to oversee activities carried out with the local communities and to be members of the steering committee. The prefect in Medouneu was effectively involved in the project activities as planned.
- Government institutions. As per the ProDoc, the ministries concerned included:
 - Forests, Sea and Environment: had the main responsibility for the execution and overall coordination of the project, was expected to be a member of the steering committee and responsible for negotiations with the forestry companies.
 - Water and Energy: is responsible for the distribution of water and electricity for the nation and for negotiating and overseeing the SEEG concession.
 - Agriculture, Livestock, in charge of the Programme GRAINE (formerly Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Food Security and Rural Development): was expected to oversee activities relating to agriculture and rural development.
 - Mines - was expected to ensure negotiations with the mining companies and to be a member of the steering committee.
 - Ministry in charge of Finance was expected to be a key member of the steering committee given its responsibility over contracts between the private sector and public administration and to contribute to the mobilization of the financial resources of the State as well as the technical and financial partners.

Of the above institutions, only the ministries in charge of environment and energy actually participated in the project activities. The other ministries were invited to but did not participate in the PSC meetings.

- The National Parks Management Agency (NPMA), including the Monts de Cristal NP Manager and ecoguards, were seen as potential beneficiaries of the revenues that would be generated by a PES scheme in the Mbé watershed. A representative of NPMA attended PSC meetings but the NP manager had not been adequately informed of the project objective and PES concept.
- SEEG: As operator of the hydroelectric dam and beneficiary of the hydrological services from the watershed ecosystem, SEEG was seen as an important stakeholder and potential buyer of the ES. SEEG was effectively involved during the whole implementation of the project, attended the PSC meetings, and one officer participated to the knowledge-sharing trip to Kenya.
- Forest companies benefiting from forestry concessions and artisanal gold miners benefiting from mining concessions were seen as potential ES providers as their activities had an impact on the watershed ecosystem services. They were both expected to be members of the steering committee. The project only invited representatives of the main forest companies to attend the PSC meetings as they found that the gold mining activities were not important enough and not conducted by companies. However, observations of local people and a representative of one of the forest companies suggest that gold mining activities are relatively important since they use mechanized machinery and chemicals within streams that are tributaries of the Mbé River, which suggests that their impact on ecosystem services is anything but negligible.
- Scientific and academic institutions were expected to contribute to scientific surveys and educational activities. An anthropologist from the Sociology Research Center of Gabon / Omar Bongo University was recruited to conduct a socioeconomic survey.
- International environmental NGOs.
 - The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has been a partner from the concept stage of the project and was identified as an implementing organisation and a co-financier to the project. WCS was recruited through the service contract N° 1040 / DGEPN / WCS of April 2013. This contract could not be consulted (not available in the

PIMS nor in the documents shared for the evaluation). However, the technical reports and TORs of the missions conducted by WCS include the activities assigned to the NGO as per this contract.

- The Nature Conservancy was identified in 2015 to carry out the biophysical and economic impact assessment to support the development of PES scheme, which was undertaken in collaboration with Future Water.

3 FINDINGS

3.1 Project Design / Formulation

The review of the project strategy focuses on its design and on the results framework or logical framework. The project design includes the identification of the problem, the relevance of the strategy to national priorities, the consideration of stakeholder perspectives and the gender issue. A critical review of the logical framework examines the indicators, risks and assumptions. As these aspects represented significant issues in this project, additional aspects have been examined: Differences in the project design between the PIF and the ProDoc, and Inconsistencies with the project design in the French version of the ProDoc have been developed.

3.1.1 Analysis of LFA/Results Framework

The project objective

Observations on the project strategy to achieve the expected results. The project strategy as presented in the ProDoc is based on two components, one systemic and the other focused on designing the scheme for the Mbé watershed. The first one aims to put in place the institutional and legislative framework and the capacity of the administration and other parties concerned to negotiate agreements that allow equitable sharing of the benefits generated by better management of land and resources within the watershed. The second component is focused on the design of a pilot PES scheme to reward or compensate the adoption of sustainable or conservation-friendly land uses in a portion of the Mbé watershed, and to develop tools to replicate the approach in the country and in the region, with the perspective of the effective implementation of the PES scheme following the completion of the project (ProDoc parag. 121). This implies:

- That the stakeholders, the *providers* (those who receive the payments) and the *beneficiaries* of the ES (those who pay) are clearly identified, adhere to the concept of PES proposed by the project, and participated in the negotiations on the terms of the associated contracts;
- That beneficiaries understand what they would pay for and that providers understand what they would be paid for, i.e. That the ES in the Mbé watershed are clearly defined and measured, that the impacts of various land uses on these ES are fully understood and measured to serve as a basis to establish payments for adopting land and resource use practices that improve the provision of such services, and that monitoring systems are established to assess the effectiveness of ES changes over the long term;
- That the payment mechanisms options that fit in the Gabon socioeconomic context and the institutional frameworks to manage the funds are identified and established;
- That a governance structure/framework is established based on clear criteria for selecting members with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and including government agencies in charge of the management of the Mbé watershed and representatives of local communities, providers and buyers – the main role of this structure would be to ensure that funds are used to support conservation within the watershed and to improve communities' livelihoods;
- And that a business plan, guidelines and criteria for negotiating contracts are developed, that contracts between providers and beneficiaries are drafted, and that a system for distribution of benefits is designed and validated by key stakeholders.

The second component was designed to address all these requirements.

Unlike carbon and biodiversity which provide intangible and more global benefits, the hydroelectric vocation of the Mbé watershed with the two existing dams and foreseen additional ones offered an optimal pilot situation with tangible benefits and a clearly identified local beneficiary and potential buyer of the environmental services, namely quality, quantity and flow regulation of water. The hydrological services provided by the Mbé watershed, therefore, represented an opportunity to test the potential of PES as way of linking conservation and development in Gabon and providing a sustainable source of revenue to support sustainable land and resource uses and conservation, including the National Park.

Limitations of the design to produce the expected impacts:

As per the ProDoc (paragraph 101), it is expected that the GEF funding will result in:

- *Increased awareness and understanding of the value of environmental services and the concept of PES*
- *Increased engagement of the private sector in natural resource management*
- *A strengthened policy and legal and institutional framework in Gabon which will be applicable to all PES mechanisms*
- *A pilot site set up in the Mbé watershed to demonstrate how a PES can provide a sustainable source of funding for a natural park and provides incentives for better management outside natural parks.*
- *An increase in the empirical evidence base, as a result of component 3 which will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Mbé pilot scheme to deliver its objectives.*
- *The increased conservation of threatened biodiversity of global importance including great apes and elephants.*

The fact that the implementation of a pilot phase to test the PES scheme in the Mbé watershed as foreseen in the project design at PIF stage was dropped and replaced by a component focusing only on the design of the PES scheme, prevents any testing of the potential of the PES mechanism as a sustainable source of revenues. The monitoring and demonstration of the linked environmental and economic benefits due to improved resource management within the watershed is no longer possible and the project lost much of its potential to persuade potential buyers and providers to get involved in this scheme and to generate lessons.

Even if the project had been implemented as previously planned at the PIF stage, the chances of the PES mechanism contributing to SLM and conservation funding, based on the demonstration of improved ecosystem services by the end of the project were limited. Assuming the implementation of a PES scheme, the impacts of better land and forest management on the target ecosystem services, i.e. water quality, quantity and flow regulation -which vary according to the ecosystems, types of restoration and species used- would have been perceived over a time horizon that exceeds the duration of a project cycle.

The pilot scheme was also limited by the fact that the Mbé river has its source in Equatorial Guinea in the Alen Mountains which are part of the same mountain range as the Monts de Cristal. Preliminary indications show that land use in Equatorial Guinea's agricultural zones is significantly more intense than in Gabon, and thus potentially have significant impacts on the ecosystem services targeted by the project. Thus, the PES mechanism developed by the project could not have encompassed all pressures that are impacting hydrological services provided by the Mbé watershed.

Finally, by designing a PES scheme (without implementing it) and ensuring that an adequate framework is in place to enable its possible operationalization (which both constitute the project's objective), this project was unlikely to deliver on conservation outcomes and have a measurable impact on biodiversity. Only the awareness raised through meetings convening Government Officers and Local Authorities and where the potential of the PES mechanism to raise revenues was put forward was likely to produce some beneficial impacts such as delaying the development of intensive agriculture in the watershed. Also, without any support for sustainable livelihoods and to reduce Human-Wildlife Conflicts, the awareness activities with local communities were not likely to reduce significantly pressures on biodiversity at their level.

Differences in the project design between the PIF and the ProDoc

A comparison with the PIF is not foreseen as part of the final evaluation. However, it seemed necessary to understand the source of the confusion as to what result should actually have been achieved by the end of the project. After reviewing the project documentation and communications related to its implementation, it was not clear whether the project had been developed to "design" or to "implement" a pilot PES scheme. The ProDoc is confusing as it refers both to designing a PES scheme (as per the wording of the objective and outcomes) and to its implementation and its effects (as per descriptions of some interventions and the Rationale and Summary of GEF Alternative).

Indeed, the presentation of the Project Rationale and summary of GEF Alternative mentions that GEF funding is expected to result in, among others: "A **pilot site set up in the Mbé watershed** to demonstrate how a PES can provide a sustainable source of funding for a natural park and provide incentives for better management outside natural parks.- An **increase in the empirical evidence base**, as a result of component 3 which will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Mbé pilot scheme to deliver its objectives.- The **increased conservation of threatened biodiversity** of global importance including great apes and elephants." None of these results can be expected from only designing a PES scheme.

As it turns out, significant changes were made to the project design between the PIF approval in September 2008 and the submission of the ProDoc in March 2011. The formulation of the project objective in the PIF was: "To **establish** a sustainable financing mechanism to ensure long term protection of the forested watershed that has a high conservation value". This formulation shows that the project's purpose was scaled back in the ProDoc as it aims to **design** a pilot PES

scheme rather than **implement** it. Also, the expected Outcome 2 in the PIF “The PES scheme is **tested, operational and generates revenues** to contribute to recurring costs of Monts de Cristal NP and to local incomes elsewhere in the Mbé watershed” is scaled back to the **design** of a pilot PES scheme that rewards the maintenance, improvement or adoption of conservation-friendly land uses, and of an associated monitoring plan. The formulations no longer refer to testing the PES scheme and generating revenues to the benefit of the NP and local communities. While no significant change was made to the formulation of Outcome 1 related to developing an enabling environment, the component 3 related to monitoring, evaluation and verification was mostly deleted, with some monitoring reintegrated in the first component. Furthermore, it can be assumed that some texts had been previously written, such as the “Project Rationale and summary of GEF Alternative” and have not been adequately revised to be consistent with this major change in the expected results of the project.

From the explanations provided in the CEO ER, such changes were required for a few reasons, a reduction of the available co-financing from \$2.9 million to \$2.0 million and SEEG's unwillingness to engage in advance in a PES scheme that has not yet been designed.

Yet, the approval of the 15-month no-cost project extension by the Principal Technical Advisor (PTA) requested the global team to support the project in this period to reach the point of actually establishing the PES scheme, to avoid the recurring criticism that projects involving PES are often limited at the level of conducting a feasibility study or putting enabling frameworks in place, rather than actually finding “buyers” of the service and starting to see payments made.

Inconsistencies with the project design in the French version of the ProDoc

Despite the fact that the English version of the ProDoc bears the signatures and is therefore the official contractual document linking the Government, UNDP and the GEF to guide the project implementation, in several francophone African countries, the main document used by project teams is often the French version of the ProDoc, which is usually a translation of the English version. Poor quality translation, particularly for the project's expected impacts, outcomes and outputs, is likely to reduce the usefulness of the ProDoc as a guidance tool for the project team and the Government, and mislead them as to what is really expected from the project. A quick glance at the French version of the ProDoc revealed that the document contained a high number of significant and recurrent translation errors. For this reason, the formulation of expected results in the French version of the ProDoc was also reviewed.

The poor translation of the ProDoc has resulted in an overall reduced readability and intelligibility of the text, leading to a loss of meaning in general and a loss of technical guidance, and even distorts the meaning of strategic formulations such as the objective and expected outcomes and outputs of the project, thus reducing significantly the usefulness of the document for guiding the project implementation. Annex 15 presents the original formulation of the objective, outcomes and outputs and translations to highlight mistakes or misleading French translations in the SRF and in the Strategy section which also differ from each other.

The **project objective** which reads as “Design a sustainable financing mechanism for long-term protection of the Mbé River forested watershed, while strengthening the legal, policy and institutional framework necessary to ensure its adoption and successful implementation” was translated as “*Établir un mécanisme de financement durable pour assurer une protection à long terme des barrages qui ont une haute valeur dans la conservation*” which actually means “Establish a sustainable funding mechanism to ensure long-term protection of the dams which are of high value in conservation”. This translation is misleading on two key aspects:

- The error -recurrent throughout the document- of translating the word “watershed” by “*barrage*” meaning “dam” shifts the focus of conservation efforts away from the ecosystem (the watershed) to the usage of the ecosystem service (the dam), which is misleading as to the purpose of the conservation efforts.
- While the project objective in the ProDoc is to **design**, it is “*Établir*” in the translated document, meaning **to establish**, which leads to significantly different expectations as to what the project should achieve.

Outcome 1 “Legal, policy and institutional framework provide enabling support for—and key institutions have improved capacity to design, manage, implement, monitor and learn lessons from—a PES scheme for the MBÉ watershed” was translated into “*Cadre de travail Juridique, politique et institutionnel pour soutenir le projet PES du barrage de Mbé et les institutions clés ont la capacité et les ressources pour concevoir, gérer /améliorer et suivre le Plan PES et d’assimiler les leçons apprises du plan pilote*”. This translation suggests that the enabling framework is set up for the PES **project** -instead of the PES **scheme**- and for the Mbé **dam** -instead of **watershed**-, adds that key institutions should not only have capacities but also **resources** to design (...) and learn from the **pilot plan**, although the original wording makes no mentions of a pilot phase or plan. It seems that the idea of implementing a pilot phase which was the project design at the PIF stage is still lingering in the translated version of the ProDoc.

For the Outcome 2, translation errors change the focus from a pilot PES scheme (as per the English ProDoc) to a **good land use test** in the Mbé **dam**, and a test for the adoption of conservation-friendly land uses (English ProDoc) to the adoption of conservation, thus making the French formulation of the outcome nearly meaningless.

It is also interesting to note that the UNDP Gabon website reproduced this error by presenting the project under the title “Gestion durable du **barrage** de la rivière MBÉ”, which means “Sustainable management of the MBÉ **dam**”. The text mentions that the Mbé River **dam** is one of the most biologically diverse sites in Central Africa!

Results Framework / Logframe

Use of the LF. Discussions about the logical framework (LF) elements and its use for adaptive management of the project showed that those responsible for the project management have made very limited use of the LF besides referring to the two components and outcomes for reporting on activities undertaken.

Observations on indicators. Among the elements of the LF, the TE assesses the correspondence of the indicators and their targets to the SMART criteria³. The outcome and impact indicators are examined following the concepts of outcomes and outputs as defined in UNDG’s guidance documents⁴. Overall, the observations made in Table 5 show i) that there is confusion between the levels of results, such as the operational results of an activity, the outputs and the outcomes, ii) that indicators are formulated as results, mostly as outputs, iii) that some indicators are not relevant to the project expected results. One could assume that some of these indicators have been formulated in an earlier version of the project that provided for the implementation of the PES scheme.

Table 5. Review of the objective-level and outcome indicators identified in the logical framework

Indicator / Target	Observations
Objective – Develop a sustainable pilot PES mechanism to secure the long-term protection of a high conservation value forested river basin	
1. A collaborative framework established and functional / Collaborative framework on PES between key institutions operational by the end of the project	An established collaborative framework is an output-level result required to enable negotiations and the development of agreements as part of the PES scheme and not an objective-level -or impact- indicator.
2. Establish a baseline for populations of selected biodiversity indicators and conservation target species in the watershed and control areas / Baseline exists for watershed and control site at end of project	This is formulated as an activity, not as an indicator. The availability of a baseline for biodiversity indicators is not an outcome indicator as an outcome should represent a development change, which is not the case for the availability of indicators’ baselines.
3. % of watershed with management plan taking into account watershed protection / 30% by the end of the project	This could be an appropriate outcome indicator. An appropriate objective-level indicator should reflect the development changes brought by the implementation of such management plans. However, the main problem with this indicator is that no management plan was to be developed as part of this project!!! A management plan was developed for the Monts de Cristal NP which represents 30% of the watershed area, but not under this project.
4. Revenue distribution (sharing) mechanism established with guidelines to orient funds to watershed protection / Mechanism and guidelines exist	This is an output, not an indicator. An example of a relevant outcome indicator could have been the revenues accrued from such a mechanism that are invested in the protection of the watershed, as a result of the pilot intervention.
Outcome 1– Legal, policy and institutional framework support PES scheme for the Mbé watershed and key institutions have the capacity and resources to design, manage/implement and monitor PES scheme, are able to learn lessons from the pilot scheme and to replicate to other sites in Gabon	
5. Inter-ministerial coordination in established collaborative framework, biannual meetings / 2 inter-ministerial meetings per year beginning PY2	This is an output-level operational indicator, not an outcome-level indicator. The fact that coordination is established and meetings held is the result of an activity; an outcome-level indicator should reflect the changes brought by this enhanced coordination among ministries.

³ As per the GEF M&E Policy: Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Atttributable, Relevant and Realistic, and Time-bound, Timely, Trackable, and Targeted)

⁴ United Nations Development Group. 2011. Results-based Management Handbook: Harmonizing RBM concept and approaches for improved development results at country level. - **Outputs** are changes in skills or abilities and capacities of individuals or institutions, or the availability of new products and services that result from the completion of activities within a development intervention within the control of the organization. They are achieved with the resources provided and within the time period specified. **Outcomes** represent changes in the institutional and behavioral capacities for development conditions that occur between the completion of outputs and the achievement of goals.

Indicator / Target	Observations
6. At the end of project (EOP), a national policy is drafted / Proposal for harmonizing sectoral policies agreed by EOP	This is formulated as a result. A draft national policy is an output resulting from activities, not a development change. The resulting outcome should rather refer to the national capacity to implement whatever is addressed by the policy such as "A new policy on PES provides a harmonized national framework that enables the planning and implementation of a PES scheme which revenues contribute to enhance environmental conservation and local livelihoods". Also, the formulation of the indicator lacks specificity as regards to what policy we are talking about here.
7. Central government training needs assessed and implemented / Training needs assessment completed by end of PY1	This is merely an indicator that the activity required to develop a targeted training program, which would be an output and not an outcome of the project. The corresponding outcome would be the development changes brought by the implementation of the training program, such as increased capacities for developing, monitoring and evaluating PES schemes in the Mbé watershed and elsewhere in Gabon.
8. Number of staff of key agencies trained in PES best practices / 60-100% of relevant central government staff have received training necessary to design, manage and monitor PES scheme by EOP (short courses, study tours, fieldwork etc.)	The number of people trained is an indicator that the training activities were conducted. The output resulting from those activities should refer to the skills and abilities developed or increased as a result of the training activities, so that the output indicator could be "Proportion (%) of key staff within the ministries in charge of environment, forests, energy, protected areas, finance, etc. who are able to design, manage and monitor PES scheme by EOP. Now, an example of an indicator for the resulting outcome (provided there are other contributing outputs) could be "The Central Government is able to implement PES schemes that generate sustainable revenues that contribute to ecosystem conservation and local livelihoods".
9. Number of people who know about PES as a means of watershed protection for the Congo basin expanded / At least 3 articles reporting on the design of PES scheme	This indicator and its target are not related. Also, the indicator is not sufficiently specific as it could refer to the number of people in the intervention area, in the country, or in the Congo basin region, which in the last case, would be difficult to measure.
Outcome 2: A pilot PES scheme that reward the maintenance, improvement or adoption of conservation-friendly land uses is designed and a monitoring plan to evaluate its success established	
10. PES mechanisms designed and contract developed between buyers and sellers / Detailed proposal for PES scheme is drafted by year 2	This refers to an outcome and not to an indicator. An example of an adequate outcome indicator could be: "Number of negotiated and agreed PES contracts between buyers and providers of ES in the Mbé watershed by EOP that provide an effective and equitable mean to compensate providers for the adoption of more sustainable land uses."
11. Major stakeholders identified and engaged by the end of Year / Contract for PES between SEEG and Government signed by EOP	This formulation lacks specificity: major stakeholders in relation to what? And engaged in what? By the end of which year? An example of an adequate outcome indicator is provided for indicator 10.
12. Management plans of land units include provisions for watershed protection and biodiversity conservation / At the end of project, management plans exist for 100% of the target area	This indicator is irrelevant as no management plan was to be developed as part of this project, either for land units or for the watershed.
13. Mechanisms for law enforcement in place / Law enforcement operational in key hotspots	This indicator reflects an output and not an outcome-level indicator. Its formulation lacks specificity as regards to what law it is related and in what geographical area it applies, as it could be the Mbé watershed or the country. Since the outcome would be related to enhanced enforcement, an example of an outcome-level indicator could be an increase in arrests and/or convictions for illicit land and resource uses.
14. Reported bush meat or frequency of bush meat sale through the Mbé / At EOP hunting for bush meat has decreased by 30%	This indicator is adequate at the outcome level to report on the reduction of pressures on biodiversity. However, such an outcome can only result from awareness activities and not from increased support to local livelihoods provided by the PES mechanisms since it was not implemented.
15. Monitoring and evaluation plan for PES in the Mbé watershed developed / Monitoring and evaluation plan developed by Y-3 with methodologies peer reviewed and baselines established	This M&E plan is an output of the project and not an outcome indicator.

3.1.2 Assumptions and Risks

The relevance of the risk analysis and of management and mitigation measures identified in the ProDoc is discussed in Table 4.

From the review of the PIRs produced for the duration of the project, it appears that the managers or advisors in charge of managing or supervising the project have not reviewed the risks identified in the LF. However, the following risks were not foreseen and proved important during the project implementation:

- **OPERATIONAL** – PES is an innovative approach representing a challenge involving changes in perceptions and values for several categories of stakeholders, including village communities, which requires lengthy interventions to raise awareness and understanding of theoretical concepts such as ecosystem services, payment for ecosystem services, service providers and buyers. To mitigate this risk, it would have been appropriate, in addition to planned interventions, to adapt the messages conveyed to the local communities and to verify their understanding on a regular basis. If this project had reached the stage of negotiating contracts where local communities would have been involved, it is clear that they would not have developed the required understanding to provide informed consent to an agreement.
- **ORGANIZATIONAL** – The project adopted implementation provisions different from those provided for in the ProDoc, including the recruitment of WCS as the Chief Technical Advisor. This situation led to overlapping and redundant leadership and coordination responsibilities, and a very inefficient use of the project financial resources. The way responsibilities were shared in the workplan between the PCU and WCS resulted in unclear responsibility and accountability in a few cases, and non-transparent rationale for managing related financial resources. This situation led to unexplained financial gaps and undue delays for transferring funds from the UCP to WCS, which problems were invoked to explain the fact that activities under several outputs have not been undertaken. To mitigate this risk, it would have been appropriate, in addition to planned arrangements, to develop and agree on a clear set of management rules between the PCU and WCS, and increase UNDP's support and supervision to settle rapidly any dispute.

Table 4. Comparison of risk assessment and analysis at end of project and design stage. Risk classification in the ProDoc used the following ratings: H (High Risk), S (Substantial Risk), M (Modest Risk), N (Negligible or Low Risk). Revised risks for the TE use the ratings required as per UNDP POPP on Project Risk Log available from <http://content.undp.org/go/userguide/results/project>, as follows C (Critical), H (High), M (Medium), L (Low), N (Negligible) based on a combined assessment of probability and potential impact.

RISKS (IN PRODOC)	CLASSIFICATION		MITIGATION MEASURES (IN PRODOC)	COMMENTS (TE)
	ProDoc	TE		
POLITICAL RISK There may be political pressure to shape the PES system to achieve non-environmental goals, such as assisting politically-favored groups irrespective of likely environmental impact.	S	N	Payments under any individual PES mechanism will only be made for land uses that are expected to generate the environmental services that the service users at that site desire. Collaborative framework established will monitor the effectiveness of these land uses in generating the desired services and report to service users.	This risk could only have occurred during the negotiations to develop the agreements and more specifically for the identification of service providers and criteria for determining the amounts of payments to suppliers. Since the project did not include any field intervention related to land use practices, no change could be expected in terms of environmental services. Without actual implementation of the PES scheme, this risk was unlikely to occur and turned out to be negligible.
ORGANIZATIONAL RISK Lack of capacity of national institutions, NGOs, and academic institutions to support long-term development of environmental service markets in Gabon.	M	H	The project aims to build the necessary institutional capacity of key actors in environmental services market. Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 are designed to provide the necessary support and capacity building activities to each institutional actor to prepare them to assume a proactive and productive role in establishing and maintaining the PES system.	This risk and its assessment (<i>moderate</i>) have been underassessed for the development of the PES scheme, especially since the foreseen capacity building activities were not carried out. The lack of capacity of national institutions and NGO, despite their participation to knowledge sharing visits have been major causes for the poor performance of the project. This risk would have been even more relevant for the long term sustainability of the PES scheme if it had been implemented. The level of risk is therefore considered high.
POLITICAL RISK	M	M	The project takes an incremental approach to developing a PES	Several institutions are concerned by the implementation of a PES scheme – convincing

RISKS (IN ProDoc)	CLASSIFICATION		MITIGATION MEASURES (IN ProDoc)	COMMENTS (TE)
	ProDoc	TE		
Lack of political will or economic/ financial incentives on the part of key stakeholders to help develop and participate in efforts to replicate and/or scale up the project's piloted PES markets to a national level			system by focusing on the building blocks of an institutional framework. A dialogue with key stakeholders has already begun.	them of the relevance/importance of their active involvement in the development of an enabling framework at political, legal and institutional levels, for such a new approach where benefits are not easily perceived in the short and medium term, proved difficult to achieve. Indeed, the ministries in charge of agriculture, mining and finance were all concerned by this project and, although they were invited to participate in multi-stakeholder meetings and in the Steering Committee, at best, they participated only in one only meeting. This risk could have been mitigated by more sustained efforts to raise awareness about the importance of conservation and ecosystem services for the well-being of the population and the country's economy and the importance of developing new mechanisms to ensure its sustainable financing.
POLITICAL RISK Low participation rate of land users - ES providers are reluctant to bear the opportunity costs of mitigating current destructive activities such as forest destruction and bush meat trade.	S	H	By putting in place PES, stepping up surveillance and law enforcement efforts through a complementary program of planning and law-enforcement to be implemented by government authorities, and addressing technical barriers that land users face in altering current land use patterns, the project will influence the cost-benefit calculus in favor of environmentally friendly land uses. Payments offered will need to be sufficient to compensate land users for their opportunity costs.	The mitigation measures identified do not apply to this version of the project that does not include the implementation of a PES scheme. However, the risk had been adequately assessed as substantial (or high in the current classification), as this corresponds to the situation found at the end of the project. Forest companies whose operations have a significant negative impact on the ES, do not consider themselves responsible for the erosion and the reduction of the quality of the hydrological services and would have wished that the impact of the artisanal mining activities are also put in question. Indeed, the project did not communicate with the artisanal gold mining companies, judging that their impact was not significant.
STRATEGIC RISK Unwillingness of service buyers to participate due to free rider behavior	S	H	Key beneficiaries such as SEEG are unaware of the value of the services and the degree to which their service delivery could be jeopardized by forest destruction. This risk will be mitigated by objectively evaluating and communicating value and threat. Information generated under Component 1 will provide the basis for negotiating deals among stakeholders. Implementation of site-specific mechanisms will require an agreement among local service users on how to share the financing burden among themselves, thus giving leverage against free-riding	From the beginning of the project, SEEG staff were aware of the value of the services provided by ecosystems in the Mbé watershed and of the degree to which their service delivery is affected by unsustainable land and resource use practices in the forest. They willingly and actively participated to the project throughout its implementation. The risk level has been somewhat overrated because, despite its low probability, the impact of their lack of cooperation would have been high, resulting in a high risk level. However, the risk of identifying SEEG as a "buyer" is rather due to the precarity of its status as a concession-holder. Indeed, at the time of the TE mission, the concession agreement was reaching the end of its validity period and its renewal was being seriously questioned by the Government. SEEG's position was that the state should be the driving force behind establishing such a PES mechanism.
ENVIRONMENTAL RISK Climate change is threatening the sustainability of the	N	N/A	Actions taken by service providers are aimed at mitigating these risks (i.e. protection of dams, reforestation, siltation control etc)	The identification of this mitigation measure presumes that the PES scheme is implemented which was not the case and was not foreseen in this version of the project.

RISKS (IN ProDoc)	CLASSIFICATION		MITIGATION MEASURES (IN ProDoc)	COMMENTS (TE)
	ProDoc	TE		
established PES scheme.			by building the resilience of the Mbé watershed to climate change.	
OTHER Difficulty in identifying changes in land use that would have the desired effect, particularly with regard to hydrological regulation.	M	N/A	Project design is based on the most recent studies of the linkages between land use and hydrology. During implementation the project's effects will be closely monitored and adjustments made for eligible activities and targeted areas. A strong monitoring component will increase knowledge on land use and hydrology relationships.	The identification of this mitigation measure presumes that the PES scheme is implemented which was not the case and was not foreseen in this version of the project.
FINANCIAL RISK Reduced level and diversity of co-financing	S	M	While the reduced level of co-financing (as compared with the PIF) has largely been accounted for by changes in project design (namely the elimination of Outcome 3), a reduced diversity of donor support remains a concern. One way in which this risk will be mitigated is through continued outreach to the donor community, which will take place in co-operation with the UNDP-GEF regional project for Sustainable PA Financing in the Congo Basin.	The limiting factor of this project was not so much the lack of co-financing as the way the available resources were spent. The mitigation measure was not applied either. This risk level is considered as medium.
STRATEGIC RISK Incomplete engagement on the part of the private sector	M	H	It has become clear during the course of the PPG that the main private sector operator, SEEG, would not be willing to commit in advance to support for a PES scheme, given that a number of questions related to the scheme were, by definition, unresolved.	This risk has been previously addressed.

3.1.3 Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) incorporated into project design

The project design integrated best practices for the design and establishment of a PES scheme as highlighted in literature reviews of existing PES initiatives, mostly in Central America, but not from other relevant projects. It was recommended in the ProDoc to get insight into dealing with the institutional complexity from other ongoing initiatives in Gabon to facilitate inter-ministerial collaboration, such as the creation of the National Commission for Sustainable Development and the designation of a national authority to register Gabon's clean development mechanism projects under the Kyoto protocol which are both inter-ministerial platforms for discussion and dialogue between governmental institutions, representatives of NGOs, and the private sector. However, this recommendation was not followed.

3.1.4 Planned stakeholder participation

Information on planned stakeholder participation was presented in the section 2.6: Main stakeholders.

Gender mainstreaming in project design: Women are affected differently by any intervention related to natural resource management and this aspect needs to be taken into account in the design and implementation of activities as well as the evaluation of their outcomes. However, this dimension has not been integrated into the project design and most of the parties involved are indeed men. The project has not developed discriminating indicator to account specifically for women's participation in project activities and the effects on them. However, during implementation, an effort was made to take into account gender considerations by identifying a number of women (not quantified) that are involved in agriculture within the watershed and to involve women that are members of a local association in a regional knowledge-sharing tour on PES.

Best practices to be adopted for future interventions, which are now required for UNDP projects, will be to complete a gender assessment to be able to develop a strategy to mainstream gender in all project interventions and to ensure that

all operational and performance indicators that document the outputs and outcomes of the project in relation to the communities systematically report these results separately for men and women.

3.1.5 Replication approach

The replication approach for this project was based on the fact that the project was, at the time it was developed, one of the first PES projects in the Congo Basin / Central Africa region and it was expected that the project, upon completion, would have documented all stages of the pilot intervention, and monitored its impacts including the perception of local stakeholders and other partners, thus generating useful lessons for PES projects in other areas with similar conservation issues and socio-economic context. Unfortunately, the project did not reach this stage and did not develop documentation of achievements as there was no use extracting lessons applicable to other situations in the country or elsewhere.

Besides, it was also expected that the strengthening of the enabling environment under the first component, including increased awareness and understanding of the PES approach, would facilitate the development of other PES projects in Gabon. This assumption has proven true, since officials in the Ministries of Energy and Agriculture have stated that a real interest has been developed following the visit to Kenya (to which at least one of them had participated) and the presentation of the results of the model developed by TNC partners. The representative of the Ministry of Energy even said that the approach would be integrated soon into a strategic environmental assessment for the development of Gabon's hydropower sector. This increased awareness and interest for the PES approach among Government officials is certainly one of the positive results of the project.

3.1.6 UNDP's comparative advantage

UNDP's comparative advantage for the GEF lies in its global network of country offices resource persons in environment and energy at country and regional levels, and its country presence in Gabon, which allows connecting the country to worldwide knowledge, expertise and resources. The fact that UNDP was in a position to provide this type of network support represented a significant advantage for this project as PES schemes were still a new approach to mobilizing finance for conservation in Gabon and in the whole region. UNDP's presence in all other countries in the Congo basin and networking capacity also represented an advantage to facilitate the dissemination of experiences and lessons learned for designing this innovative approach at the regional level.

UNDP's experience in integrated policy development, human resources development, institutional strengthening, and non-governmental and community participation was also relevant to this project, especially for the first component which aimed at establishing an enabling legislative and institutional framework to enable the development and operation of PES schemes and for developing stakeholders' ability to hold negotiations to ensure equity and fairness in the distribution of the project's benefits and services. As discussed in the PIF, UNDP's comparative advantage is also related to its extensive experience in capacity building and technical assistance to enhance the sustainability of protected area systems to contribute to human development by securing ecosystem services, maintaining the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people, and buffering humanity from the impacts of climate change. Through the BD and SLM projects in its global portfolio, UNDP also developed experience in several areas that are highly relevant to this project, such as governance of natural resources at the landscape level, land tenure reform, access to natural resources and integrated land use planning, making markets work for the poor, increasing the financial sustainability of PA systems including through PES and other innovative financial mechanisms. However, there is no evidence that the project actually benefited from UNDP's global experience and networks in these fields.

3.1.7 Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector

The project established some cooperation with two GEF-WB projects by inviting them to the PSC meetings which contributed to raise their awareness on PES: "Sustainable Management of Critical Wetland Ecosystems" and "Wildlife and Human-Elephant Conflicts Management". Highly relevant collaborations had been identified in the ProDoc with other interventions at the national, regional or global levels but the project coordinator reported that no such collaboration had been established. Potential linkages were foreseen with ongoing initiatives in the same geographical area, namely USAID (CARPE) and ADB funded programs that had targeted a landscape including the Monts de Cristal as one of the intervention landscapes to improve natural resource management and governance at landscape level across the Congo Basin. No collaboration was either established with the GEF regional project "Sustainable Financing of Protected Area Systems in the Congo Basin", covering six countries including Gabon. The implementation of this project was concomitant with that of the Mbé River project (closed end of 2016) and included activities for developing institutional frameworks and model mechanisms for the long-term financial sustainability of PA systems which were relevant to this project. The

same applies to the foreseen synergies with UNDP's global PES project, aiming to institutionalize capacity for expanding systems of payments for ecosystem services.

3.1.8 Management arrangements

Project implementation modalities. The Gabonese government through the DGE received GEF funding for project technical assistance and implementation and the management of this funding was entrusted to UNDP as the GEF implementing agency for this project. At PIF stage, the project was initially designed as a UNDP/UNEP project where both institutions would partner in the project implementation. UNEP withdrew from the project following the PIF approval and no explanation is provided in the ProDoc or in the CEO ER for this.

Organization of project management:

- Execution: DGE/ Ministry of Forests, Sea and Environment (MFSE)
- Quality Assurance / technical and financial management: UNDP CO + UNDP regional office
- Day to day implementation: PCU within the DGE
- Chief Technical Advisor: WCS
- Other technical partner identified during the project: TNC
- Supervision and strategic guidance: Project Steering Committee

Modality of execution. The project was developed to be implemented according to the National Execution Modalities (NEX/NIM), but until 2015 this modality was adapted to exercise closer control over the project's expenditures rather than operating on the basis of quarterly advances. Starting in 2016, the project was managed based on quarterly advances justified by a work plan.

Executing Agency. The Executing Agency is the DGE of the MFSE and is therefore accountable to the Government for the results of the project. The Director of Environment was appointed National Project Director (NPD) to represent the Direction in the project implementation.

Supervisory committees. As per the ProDoc, two committees were responsible for overseeing the project, the steering committee and the technical unit. The project steering committee (PSC), chaired by the DGE, was responsible for ensuring the political orientation and supervision of the project. It was responsible for assessing the performance of project staff, approving annual work plans, budgets and progress reports, terms of reference and project evaluation reports, coordinating the relevant government agencies, ensuring that the project remains consistent with national and local policies and integrate with other regional development initiatives and monitoring the effectiveness of project implementation. It was expected that this committee would meet twice a year or more, as needed. Now, the PSC was established in July 2015, 3 years and 7 months after the start of the project, and less than a year before the planned closure of the project. Article 3 of the Decree of establishment of the PSC (No. 275 / MFPRN) specifies that it is responsible for approving the annual work plan and for reviewing the project implementation progress. The PSC met 3 times after its late creation in July 2015 (December 2015, May 2016, May 2017), to fulfill the regular tasks of approving progress reports and work plans. The minutes of these meetings are available but do not present substantive recommendations, decisions or strategic directions to guide the project and make no reference to the validation of a workplan. It has, however, been able to play a special role in calling for the suspension or postponement of agricultural development interventions under the national investment project GRAINE, which had foreseen several areas for agriculture intensification within the watershed. The late creation of the PSC without adequate TORs deprived the project of the body responsible for providing overall and strategic guidance and direction during most of its implementation.

As per the ProDoc, one of the first project activities to undertake was, besides establishing the PSC, to establish a project management technical unit, the Technical Cell, to follow closely the development of the PES scheme, as part of the Project Coordination Unit. This technical cell was expected to include representatives of key ministries, notably Environment, Planning and Finance to facilitate cross-sectoral coordination. It was envisaged that a PES institution would be created as part of the project and that the technical unit would be the nucleus of this institution. However, this technical cell was never established.

Three Local Committees have been established among the relevant villages within the watershed as a way of involving local stakeholders and to protect their interests and rights. However, their role is not well understood by the villagers and confused with the role of the Local Committees for the Management of the NP, established to involve local communities in the management of the Monts de Cristal NP, as the same people are involved in both committees, and the purpose of the committees are similar.

Project Coordinating Unit. The PCU within the DGE and WCS as the Chief Technical Advisor were responsible for day to day implementation for their respective activities under the work plan. The PCU included three full-time staff including a

Project Coordinator, an Assistant Project Coordinator and an Administrative and Financial Assistant based in the DGE and part-time staff within WCS, including a Program Director, a Project Manager and a Technical Advisor. The DGE members of the PCU worked from their own offices within the DGE and WCS members, from their own office, all based in Libreville. The members of the PCU/DGE continued to perform their functions within the Directorate of the Environment. This situation led to overlapping and redundant leadership and coordination responsibilities, resulting in ineffective coordination and planning of the work.

The fact that the members of the PCU based in DGE (PC, assistant PC and AFA) continued to fulfill their duties with the Government while working and getting paid full time with project funds is not compliant with UNDP rules regarding UNDP policy on the recruitment of Government staff (see Annex 16 for reference). This issue has not been raised by UNDP, either at the country office level or at the regional level, and no justification has been provided to explain or justify it.

Technical assistance. To support the PCU, the project plans / budget provided for technical assistance from 12 Consultants, including 6 national and 6 international experts, for a total of 144 person-weeks for national consultancies, and 54 person-weeks for international consultancies, in addition to a full time international expert over 4 years as Chief Technical Advisor. National consultancies were planned in the following fields: PES and Partnership, Institutional and Policy and Procedures, Business, Ecological Monitoring, Socio-economy, and Hydrology. International consultancies were foreseen for a Training expert, a PES expert, a Watershed assessment consultant, an Environmental economist and a Monitoring expert. Now, none of the international experts has been recruited as it was assumed that some of this expertise was available through WCS national and international staff and partners, and very few of the national specialists have been recruited mostly under short-term contracts for shorter periods than what had been indicated in the ProDoc. Such decisions have not been adequately justified and deprived the project from the much-needed expertise and guidance that PCU staff had not the capacity to supply.

WCS' role as **Chief Technical Advisor** (CTA) rather than Implementing Organisation (IO). The PRODOC had foreseen that the CTA would be an experienced expatriate and that WCS would act as one of the IOs, with local research institutions, NGOs and associations active in the project site. The IOs were expected to assume technical responsibility for individual outcomes as specified by TORs within sub-agreement contracts signed with the executing agency. Actually, rather than working on specific outcomes, responsibilities were shared between WCS and the PCU/DGE within a same outcome, and even within a same output. This represented a serious coordination challenge, which has not been successfully met, and the failure to achieve several of the outputs has been attributed to each other's gaps. Acting as the CTA, WCS was responsible for providing overall technical backstopping to the Project, coordinate the provision of technical inputs, draft ToRs and review consultants' reports. Actually, WCS was counting on the contribution and guidance of a PES expert who worked within the NGO at the international level, but she left the organization before she could provide her contribution, thus reducing the level of specific expertise that could be provided by the CTA. Without this expert, WCS Gabon did not have the required level of expertise to provide the type of technical guidance required in the project early stages. Such expertise was necessary to develop the TORs of the technical studies to provide in a timely manner the basic information needed to negotiate and develop the PES scheme, and to plan and implement the pilot intervention. The project has definitely suffered from a lack of technical expertise especially in its early stages, until TNC came on board, bringing in the technical expertise of its partner Future Water.

3.2 Project Implementation

3.2.1 Adaptive management and feedback from M&E activities

No change was made to the project design and project outputs during implementation based on the monitoring and evaluation of the results and indicators, mainly because no such monitoring and evaluation was done prior to developing the annual work plans. The annual planning was done separately by the UCP / DGE and WCS according to the activities under their respective responsibilities and compiled by the UCP / DGE. This planning was not associated or preceded by a participatory evaluation of the progress of the project while the joint operation of these two activities would have fostered the development of a common vision of the project as a whole and facilitated the adoption of adaptive management by integrating lessons learned from the evaluation of project results and effects.

3.2.2 Partnership arrangements

Main partnership arrangements for implementation. The project adopted implementation arrangements different from those provided for in the ProDoc, including the recruitment of WCS as the Chief Technical Advisor. Given the experience of WCS in the region and in this theme, the DGE as executing agency requested WCS (who had performed the preliminary studies as part of the PPG), to act as a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) for the implementation of the project rather than as

an Implementing Organization. According to the organigram and arrangements in the ProDoc, the CTA is part of the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) with the NPC and a Technical Cell which was never established. This situation led to overlapping and redundant leadership and coordination responsibilities within the PCU, with three full-time staff including a Project Coordinator, an Assistant Project Coordinator and an Administrative and Financial Assistant based in the Environment Directorate and part-time staff within WCS, including a Program Director, a Project Manager and a Technical Advisor, all based in Libreville, resulting in a very inefficient use of the project financial resources. Investments were made to restore a base camp within the intervention site but it was not visited. The members of the PCU worked from their own offices within the DGE.

The implementation of activities was shared between the PCU acting on behalf of the DGE (legal, legislative aspects and sharing of benefits) and the CTA (WCS), agreeing that WCS will outsource the activities for which it does not have the required expertise. In the early stages of their collaboration, a common work program was developed in which responsibilities were shared between the PCU and WCS, and sometimes for a same result, resulting in unclear responsibility and accountability in a few cases, and non-transparent rationale for managing related financial resources. The implementation of the project by the two main implementing teams, the PCU in DGE and WCS, appeared disarticulated and stem from the lack of a common understanding of the issues and objectives of the project, lack of participatory and transparent work planning, and overall weak management skills. This situation led to unexplained financial gaps between budgets and payments, and undue delays for transferring funds from the UCP to WCS (most payments were done in August for the current financial year and were lower than the amounts budgeted in the workplans prepared by WCS), which problems were invoked to explain the fact that activities under several outputs had not been undertaken by the end of the project.

An amendment was made to the contract between the DGE and WCS after lengthy negotiations where the management fees requested by WCS had been questioned by UNDP authorities. The rate originally requested by WCS was 16.9% while UNDP proposed a rate of 8%. An agreement to set the rate of management fees at 10% allowed restarting the implementation after several months of negotiations during which implementation was suspended.

Consultants. In November 2015, TNC was recruited under contract by WCS as the hydrology specialist to carry out the required studies to meet results under a few outputs of the Component 2. This work was carried out in collaboration with another partner, Future Water, who conducted the studies based on hydrological modeling. A scientist from a research institution, the CENAREST, was involved as a short-term consultant to carry out socioeconomic studies. A scientist from a national consulting office was also involved as a short-term consultant to carry out biodiversity surveys.

3.2.3 Mobilization of stakeholders

Stakeholder analysis. All the main actors have been identified as well as their foreseen role in the project implementation.

Participatory process for the implementation of the project: The interviews conducted as part of the evaluation highlighted the interest of those who had been actively involved in the project, in the PES concept and its potential to generate income, especially at the administrative level (Ministry of Energy, National Parks Management Agency). However, this participation was mostly limited to attending meetings where project activities were presented. They all showed great interest in the hydrological model presented by TNC and developed by Future Water under contract with TNC.

Local communities: The members of the villages interviewed all showed a motivation to get involved and to participate in the meetings organized by the project. However, according to them, this participation was limited because they did not understand what was expected of them, because what was expected of them was not presented clearly and simply, with words they could understand, because the concept of PES seemed difficult to comprehend and does not seem to bring a tangible benefit for them. The participation and motivation of the village communities is precarious because of the feeling of having been abandoned by the project since 2015 and even more in the face of the threat posed by the invasions of their crops by elephants. A women environmental association was involved to contribute to raise awareness among village communities. However, the president of this association regretted that no relevant information had been transmitted to local communities on improved agriculture practices they were expected to adopt and on their role in the PES mechanism.

At the end of the project, the people interviewed say that they feel excluded from the system put in place (in fact, that they presume to have been put in place, as announced during the first meetings organized by the project), do not understand the PES mechanism, the concepts of buyers and payers remaining unclear, perceive no positive impact at the village level, do not benefit from any activity to compensate for the ban on hunting and to dissuade people from

continuing their illicit activities, suffer the impacts of the unsustainable exploitation by the foresters and the destruction of their gardens by the fauna which they contribute to protect.

Community disappointment is a demotivating factor that risks undermining their openness to project proposals and compromising the achievement of results that depend on their active participation. It would have been important to be clear about what the project could bring directly to communities to avoid disappointed expectations. Maintaining a contact throughout the project with local communities would have been necessary. Also, the communication of concrete explanations and in an accessible / understandable language about the PES approach, the role they could play and the benefits they could draw, would have avoided misunderstandings, inadequate expectations and disappointments. A clearer and more sustained dissemination of project activities, focusing on elements of interest to local communities as part of a targeted communication plan, could have helped to maintain their openness and participation.

Local partners: The project established a good contact with a local association in the village of Akoga although the areas of collaboration have not been defined other than attending outreach activities.

Prefectural officials seemed motivated and actively involved in following up and supporting the project.

3.2.4 Communication

A communication plan has been drafted by WCS but has not been implemented due to the unavailability of required resources. Although the project maintained the necessary communications as needs arose, the people interviewed in village communities all mentioned the lack of communication in the past two or three years and the ineffectiveness of communication (information and level of language inaccessible to communities) as a gap in project management. The launch workshop took place only in the capital and not in the targeted intervention site, missing a good opportunity to involve local communities.

3.2.5 Project Finance

This section assesses the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of planned and realized co-financing. Financial data to complete the financing table were provided by the Project Coordination Unit for co-financing, while data for GEF funds used as of December 2017 were obtained through the Project Information Management System.

Finance and co-finance. Table 7 shows that together GEF and UNDP contributed 95% of the grants for which they committed, and therefore the availability of financial resources was not a constraint to the implementation of the project. However, there are significant variances between planned and actual contributions for in-kind co-financing. The total in-kind contributions at the end of project implementation represent only 5% of projected contributions for the duration of the project, although this amount may be underestimated to a certain extent. Since these could not be fully explained, it is difficult to relate it to any impact on the project implementation:

- The values corresponding to WCS in-kind contribution must be interpreted with caution since they might result from inadequate communication of the relevant information to the PCU/DGE (as explained by the PCU). Total in-kind contribution from WCS is certainly higher, since it represents the provision of premises within the WCS local office, the provision of a 4-wheel drive vehicle for missions to the field, in addition to the existing office equipment over the life of the project.
- Government's in-kind contributions include the provision of a 4-wheel drive vehicle and of premises and office furniture where the PCU worked and held meetings for 5 years. The co-financing letter does not detail what type of expenses are covered by the pledged co-financing so actual contributions cannot easily be compared with pledged ones to explain differences. However, the ProDoc indicated that the Government had the financial responsibility for covering 100% of the Financial Director's salary (same tasks as those actually fulfilled by the AFA), and 50% of the Administrative Assistant's salary, amounting to 160,000\$ over 4 years for both salaries. However, the project grant (GEF and UNDP funds) paid for 100% of the salaries for the three PCU/DGE staff.
- This table has not compiled in-kind contributions from another partner agency, TNC (recruited in November 2015), since requested information was not provided. TNC contributed existing data as essential inputs to the hydrological model, and set up a meteorological station, which are key outputs of the project. Unfortunately, this leveraged contribution could not be evaluated and reported in this table.

Table 7. Financial planning of the project and actual contributions of the partners at the end of the project (amounts in USD)

Financing (type/source)	UNDP TRAC funds		Government		GEF		Partner Agency WCS		Total	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Grants	100,000	100,000 (100%)			859,090	809,430 (94%)			959,090	909,430 (95%)
Loans / Cession										
*In -Kind			1,400,000	82,000 (6%)			480,000	12,000 (2,5%)	1,880,000	94,000 (5%)
*Other										
Totals	100,000	100,000 (100%)	1,400,000	82,000 (6%)	859,090	809,430 (94%)	480,000	12,000 (2.5%)	2,839,090	1,003,430 (35%)

Financial management. The PCU was working with a different budget than the one approved in the ProDoc, although there has never been any budget revision. Any adjustments to the initial approved budget should have been reflected as budgetary revisions in Atlas for the year affected by the adjustment. It has not been possible to get more insight into this issue.

WCS. A total amount of 388,136 USD was paid to WCS from 2013 to 2017, representing 85% of the budget specified in their contract (456,335 USD) and approximately 40% of the project grant. Although the amount paid is lower than planned, the 15% difference should not be used to explain the low achievement rate.

Cost per result / expenses. The data and information required to assess the cost of each outcome and compare actual vs planned expenses for the various budget items have not been provided to the evaluator so that this aspect of cost-effectiveness cannot be commented. However, the detailed report of the expenditures made since the beginning of the project, produced with ATLAS, was provided by the UNDP CO and it was possible to get some insight on the type of expenses made by the project and make a few observations illustrating the inefficient use of the project grant:

- Project funds have not been used to recruit the much-needed technical expertise as budgeted in the TBWP of the ProDoc. The PCU included three staff including a Project Coordinator, an Assistant Project Coordinator and an Administrative and Financial Assistant based in the DGE and paid full-time from the project grant and a Program Director, a Project Manager and a Technical Advisor within WCS paid part-time from the project grant. This situation led to overlapping and redundant leadership and coordination responsibilities, resulting in ineffective coordination and planning of the work, and a very inefficient use of the project financial resources which were no longer available for recruiting the national and international technical experts as planned in the ProDoc.

- Total travel expenses do not significantly exceed the budgeted amounts for all components. However, most of the travel budget was planned to cover travel expenses of national and international consultants who were never recruited. The travel expenses thus correspond to the expenses incurred solely for the travel of the PCU/DGE.

- Mission expenses for the PCU/DGE amount to \$ 32,515 including \$12,410 for the participation of two people in the mission in Kenya, and \$4,890 for the NC mission in Montpellier (unexplained and without mission report), the balance being for in-country missions.

- The mission expenses of the Program Manager of the UNDP BP amount to \$ 9933 for his participation in a forum on agribusiness in Burkina Faso in November 2012 without any link with the project, and for a mission in the Congo, also without explanation and apparently unrelated to the project. These expenses were incurred while the project had not yet started, were not justified and were not the subject of mission reports.

- A costly multi-stakeholder committee meeting was organized as part of the strengthening of the institutional framework for the establishment of a PES mechanism in December 2014 at DGE for a total amount of \$ 6138 to pay for an opening cocktail for 50 people, coffee break, lunch and open bar service.

3.2.6 Monitoring and evaluation: design at entry, implementation, and overall assessment

Operational indicators. The project did not develop operational indicators to monitor its implementation. In the absence of operational indicators, monitoring is carried out on the basis of the completion of the work plans.

Result indicators and TTs. The quality of objective- and outcome-level indicators has been evaluated in section 3.1.1 - Analysis of LFA/Results Framework (see Table 5). Outcome indicators at the level of impacts and effects have not been

directly measured or assessed for any year, and the GEF tracking tools (which scores were not included in the LFA as indicators) have not been completed by the project coordination team. The final TTs presented as part of this TE were completed by the stakeholders participating to the TE field mission, the Monts de Cristal NP *Conservateur*, two ecoguards, and the TE consultant. Though mandatory for GEF-4 projects under the Strategic Objective 1 (Catalysing Sustainability of Protected Areas), the use of this tool was not necessarily relevant to monitor the impacts of this project since none of its intervention involved the Monts de Cristal NP or had any impact on its management or financing – although this would have been expected if the PES scheme had been implemented.

Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs). The annual reports (PIRs) present a rather narrative account - and very little analytical - of the progress made for certain activities whose link with the expected results is often dubious. Rather than reporting on results, or achievements towards results, the information provided is about activities such as recruitment of consultants. The justification of ratings provided for the progress made towards the development objective and implementation progress are very poor and, in certain cases, missing. Comments were more substantial in the two last reports, although the satisfactory ratings provided in 2016 and related justifications were obviously erroneous or misinformed.

Annual audits. The project has only been subject to one audit during its implementation, although these should have been carried out every year. This additional gap is another missed opportunity to verify the project implementation. Indeed, in addition to the financial analysis, audits can make recommendations on various aspects of administrative management to help the project to improve its management practices.

Mid-Term Review. The M&E Plan had foreseen that an independent Mid-Term Review (MTR) should be undertaken at the mid-point of the project lifetime to determine progress made towards the achievement of outcomes and to identify course correction if needed. The MTR that was planned to take place in November 2014 was first postponed to June 2015 due to the delayed implementation at the start of the project, and finally was never conducted without a clear explanation.

Design at entry (MU): Significant shortcomings – Adequate M&E planning providing adequate information and budget but low quality and relevance of the objective- and outcome-levels indicators)

Implementation (HU): Severe shortcoming - MTR not conducted, indicators not assessed, TTs not completed, low quality of PIRs and other progress reports by the PCU/DGE, no use of M&E results to implement adaptive management, no monitoring of risks, only one audit over the project duration)

Overall assessment (U): major shortcomings – based on the above observations)

3.2.7 Implementing Agency (UNDP) execution (*) and Executing Agency execution (*), overall project implementation/ execution (*), coordination, and operational issues

Implementing Agency (UNDP) execution (MU⁵). As the implementing agency, UNDP is responsible for assuring/controlling quality throughout the stages of project identification, development and implementation oversight. Based on the evidence reviewed for this evaluation and information collected through interviews, it appears that UNDP did not satisfactorily fulfill such supervision, oversight and quality control, whether at the Country Office or Regional level. Yet, it must be noted that UNDP CO facilitated the participation of two PCU members to a training on Result-based Project Management that took place in 2014.

At the CO level, quality control is to be exercised at different stages throughout the year and throughout the project cycle: through supporting the development and validation of AWP and budgets to request the ASL; monitoring the implementation of AWP; exerting duly and diligent financial oversight to ensure that funded activities comply with the ProDoc, including through annual audits; contributing to monitoring project results, indicators, risks and social/environmental issues; contributing to the annual PIR and other reports; and undertaking site visits during the course of the project implementation. The weak quality-assurance provided at the CO level may be partly explained by the fact that the Environmental Program Officer who was supervising the project was not replaced by another Programme Officer dedicated to environment after his departure at the end of 2014. Several officers successively fulfilled the administrative role of UNDP, but in the absence of a specialist on environmental issues, one can suspect that this was done without exerting quality control at the technical level. The fact that an issue was raised by the RR at the start of the project regarding the redundancy or overlap of WCS' and PCU's roles and the excessive administrative overhead costs requested by WCS shows that there was a concern to exert vigilance over the project expenses, but there is little evidence of this period, which lasted more than a year. A few issues remain unexplained, including the 3-year period to establish

⁵ Refer to Annex 8 for the TE rating scales

the PSC, the insufficient support, supervision or training for the NC, namely in project management, that could have favored his appropriation of the ProDoc and monitoring tools (indicators and tracking tools) in the project early stage, and the costs for the participation of the Environment Program Officer to a workshop in Burkina Faso in 2012 which had no connection with the project.

The fact that no Mid Term Review (MTR) was undertaken for this project was another missed opportunity for UNDP to redress the project implementation and increase chances to reach the intended outcomes and objective. As per the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy⁶, MTRs are not mandatory for GEF-financed medium-sized projects (MSP) but *should be undertaken, at the discretion of the Project Board, when the project is not performing well* and could therefore benefit from an independent review. As seen in project expenses, a MTR was planned and TORs advertised, but did not take place.

At the regional level, the UNDP Region-based Technical Advisor (RTA) is responsible for quality control through overseeing project implementation, which is exercised at similar stages: the RTA is responsible for providing technical backstopping to CO and technical quality assurance to the project; for validating AWP and budgets to ensure that funded activities comply with the ProDoc in order to authorize the annual ASL issuance; and to monitor the project implementation to be able to contribute to and validate the annual PIR. Several RTAs (at least 3) have successively shared the supervisory role of this project without addressing the several irregularities of this project, namely in the financial and management arrangements. Several cues should have attracted attention at the regional level and call for closer supervision, including changes in management arrangements; long delays at the project start for negotiating WCS and PCU roles and fees, late establishment of the PSC by mid 2015; and poor reporting quality in successive PIRs such as reporting on the recruitment of a consultant rather than on actual progress towards results. The first RTA is responsible for undue expenses for attending international meetings unrelated to the project that were charged to the project. Concerned RTAs are no longer in office and thus could not be interviewed to understand these situations.

Executing Agency execution (MU⁷). As the Executing Agency, the DGE was responsible for several coordination, participation, nomination, supervision tasks related to the PSC and the technical cell, and also for several tasks that should normally come under the PCU, such as preparing technical, financial and M&E reports. The establishment of the project supervisory committees, the PSC and the technical cell, were its responsibility. This, and the fact that the members of the PCU/DGE continued to perform their functions within the Directorate of the Environment, must have certainly contributed to confuse the *coordination* role with the *execution* role of the project. It was not possible to further elucidate this aspect since the Director of the Environment was not available for an interview during the evaluation mission.

Overall project implementation/ execution (MU⁷), coordination, and operational issues. To summarize, overall implementation and execution issues that justify the rating include the following:

- excessive delays due to the long negotiation regarding the role and administrative costs of WCS leading to suspended activities and delays for the payment of salaries in 2013,
- cumbersome administrative procedures with UNDP until the end of 2015,
- insufficient use of the ProDoc as a reference to guide the project implementation, which poor quality of the French translation is misleading as to what the project was expected to achieve
- redundancy in leadership and coordination roles within the PCU, combined with the absence of a shared or common vision and understanding of what the project is expected to achieve, leading to inefficient and ineffective coordination,
- non- compliance with UNDP rules regarding UNDP policy on the recruitment of Government staff as the members of the PCU based in DGE (PC, assistant PC and AFA) continued to fulfill their duties with the Government while working and getting paid full time with project funds,
- absence of joint and participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation of the project progress,
- exceedingly late establishment of the PSC, and no setting up of the technical unit thus depriving the project from much needed strategic support, supervision and oversight.

⁶ <http://www.thegef.org/gef/EvaluationPolicy2010>

⁷ Refer to Annex 8 for the TE rating scales

3.3 Project Results

3.3.1 Overall results (attainment of objectives and outcomes) (Refer to Annex 8 for the TE rating scales)

The review of progress towards results includes evaluation (rating) based on criteria presented in Appendix 4. Table 6 presents the status of progress towards achievement of the purpose and effects as formulated in the project document. Indicators and end-of-project targets are presented as formulated in the project's strategic results framework. Baselines have been omitted in the table since the values were indicated as "none" for all 15 indicators. The situation at the end of the project is documented from the information gathered in the progress reports of the project and during the evaluation mission.

Table 6. Project Progress towards achieving the objective and expected outcomes at project end

Indicator/ End-of-project target	End-of-project situation
Objective – To design a sustainable financing mechanism for long-term protection of the Mbé River forested watershed, while strengthening the legal, policy and institutional framework necessary to ensure its adoption and successful implementation	
1. A collaborative framework established and functional / Collaborative framework on PES between key institutions operational by the end of the project	The project was expected to work towards the formalization of a PES institution able to provide effective support services to PES deals and projects, following a full feasibility analysis. As a first step, the project was expected to establish a management technical cell to convene key ministries such as Environment, Planning and Finance for collaboration on the PES scheme. Now, no proposal was made for the PES institution and no feasibility study was conducted. The technical unit was not set up, and while it has been argued that the composition would have been redundant with that of the PSC, the PSC was not created until July 2015. The meetings convening ministry representatives were the 3 PSC meetings (2015, 2016, 2017) and 2 multi-stakeholder meetings held in 2016. The composition and purpose of the multi-stakeholder meetings remain unclear and are not effective preliminary steps leading to the establishment of a PES institution. Interviewed stakeholders were confused between the project steering committee and the multi-stakeholder meetings. Also, whether the PSC or the multi-stakeholder meetings, such framework is not permanent, does not operate autonomously and has been functioning solely under the impulse and with the resources of the project.
2. Establish a baseline for populations of selected biodiversity indicators and conservation target species in the watershed and control areas / Baseline exists for watershed and control site at end of project	Inventories of aquatic biodiversity have been conducted in 2017 over 25 stations within the watershed in two contrasting seasons (dry season and long rainy season) but did not include control sites. No site was sampled between the 2 dams. These inventories include a few species that could be selected as indicators of the water quality for further monitoring. The monitoring stations have not been characterized, namely in terms of the physical environment and various sources of impact that could help explain differences in species composition and abundance among sampling stations. Data have not been secured in a permanent database hosted in a national institution. Flora inventories have been conducted by the National Parks Management Agency but data / report was not shared with the TE team. Data are secured in the national herbarium.
3. % of the watershed with management plan taking into account watershed protection / 30% by the end of the project	A management plan was developed for the Monts de Cristal NP which covers approximately 34% of the Mbé watershed. However, this management plan was not developed as part of the project which, anyway, did not include the development of management plans. Several interventions planned to provide support to land use planning have <u>not</u> been implemented: i) Land use rights were expected to be clarified and land use zoning plans for the Rural Forest Domain developed with guidelines supportive of PES development, ii)

Indicator/ End-of-project target	End-of-project situation
	Land management contracts between local communities and NPMA in the periphery of the NP were expected to be negotiated and iii) support for the creation of community forests in the rural forest domain.
4. Revenue distribution (sharing) mechanism established with guidelines to orient funds to watershed protection / Mechanism and guidelines exist	No mechanism or guideline has been developed as part of the project for the distribution of possible revenues from a PES scheme. In order to achieve the design of the payment mechanism and the negotiation of contracts (output 2.2), several essential steps that required studies and in-depth discussions with the project stakeholders have not yet been undertaken so that the corresponding outputs are completely lacking by the end of the project: the criteria and procedure to determine the levels of payments as well as the unit and timing of the payments, the mechanism to transfer payments from buyers to sellers, the procedure to enforce the application the contracts, and the indicators and methodology to monitor the performance of the contracts to ensure that the scheme effectively achieves its conservation and environmental objectives.
Additional indicator ⁸ / N/A	As compared with the baseline METT score of 30, the current score of 56 shows a great improvement. This increased score includes minor differences that could be attributable to different perceptions for several questions, and significant improvement as regards the availability of a detailed management plan and improvements in the planning process (+5), improved staff situation (+2), improved equipment (+4) and enhanced cooperation with neighbours and local communities (+8). However, this improvement is not attributable to the project's interventions.
Assessment of the achievement of the objective: U (Unsatisfactory)	
Outcome 1 – Legal, policy and institutional framework support PES scheme for the Mbé watershed and key institutions have the capacity and resources to design, manage/implement and monitor PES scheme, are able to learn lessons from the pilot scheme and to replicate to other sites in Gabon	
5. Inter-ministerial coordination in established collaborative framework, biannual meetings / 2 inter-ministerial meetings per year beginning PY2	Meetings convening ministry representatives were the 3 PSC meetings starting in 2015 and 2 multi-stakeholder meetings in 2016. For stakeholders, there is confusion between the project steering committee, the multi-stakeholder meetings and the technical cell that was expected to convene concerned ministries for collaboration on the PES scheme. These meetings do not constitute a permanent collaborative platform, and clearly, whether for the PSC or the multi-stakeholder meetings, such frameworks are not autonomous and have been operating solely under the impulse and with the resources of the project.
6. At the end of project (EOP), a national policy is drafted / Proposal for harmonizing sectoral policies agreed by EOP	No new policy harmonizing sectoral policies has been drafted. A study on institutional and legislative aspects has been conducted and includes preliminary recommendations that do not go beyond the observations made in the study conducted in the PPG phase. A legal and institutional study conducted as part of the project identified regarding constraints and strengths of existing policies to enable the implementation of a PES scheme. Conclusions are often minor (such as concluding that there is currently no specific provision for PES schemes) and recommendations do not go beyond those formulated in the legal and institutional study carried out under the PPG in September 2009 which had already identified the gaps and constraints of the current framework. No progress has been made regarding the declaration of the Mbé watershed as a zone of public interest which would have allowed the restriction of certain activities in exchange for compensation.

⁸ Including the METT scores as a project indicator is not necessarily appropriate since the project did not include interventions that could impact the effectiveness of the NP management. However, since the project was funded under GEF-4 SO1, results are presented here for the sake of information.

Indicator/ End-of-project target	End-of-project situation
7. Central government training needs assessed and implemented / Training needs assessment completed by end of PY1	The ProDoc had foreseen technical capacity building in PES for key ministries, including Environment, Finance, and Energy, SEEG and local NGOs working at the site level, following a capacity needs assessment to design, implement and monitor PES and assess / predict the effects of land uses on environmental services and its impacts on local livelihoods and national economy. It has been reported that capacity needs were identified as well as beneficiaries but most training sessions were not organized due to the unavailability of adequate financial resources, as reported. A training session was held on the Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) and hydrological and hydro-economic modelling for around 20 environmental officers.
8. Number of staff of key agencies trained in PES best practices / 60-100% of relevant central government staff have received training necessary to design, manage and monitor PES scheme by EOP (short courses, study tours, fieldwork etc.)	However, the project was much more successful at organizing an experience-sharing tour which was attended by 5 people including 2 PCU staff (PC and AFA), who are also Government officers, one representative of local communities, one representative of TNC, and UNDP CO Program Officer, to learn from a successful PES experience in Kenya. The mission report does not document specific lessons learned on the process for establishing a PES scheme as expected (in the ProDoc). Another study tour in Costa Rica was attended by the Project Coordinator in 2014, but no report was produced to share the related learnings. It was not possible to assess the new abilities, skills, knowledge developed through these tours. No document on best practices learned during these tours has been elaborated. The result of 2 Government officers trained is far from the target of 60 to 100% of relevant central government staff.
9. Number of people who know about PES as a means of watershed protection for the Congo basin expanded / At least 3 articles reporting on the design of PES scheme	This indicator was not measured. It was foreseen that the project results would be published in journals and through manuals describing best practices and disseminated throughout the region. No such work was undertaken. The project estimates that awareness activities conducted with local communities have reached about 5000 inhabitants, which could be somewhat overestimated as the number of people inhabiting the villages in the watershed amounts to approximately 1100 people to which can be added part of the population inhabiting Medouneu and a couple of villages where are found a few local elites originating or having interests in the watershed villages. Whatever the number of people contacted through the project outreach activities, interviews with villagers showed that the concept of PES was difficult to comprehend and did not seem to bring tangible benefits for them, that what was expected of them was not presented clearly and simply, with words they could understand.
Assessment of the achievement of the outcome 1: U	
Outcome 2: A pilot PES scheme that reward the maintenance, improvement or adoption of conservation-friendly land uses is designed and a monitoring plan to evaluate its success established	
10. PES mechanisms designed and contract developed between buyers and sellers / Detailed proposal for PES scheme is drafted by EOP	Future Water, as part of a contract with TNC, used hydrological modelling to predict the impact of land management practices on water quantity and quality in a watershed with varying soils, land use and management conditions through various land use scenarios including intensified logging, large and small-scale agriculture, and forestry roads where mitigation measures are applied or not, and the National Park. Cost-estimates per unit area were then calculated for each scenario. The analysis confirmed that the highest annual net benefits for hydropower – through a reduction of reservoir sedimentation and sediment concentrations affecting the hydropower facilities- would result from sustainable forestry intensification with reduced impact logging, including road erosion mitigation activities. Results also showed that protection of the NP buffer zone and improved agricultural management practices in Equatorial Guinea are also cost-effective in most areas, would be the most effective to regulate generation of hydropower over the year. This type of information and the maps produced could be used in later stages to target areas providing the most benefits for

Indicator/ End-of-project target	End-of-project situation
	<p>investment as a basis for planning sustainable land and resource use in the Mbé watershed to optimize hydrological services. The study concludes that “there are clear economic benefits for the horizon studied (2035) in investing in the watershed: promoting sustainable forestry practices and mitigating erosion from forestry roads... benefits can go up to 18 million US\$/year.” Although the results of this study provide a strong basis for developing a PES scheme in the Mbé watershed, it should have been completed by several other outputs that have not been undertaken.</p> <p>A socio-economic study described the current production systems in the Mbé watershed. The unit costs of the products of village activities (hunting, fishing, agriculture) are recorded. However, there are no estimates of the revenue generated for the different users of land and resources in village communities, like other operators as foresters and miners. Without this information it is not possible to calculate the opportunity costs associated with changes in practices or operating modes as part of the implementation of the PES scheme, and negotiate fair agreements between buyers and providers. In order to achieve the design of the payment mechanism and the negotiation of contracts (output 2.2), several essential steps that required studies and in-depth discussions with the project stakeholders have not yet been undertaken so that the corresponding outputs are completely lacking by the end of the project: the criteria and procedure to determine the levels of payments as well as the unit and timing of the payments, the mechanism to transfer payments from buyers to sellers, the procedure to enforce the application the contracts, and the indicators and methodology to monitor the performance of the contracts to ensure that the scheme effectively achieves its conservation and environmental objectives. The PES options for the watershed (output 2.3) should have been discussed in detail with stakeholders to favor the acceptance of the adopted scheme by all stakeholders and verify their willingness to participate. A clear set of criteria still had to be developed to define eligible activities, expected benefits, and level / mode of payment or compensation. The development of a business plan was a planned output (2.4) and would have been crucial for assessing the financial sustainability of the scheme and engaging SEEG. It would have entailed a detailed analysis of the current budgets, financial mechanisms and income sources for the Mbé watershed, an economic evaluation of the ecosystem services and a financial feasibility analysis. On that basis it would have been possible to assess whether generated revenues would have been sufficient to compensate the opportunity costs related to the adoption of more sustainable land uses in the watershed.</p>
<p>11. Major stakeholders identified and engaged by the end of Year / Contract for PES between SEEG and Government signed by EOP</p>	<p>At the end of the project, the question of the identification of buyers and suppliers is far from resolved. While it was clear that SEEG was the <i>buyer</i> in the PES scheme, the recent questioning of the renewal of its agreement with the Government raises doubt on the relevance of this role. As owner of the land, the State is responsible for enforcing national regulations related to logging practices (in accordance with the National Forest Management Technical Guide) and for validating the sustainable management plan which is required to forest companies for plots under concession at the end of a 3-year provisional period. As responsible for ensuring the reduction of the impacts that resource users within the watershed may have on ecosystem services, the State may be viewed as a ‘<i>service provider</i>’. At the same time, as <i>owner</i> of the dams and electricity infrastructure, as well as being responsible for providing electricity to Gabon, the state could also be considered a beneficiary of the watershed ecosystem services, and therefore a ‘<i>service buyer</i>’. The role of the state can also be to facilitate and regulate a PES mechanism between other service providers at the local level such as the national park managers, logging and mining companies and local communities, and other service buyers such as SEEG. Also, the <i>service providers</i> identified in the ProDoc included local communities, forest companies and artisanal gold panners using resources within the watershed. Now, the results of the hydrological modeling show that local communities and gold mining have</p>

Indicator/ End-of-project target	End-of-project situation
	negligible impacts on the target ecosystem services, water quality and quantity – so that little gain can be made by changing practices at their level, which discards them as service providers. Indeed, the Mbé watershed is inhabited by a low-density population of about 1200 inhabitants living in 19 villages during part of the year only. Their use of land and resources has been estimated to have little impact on ecosystem resources. Significant ES improvements could result from sustainable forestry intensification with reduced impact logging, including road erosion mitigation activities. However, given that current practices are non-compliant due to inadequate enforcement of the provisions of the Forest Code regarding forest concessions, it is unconceivable to compensate forest companies for improving their practices or for motivating them to abide by the rules. This shows that the question of the identification of <i>buyers</i> and <i>providers</i> or <i>suppliers</i> is not yet resolved and the PES scheme not ready for implementation.
12. Management plans of land units include provisions for watershed protection and biodiversity conservation / At the end of project, management plans exist for 100% of the target area	No such management plan has been developed. As mentioned for the indicator #3, a management plan was developed for the Monts de Cristal NP which covers approximately 34% of the Mbé watershed. However, this result cannot be attributed to the project since this management plan was not developed as part of the project. Several project outputs that were expected to provide a sound basis for designing a PES scheme have not been undertaken, including: i) Clarification of land use rights and development of land use zoning plans for the Rural Forest Domain with guidelines supportive of PES development, ii) Negotiation of land management contracts between local communities and NPMA in the periphery of the NP, and iii) Support for the creation of community forests in the rural forest domain.
13. Mechanisms for law enforcement in place / Law enforcement operational in key hotspots	No such mechanism for law enforcement has been developed or implemented.
14. Reported bush meat or frequency of bush meat sale through the Mbé / At EOP hunting for bush meat has decreased by 30%	This indicator was not measured and was not entirely relevant anyway since the PES scheme was not expected to be implemented, thus no benefit could be generated to compensate local communities for their effort to protect the watershed ecosystem services and encourage them to stop or reduce hunting. Nevertheless, the project CTA reported noticing a diminution of the hunting pressure in the first years of the project based on the reduced number of sightings of bushmeat for sale along the road. This is likely results from the village community meetings held during the first years of the project, until 2015, during which the message was reinforced regarding hunting activities and the species to be protected that accompanied the creation of the PA. However, a resurgence of bushmeat sightings was noted during the TE field mission, which was confirmed during interviews with local community representatives. Indeed, the project suspended its presence in the last 2 years, and the people interviewed say that they feel excluded from the system put in place (in fact, that they presume to have been put in place, as announced by the project until 2015), they perceive no positive impact at the village level, and do not benefit from any activity to compensate for the ban on hunting and to dissuade them from resuming their illicit activities. At the same time, they suffer the impacts of the unsustainable exploitation by the foresters, their isolation due to impracticable roads during part of the year, and the destruction of their gardens by the fauna which they contribute to protect. As long as the safety of communities and their access to adequate livelihood resources is not ensured on the periphery of the PA, it is unlikely

Indicator/ End-of-project target	End-of-project situation
	that communities who currently practice hunting, poaching and logging activities, illicit or not, cease such activities, thus compromising the pursuit of the objectives of sustainable management of natural resources consistent with the conservation objectives of the PA.
15. Monitoring and evaluation plan for PES in the Mbé watershed developed / Monitoring and evaluation plan developed by Y-3 with methodologies peer reviewed and baselines established	No monitoring and evaluation plan has been developed. The biodiversity surveys include recommendations on possible indicator species, which is far from sufficient to achieve the intended output. Recommendations are provided in the relevant section for i) designing and ii) operationalizing a long-term ecological monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the PES system. A hydro-meteorological station was provided and installed by TNC to allow the continuous measurement of meteorological and water parameters in the Mbé River.
Assessment of the achievement of the outcome 2: MU	

3.3.2 Relevance

This section assesses the extent to which the project responds to local and national development priorities and policies, and is in line with GEF operational programs. The question of relevance also examines whether the objectives of an intervention or its design remain appropriate in light of changing circumstances. Rating: MS⁹

Consistency of the project with national policies. The project builds on, and is consistent with, the country's political and legislative framework, including the consolidated Forest Code in 2014, the National Parks Act of 2007 including the provisions relating to the ANPN, the forest concessions, and community forests. The establishment of a PES mechanism is consistent with the provisions of the only text dealing with the preservation of watersheds, Decree No. 744/PR/MMEPRH of 2005 which allows the creation of water resource preservation zones around a point of water intake, a structure intended for human consumption or a hydroelectric installation, corresponding to all or part of the catchment area concerned, to ensure the protection of the quality of the water and quantities of water available. One provision provides that compensation or assistance may be made by the licensing authority to individuals or legal entities that implement measures to reduce the risks of alteration, pollution and degradation of water resources. The project also contributes to two of the three specific objectives of the "Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Biodiversity" (i) to develop the capacity of all stakeholders involved in biodiversity management; (ii) preserve, in a participatory manner, representative areas of the different ecosystems to ensure their sustainability and preserve their constituent elements.

Consistency of the project with the national Institutional framework. In order to respect the competence of the various national institutions involved in setting up an interinstitutional consultation framework for the PES mechanism, and for elaborating guidelines for the elaboration and negotiation of PES contracts, it would have been required to involve, in addition to the ministries in charge of Environment and Energy, the Ministries in charge of Mines, Agriculture and Finance, as was indicated in the ProDoc.

Compliance with GEF Operational Programs. As per the ProDoc, the project is consistent with the GEF-4 Biodiversity focal area strategy, namely with the Strategic Programs (SP) 1 and 5:

- SP-1 - Sustainable financing of PA systems at the national level; expected outcomes are increased revenues, diversified revenue streams, and reduction in financing gap for PAs; indicators are the total revenue and diversification in revenue streams
- SP-5 - Fostering markets for biodiversity goods and services; expected outcome is markets created for environmental services; indicator is Number and extent (coverage: hectares, payments generated) of new payments for environmental service schemes created.

While the long-term goal of the project is ultimately to contribute to generate revenues, the project objective is limited to designing a PES scheme without implementing it, which means that no revenue can be generated as a result of the project – which reduces its relevance to SP-1 outcomes and indicators. The same applies to SP-5 which indicator also refers to generated payments.

Relevance in light of changing circumstances. The interest from stakeholders in the Government, including the Ministry for Energy and the Agency for National Parks Management, and their wish to integrate the concept of PES in their practices illustrates the relevance of the approach, years after the project design.

3.3.3 Effectiveness

Rating: U. Effectiveness assessment reviews the extent to which intended results have been achieved and is included in the Section 3.3.1 – Table 6. Results include direct outputs, short and medium-term outcomes and longer-term impacts, including global environmental benefits. This assessment is carried out based on the indicators identified in the logical framework and used to report annually on the progress of the project to UNDP-GEF, and considering the factors that may have facilitated or hindered their achievement.

3.3.4 Efficiency

Efficiency reflects how inputs, costs and implementation time are translated into results - or the extent to which environmental and development outcomes and project outputs have been achieved with the lowest possible cost; also called

⁹ Refer to Annex 8 for the TE rating scales

cost-effectiveness. It also examines the project's compliance with the incremental cost criteria and the effectiveness of the co-financing search. **Rating: U¹⁰**

The argument put forward by the ProDoc was that setting up a PES scheme for the Mbé was a cost-effective alternative to establishing a trust fund, continuing with classic conservation finance and grants from donors, classic park management with tourism financing and integrated conservation and development projects. Some aspects of the cost-effectiveness were to involve WCS in the project development and implementation and benefit from their long-term involvement in the project intervention site and especially in the NP and to involve the private sector and civil society partners in implementing the PES scheme. While this would have been true if a PES scheme had been established and piloted, the same does not apply to the alternative of conducting studies and strengthening the legislative and institutional framework.

Little progress was made towards the achievement of the two intended outcomes, as shown by the assessment of the indicators (which relevance is limited in some cases) and as evidenced by the number of outputs that were not achieved and activities that were not undertaken, while most of the budget was spent. However Among the causes that could explain this low efficiency: the unproductive management arrangements and insufficient technical and management capacities within the PCU leading to redundant leadership and ineffective coordination, the insufficient use of national and especially international expertise planned and budgeted in the ProDoc, co-financing contributions significantly lower than commitments, particularly those of the Government, particularly with regard to the payment of part of staff salaries within the project coordination unit.

3.3.5 Country ownership

National ownership is demonstrated, among other things, by respect for the government's financial commitments and the direct involvement of government officials to participate in project activities and support its interventions. In this case, the State has not respected all of its financial commitments since the contribution in kind was estimated at about 5% of what had been committed and covers, in particular, the provision of premises from which PCU worked and a car that was available to them. The active participation of the Directorate of the Environment can be seen through the involvement of the three State agents within the PCU and that of the Director of the Environment as Project Director.

3.3.6 Mainstreaming

UNDP- GEF projects are key elements of UNDP country programming, as well as regional and global programs. The evaluation should be assessing the extent to which the project has successfully integrated other UNDP priorities, including reducing poverty, improving governance, prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

While the design of this project was addressing aspects relevant to the areas of governance and indirectly to poverty reduction, their actual integration in the project is limited by the fact that the interventions were limited and did result in the development of sustainable governance structures and in the generation of benefits for local communities, because the PES scheme was not expected to be implemented.

Gender mainstreaming in project design and implementation. Women are affected differently by any intervention related to natural resource management and this aspect needs to be taken into account in the design and implementation of activities as well as the evaluation of their outcomes. However, this dimension has not been integrated into the project design and most of the parties involved are indeed men. The project has not developed discriminating indicator to account specifically for women's participation in project activities and the effects on them. However, during implementation, an effort was made to take into account gender considerations by identifying a number of women (not quantified) that are involved in agriculture within the watershed and to involve women that are members of a local association in a regional knowledge-sharing tour on PES.

Best practices to be adopted for future interventions, which are now required for UNDP projects, will be to complete a gender assessment to be able to develop a strategy to mainstream gender in all project interventions and to ensure that all operational and performance indicators that document the outputs and outcomes of the project in relation to the communities systematically report these results separately for men and women.

¹⁰ Refer to Annex 8 for the TE rating scales

3.3.7 Sustainability

This section provides an assessment of the extent to which the main project results are likely to continue after UNDP and GEF assistance or other external assistance has ended under this project. Sustainability is classified by evaluating factors within four dimensions of risk that may affect the persistence of project outcomes, including sustainable funding mechanisms, changes in perception and attitude within communities and other stakeholders, capacity building, socio-political context, the institutional and governance framework, and the environment. These dimensions of risk are assessed according to the scale provided in Annex 8.

Financial risks to sustainability - Rating: MU¹¹ (significant risks)

In its current version, the project could only, at best, **devise** a mechanism that could, once applied, generate revenue and be a sustainable funding mechanism dedicated to the PA system and to improving the livelihoods of communities. Its application will need to be the subject of subsequent initiatives. It will be crucial for the Government to seek the support of its partners and mobilize the resources required to rapidly design one or more interventions to complement, test, validate and implement a SEP scheme, building on the work already done.

Socio-economic risks to sustainability - Rating: MU¹¹ (Significant risks)

The project's achievements in terms of raising local communities' awareness on the PES concept are precarious since communications and meetings have been suspended during the last two to three years of the project. Their role and what would be expected from them as part of a PES scheme has not been clearly explained or is definitely not well understood. There was no structured and targeted communication program to maintain the dissemination of the initial message shared during the first years, but above all no concrete activity was carried out on the ground with the communities. A limitation to the sustainability of the effects of the awareness conducted by the project is that village communities not only do not perceive the benefits of the presence of the PA, but have incurred the opportunity costs related to the creation of the PA as they were resettled along the national road and had to cease their subsistence hunting activities. Distraught and discouraged villagers have complained of invasions by the wildlife they have accepted to protect, their gardens and plantations are ransacked, and the safety of their families is threatened as elephants get bolder and approach a few dozen meters from homes to feed on banana and cassava plants. These plantations, previously cultivated away from homes, have been brought closer to dwellings with the idea of reducing their accessibility to these animals, but obviously without success. These facts were observed on site during the TE field mission.

As long as the safety of communities and their access to adequate livelihood resources is not ensured on the periphery of the PA, it is unlikely that communities who currently practice hunting, poaching and logging activities, illicit or not, cease such activities, thus compromising the pursuit of the objectives of sustainable management of natural resources consistent with the conservation objectives of the PA.

Institutional framework / governance risks to sustainability - Rating: MU¹¹ (significant risks to sustainability)

Although this was planned as part of the project, no proposal was made for a formal or informal PES institution convening key concerned ministries and able to provide effective support services to PES deals and projects, no feasibility study was conducted, and no effective progress was made towards its establishment. The meetings that convened ministry representatives were the 3 PSC meetings (2015, 2016, 2017) and 2 multi-stakeholder meetings held in 2016. The composition and purpose of the multi-stakeholder meetings remain unclear and are not effective preliminary steps leading to the establishment of a PES institution. Interviewed stakeholders were confused between the project steering committee and the multi-stakeholder meetings. Also, whether the PSC or the multi-stakeholder meetings, such framework is not permanent, does not operate autonomously and has been functioning solely under the impulse and with the resources of the project.

Environmental risks to sustainability - Rating: L¹¹ (Negligible risks to sustainability)

There is no environmental risk to the few outputs of the project as none of them involved any implementation on the ground. The results of hydrological modeling emphasizing the economic benefits of environmental services related to the presence of the national park provide a tool for changing perceptions of the real cost-benefit ratio related to the creation of protected areas and sustainable land management within watersheds. They provide a convincing argument to demonstrate to

¹¹ Refer to Annex 8 for the TE rating scales

government authorities and the general public that PAs are not an opportunity cost, and that it is economically profitable to invest in preserving ecosystems as a basis for sustainable development.

3.3.9 Impact

The evaluation is assessing to what extent the project has achieved impacts or has actually made progress towards achieving the expected impacts in terms of measurable or verifiable improvement of the ecological condition, verifiable reduction of pressures on ecological systems, and/or demonstrated progress toward achieving such impacts. Rating: MU¹²

This project intended impacts were to improve the protection of biodiversity and environmental services of Mbé watershed and livelihoods of dependent communities through an increased awareness and valorisation of the environmental services provided by the watershed. Early indications of increasing or reducing pressures on biodiversity and water resources in the watershed are not supported by meaningful and rigorous measures and are not necessarily sustainable. Negative indications of the pressures on biodiversity include observations of bushmeat for sale along the road near the villages, indicating a resurgence of hunting pressure - including on species protected - by local communities, presumably related to absence of the project for at least two years and lack of tangible benefits for them. Positive indications include (i) Reduced pressure on ecosystems through the suspension - possibly temporary, at least precarious, of intensive agricultural development projects that had been planned within the Mbé watershed as part of the GRAINE project, through awareness of the prefectural and local authorities on the value of ecosystem services; (ii) Potential prospect for further PES development: the Ministry of Energy, which sees itself as a conceding authority on the same basis - in fact, and more appropriately - than SEEG, has a strong interest in the concept of PES as it constitutes "an additional tool to compensate people who suffer the disadvantages associated with the establishment of a dam" and will integrate it in the scenario of development of two or more new dams to be built in the short term, in 2 or 3 years, which will be the object of a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment.

There is no evidence of improved livelihoods for local communities as they feel left out from the system developed by the project and perceive no positive effect at the village level. Local communities are still paying the opportunity cost of establishing the Monts de Cristal National Park in 2002, being deprived of their hunting activity which generates significant income for most households in each village, and without getting any benefit from the presence of the PA. Meanwhile, logging concession operators have a significant impact on the forest environment, mainly through the opening of the forest roads and logging areas without complying to regulations, particularly those concerning the distances from watercourses and clearing on sloping land. In addition, villagers suffer from the isolation aggravated by the degradation of the national road by logging trucks. Gold panning activities are carried out in the terroirs of village communities, sometimes involving mechanical means and the creation of local pools. All these activities disturb the living environment of local communities without them having the opportunity to be heard when they report non-compliant situations. Furthermore, villagers are threatened by increasingly frequent incursions of elephants who venture near homes and sack crops. This increased threat is possibly related to increased disturbances in the forests that disrupt elephant habitat, leading them to forage for food closer to human dwellings and threaten people's safety. Communities are thus threatened by the very biodiversity they have agreed to protect.

4 CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS

Conclusions

After 5 years of implementation, including an 18-month no-cost extension, this project has a very low rate of technical achievement while financial resources have been fully utilized. By the end of the project, as detailed in the Table 6 on Project Progress towards achieving the objective and expected outcomes, the PES scheme not ready for implementation. At this stage, there is no clear or definitive identification of the following:

- the PES scheme providers and beneficiaries,
- the opportunity costs associated with changes in practices or operating modes as part of the implementation of the PES scheme,

¹² Refer to Annex 8 for the TE rating scales

- a clear set of criteria and procedure to define eligible activities, expected benefits, and level / mode of payment or compensation practices for different land and resources users to generate environmental benefits,
- a clear acceptance of the adopted scheme by all stakeholders and demonstration/evidence of their willingness to participate;
- the mechanism to transfer payments from buyers to sellers,
- the procedure to enforce the application the contracts,
- the indicators and methodology to monitor the performance of the contracts to ensure that the scheme effectively achieves its conservation and environmental objectives,
- the institutional structure capable of managing the funds generated in the PES mechanism and monitoring its implementation and outcomes.

Table 3 in section 4.5 presents the dates of the main stages of project preparation and implementation. A number of factors explain this weak performance, without justifying it:

- The late and slow start of the project, including significant delays in the actual start of implementation linked to administrative and institutional obstacles, including the questioning of the complementarity of the roles of the Coordination Unit and the WCS Technical Assistant, and its consequences on the effective start of activities (one-year period to establish a contract between the Technical Assistant, WCS, and the DGE), slow implementation of activities related to the cumbersome process for disbursing funds activity-by-activity imposed by the UNDP management modalities until June 2016;
- The inexperience of the country with regard to PES and insufficient technical expertise provided by the technical assistance in the specific area of PES (whereas the recruitment of an international PES expert was foreseen in the ProDoc);
- The low technical and management capacity and insufficient availability of the Project Management Coordination Unit, including of the CTA, lack of vision / overall project planning;
- Late and very limited use of the national and international consulting experts (that were foreseen in the ProDoc) TNC by the end of 2015 and short-term individual consultants by mid 2017
- Insufficient supervision and guidance from UNDP at the country office level as well as at the regional office level for communicating and enforcing UNDP and GEF standards in financial and operational management;
- The departure of the program officer from the UNDP CO at the end of 2014, replaced by a succession of program officers for short periods, which did not allow for proper project technical supervision by UNDP;
- A 3-year delay for setting up the project steering committee and the inadequacy of its terms of reference leading to insufficient strategic guidance by this supervisory body, especially in its early stages.

Limitations due to the project design. The fact that the implementation of a pilot phase to test the PES scheme in the Mbé watershed as foreseen in the project design at PIF stage was dropped and replaced by a component focusing only on the design of the PES scheme, prevents any testing of the potential of the PES mechanism as a sustainable source of revenues. The monitoring and demonstration of the linked environmental and economic benefits due to improved resource management within the watershed is no longer possible and the project lost much of its potential to persuade potential buyers and providers to get involved in this scheme and to generate lessons. Pilot testing is an integral part of the development of a PES scheme as it is indispensable to verify hypotheses on the conservation and ES benefits expected from prescribed land and resource use changes as the links between land use changes and watershed services are complex and vary with forest types and development stages. By designing a PES scheme (without implementing it) and ensuring that an adequate framework is in place to enable its possible operationalization (which both constitute the project's objective), this project was unlikely to deliver on conservation outcomes and have a measurable impact on biodiversity. Only the awareness raised through meetings convening Government Officers and Local Authorities and where the potential of the PES mechanism to raise revenues was put forward was likely to produce some beneficial impacts such as delaying the development of intensive agriculture in the watershed. Also, without any support for sustainable livelihoods and to reduce Human-Wildlife Conflicts, the awareness activities with local communities were not likely to reduce significantly pressures on biodiversity at their level.

Recommendations

Recommendations are listed with the suggested implementers of the recommendations (Responsible entity) and include corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project, and actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project.

	Recommendations	Resp. entity
Design		
1	Project design / Coherence of the project document. Ensure coherence of the project document following revisions, namely strategic ones involving significant changes in project outcomes, to ensure expected results, described activities, benefits at global, national and local levels, and indicators are coherent and remain relevant to the project's intervention.	UNDP – all levels, Government
2	Project design / Translation of the project document. It is crucial to invest adequate resources to allow the recruitment of qualified translators able to guarantee a high-quality technical translation, and to have the translation validated by a technical expert familiar with the project's field of activity, as well as to have the translated version signed to authenticate its validity as a reference document just like the English version. Poor translations are misleading and can potentially lead to erroneous understanding of the project purpose, inadequate planning, ineffective interventions and inefficient use of resources.	UNDP, Project development team
Implementation		
3	Quality assurance role - Even under the NIM implementation modalities, UNDP at country and regional levels must ensure that project implementation arrangements and expenditures comply with UNDP rules and that funds are used for agreed purposes.	UNDP – all levels
4	Participatory planning and evaluation for adaptive management: In a project implemented by several entities, joint planning and reviews are essential to develop a common vision of project directions and priorities. The effectiveness of the annual planning process would have been greatly improved by involving all the parties concerned by the implementation of the project, including the different project partners, the relevant directorates within MSFE, concerned prefects, and staff in charge of managing the PA, to review the project's achievements and draw lessons to integrate them in the new annual workplan. Such participation would have consolidated and improved the transparency of planning and budgeting processes while contributing to capacity development of the partners involved in these exercises. Such planning meetings can take place in the concerned prefectures to facilitate the participation of local partners and village community representatives.	Project staff MSFE
5	Capacity for results-based management. It is recommended that UNDP, at the national and regional levels, ensures that Project Managers are able to implement results-based management, through requiring previous experience as part of the TORs or at least, by requiring project staff in charge of coordinating the project to attend targeted trainings in the first months of the project implementation, and providing continuous support as needed during implementation.	UNDP CO
6	Financial management. It would have been necessary to exert increased and sustained vigilance and scrutiny over planned expenditures in the annual work plan that accompanies the Authorized Spending Limit request to ensure that limited project financial resources are not used for other purposes than those planned and are no longer available for interventions planned in the ProDoc, especially when country-level technical support (i.e. by the Programme Officer) is disrupted or interrupted. Several cues should have attracted attention at the regional level and called for closer supervision.	UNDP RTA, Regional Program Assistant
Monitoring and evaluation		
7	M&E /Evaluations and audits. It is recommended that UNDP organizes annual project audits and reviews/evaluations <u>in accordance</u> with the initial M&E plan in the ProDoc. The objectives of a mid-term review include assessing the project's degree of achievement, and making recommendations to improve the project's performance and its chances of achieving the agreed results during the remaining period. Among other aspects, this review would have examined and made recommendations to improve the management arrangements, the implementation strategy, the monitoring and evaluation system, and the risk factors that may affect the sustainability of the results. The recommendations would certainly have addressed many of the issues raised in this evaluation and their implementation would have improved the overall performance of the project.	UNDP
Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits under component 2		
8	Recommendations for i) designing and ii) operationalizing a long-term ecological monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the PES system on the maintenance and improvement of ES within a watershed: 1. The selection of indicators, the development of taxonomic identification tools and protocols specific to the selected indicators, the establishment of permanent sampling stations described according to their geographical	Government

	Recommendations	Resp. entity
	<p>position, their exposure to pressure factors (eg roads, gold panning, deforestation, intensive agriculture) and their physical and biological parameters, the identification (or the creation) of a permanent database secured in an institution to collate collected data.</p> <p>2. The operationalization of the long-term ecological monitoring system should include: i) the establishment of collaborative arrangements with scientific partners and on-site environmental associations, as well as with local communities; ii) practical trainings on monitoring protocols and measurement of indicators; iii) coordination of contributions for the measurement of indicators and their integration into databases; iv) integration of existing data; v) monitoring of pressure factors on biodiversity and ecosystems; vi) and recording and exploiting data to support adaptive management of resource use in the Mbé watershed.</p>	
Actions to mitigate potential negative impacts due to the project implementation		
9	It is recommended that UNDP, Government and WCS representatives undertake a short mission within the villages along the road in the Mbé watershed to communicate with local community members whose participation was sought during project implementation, to thank them for their involvement and interest, to inform them of the project closure and that the results showed that their agricultural activities had a limited impact on the hydrological services in the watershed, and to clarify that no financial mechanism was set-up through the project and that they have not been left out of it.	UNDP, Government and WCS
10	The government of Gabon is tackling human-elephant conflicts through the project implemented by the National Agency for National Parks in four national parks of Southwestern Gabon as part of the GEF-funded WB-supported Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development. One of the intended outcomes is increased community engagement to live with, manage, and benefit from wildlife as indicated by reduced human-wildlife conflict incidents and benefits perceived by communities from sustainable natural resource management activities and enterprises, namely wildlife tourism. It is recommended that the Government and partners mobilize additional resources to expand their current efforts and apply successful approaches in the buffer zone of the Monts de Cristal NP to provide tangible support to the village communities who suffer repeated invasions of elephants near their homes and the destruction of their crops and help them to improve their living conditions and to cope with the threats of wildlife.	Government and partners

Lessons

Midterm review. At the mid-point of a project, the accumulation of implementation issues, including a Project Steering Committee that remains to be established, multiple delays in setting up the project management unit (including the recruitment of WCS as Chief Technical Advisor), in recruiting experts and in starting-up activities - significant changes in the implementation arrangements - repeated ratings in the unsatisfactory range for the annual project implementation reviews (PIRs) and the poor quality of these reports, should have triggered some sort of warning to require that a mid-term review is conducted to identify issues and solutions to increase the chances of meeting intended outcomes or of making progress by the end of its implementation cycle.

Financial management. It would have been necessary to exert increased and sustained vigilance and scrutiny over planned expenditures in the annual work plan that accompanies the Authorized Spending Limit request to ensure that limited project financial resources are not used for other purposes than those planned and are no longer available for interventions planned in the ProDoc, especially when country-level technical support (i.e. by the Program Officer) is disrupted or interrupted. Several cues should have attracted attention at the regional level and called for closer supervision.

Communication. One great benefit of the use of the hydrological model is that it has produced figures on the value of ecosystem services, the costs of unsustainable practices of land and resource use, and the benefits associated with conservation in the National Park and the adoption of improved practices, which helped raise stakeholders' awareness with more convincing arguments that conceptual demonstrations on the concept of PES.

Identification of buyers and providers in a PES scheme. The design of a PES scheme linking beneficiaries of the watershed services with the providers to ensure upstream forest protection seemed at first fairly straightforward: Water quality (low sedimentation load), quantity and flow regulation were identified as the environmental services; SEEG (hydroelectric dam company) was identified as the beneficiaries (buyers), while the local communities, the National Park, the forestry and mining concessions were identified as the providers (sellers). Studies have shown that the impact by local communities and gold miners were negligible and that the NP had a positive impact on ES so that little improvement of ES can be expected from adapting practices at those levels. It was found that the forestry concessions had the most impact through clearing the forest

for roads, skid trails and loading areas in inappropriate locations in relation to the river, but such proscribed practices are taking place due to ineffective enforcement by the Forest Directorate and inappropriate validation of the concessions management plans. It does not seem appropriate to compensate foresters to adopt legitimate practices. While SEEG has been involved from the very beginning of the design of this project, it turns out that its role as a concessionary (investing in a limited timeframe) entails limitations to its role as beneficiary or willingness to be the one who pays. Indeed, at the time of the TE mission, the maintenance of SEEG in the short term was seriously questioned. The identification of providers and buyers should follow a prior assessment of the effective impact of the various resource users on the ES and include considerations on the tenure issue.

To successfully negotiate agreements in a PES scheme that bind resource users and beneficiaries of the ecosystem services affected by these uses, the issues must be perceived by the different actors on similar time scales. In this project, the fact that the State, SEEG, local communities, forest concessionaires, artisanal miners perceive their investments and their profits over significantly different time scales makes the negotiation process more complex. Some users have a short-term focus whereas investment to improve land use and ecosystem services in the watershed requires a timeframe of decades. For example, local communities enjoy permanent use rights under the laws of Gabon. According to the Forest Code, forestry companies' exploitation rights are framed by temporary 3-year agreements to develop management plans that, once validated, allow the establishment of 20-year agreements. However, many concessions are non-compliant. SEEG's use right under the terms of a 20-year concession agreement (1997-2017) has been replaced by a 5-year agreement (2017-2022). This greater precariousness modifies the investment prospects for SEEG which was perceived as the beneficiary or 'buyer' in the PES scheme envisaged for the Mbé catchment area.

5 ANNEXES

Annex 1. ToRs

Annex 2. Schedule of meetings for the TE of the Project PIMS 4183

Annex 3. Itinerary and purpose of field visits

Annex 4. List of persons interviewed

Annex 5. Assessment Matrix for Evaluation

Annex 6. Questions to document results based on logical framework and summary of results

Annex 7. Evaluation questions (indicative list included in ToRs)

Annex 8. Rating scales used in the terminal evaluation

Annex 9. List of documents reviewed

Annex 10. Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct and Agreement Form

Annex 11. Evaluation Report Clearance Form

Annex 12. *Annexed in a separate file*: TE Report audit trail (to be completed)

Annex 13. *Annexed in a separate file*: Terminal GEF Tracking Tool

Annex 14. Risk Assessment Guiding Matrix

Annex 15. Review of the formulation of the project expected results in the English ProDoc and in the version translated in French to highlight inconsistencies in the translation

Annex 16. UNDP policy on the recruitment of Government staff (2011) and UN Policy on payment to Government Staff (1996) (excerpts)

ANNEX 1. TERMINAL EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP support GEF financed projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation. These terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for a Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the project on ***Sustainable Management of the Mbé River Forested Watershed through the Development of a Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) Mechanism*** (PIMS 4183.) The essentials of the project to be evaluated are as follows:

PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE

Project Title:	Sustainable Management of the Mbé River Forested Watershed through the Development of a Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) Mechanism			
GEF Project ID:	PIMS 4183		<u>at endorsement</u> (Million US\$)	<u>at completion</u> (Million US\$)
UNDP Project ID:	00079015	GEF financing:	859,090.00	859,090
Country:	Gabon	IA/EA own:		
Region:	RBA	Government:	1,400,000	1,400,000
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Other: UNDP WCS	100,000 480,000	100,000 480,000
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	Design a sustainable financing mechanism for long-term protection of the Mbé River forested watershed, while strengthening the legal, policy and institutional framework necessary to ensure its adoption and successful implementation	Total co-financing:	1,980,000	1,980,000
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment	Total Project Cost:	2,839,090.00	2,839,090.00
Other Partners involved:	WCS	ProDoc Signature (date project began):		07/05/2012
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: 31/10/2017	Actual: 31/12/2017

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The project was designed to *develop a sustainable funding mechanism to secure the long-term protection of the forest ecosystems in the Mbé River watershed - one of the most biologically diverse sites in Central Africa. Specifically, the Project was designed to remove barriers to funding mechanism by strengthening the enabling environment in Gabon for payments for ecological services (PES) and testing a PES scheme(s).*

The Mbé River watershed is of substantial economic importance for Gabon, providing electricity for 60% of the country's population and providing ecosystem services such as regulating water flows, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity. These services are presently provided free of charge. The long-term solution for the conservation of the Mbé watershed's biodiversity and ecosystem services is to ensure that sufficient financial resources are available to cover PA (Monte Cristal National Park, for instance) management costs, support sustainable resource use in the watershed area and remunerate the various actors (including local communities) that help in maintaining environmental services and preserving biodiversity.

The TE will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects.

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHOD

An overall approach and method¹³ for conducting project terminal evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed projects has developed over time. The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact**, as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects. A set of questions covering each of these criteria have been drafted and are included with this TOR. The evaluator is expected to amend, complete and submit this matrix as part of an evaluation inception report, and shall include it as an annex to the final report.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, the GEF operational focal point, UNDP Country Office, project team, UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and key stakeholders. The evaluator is expected to conduct a field mission to Gabon, including project sites in the Mbé River catchment including Medouneu (Woleu ntem) and Kango (Estuaire).

Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum:

Government of Gabon

- The Ministry of Environment, nature protection and sustainable development (Focal point: Monsieur Louis Léandre Ebobola Tsiba Directeur Général de l'Environnement)
- The Ministry of Forest Economy, Waters and Fishing
- Ministry of Mines and Hydrocarbons
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Food Security and Rural Development
- The National Parks Agency (ANPN), under the Ministry of Tourism and National Parks
- Ministry of Energy, Hydraulic Resources and New Energies
- Ministry of Economy, Finance, Budgets and Privatization
- Local Authorities

Private Sector

- SEEG (Monsieur Désiré Meba, Directeur Hygiène sante environnement)
- Forestry Companies
- Mining Companies

Civil Society

- Local communities

¹³ For additional information on methods, see the [Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 7, pg. 163

- Local leaders
- Local associations
- International NGOs (WCS: Monsieur Gaspard Abeti - Directeur; Monsieur Martin Ega - chef de projet; and TNC Madame Marie Claire Paiz; Wild consulting: Madame Biana Bouroubou)
- Research Institutes/Universities (Centre de recherche en études sociologiques du Gabon : Madame Claudine Amboué)

Other

- UNDP-Gabon Country Office
- Unité de gestion du projet (Monsieur Ondomba Faustin; Monsieur Alfred Mouity coordonnateur adjoint ; Monsieur Rodric Mba, Assistant administratif et financier)

The evaluator will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, midterm review, progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools, project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review is included in [Annex B](#) of this Terms of Reference.

EVALUATION CRITERIA & RATINGS

An assessment of project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework (see [Annex A](#)), which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact**. Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales are included in [Annex D](#).

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	rating	2. IA& EA Execution	rating
M&E design at entry		Quality of UNDP Implementation	
M&E Plan Implementation		Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	
Overall quality of M&E		Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	
3. Assessment of Outcomes	rating	4. Sustainability	rating
Relevance		Financial resources:	
Effectiveness		Socio-political:	
Efficiency		Institutional framework and governance:	
Overall Project Outcome Rating		Environmental :	
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	

PROJECT FINANCE / COFINANCE

The Evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures. Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained. Results from recent financial audits, as available, should be taken into consideration. The evaluator(s) will receive assistance from the Country Office (CO) and Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete the co-financing table below, which will be included in the terminal evaluation report.

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (mill. US\$)		Government (mill. US\$)		Partner Agency (mill. US\$)		Total (mill. US\$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Actual	Actual
Grants	100,000	100,000					100,000	
Loans/Concessions					480,000	480,000	480,000	

• In-kind support			1,400,000	1,400,000			1,400,000	
• Other								
Totals	100,000	100,000	1,400,000	1,400,000	480,000	480,000	1,980,000	

MAINSTREAMING

UNDP supported GEF financed projects are key components in UNDP country programming, as well as regional and global programmes. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

IMPACT

The evaluators will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. Key findings that should be brought out in the evaluations include whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.¹⁴

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of **conclusions, recommendations** and **lessons**. Conclusions should build on findings and be based in evidence. Recommendations should be prioritized, specific, relevant, and targeted, with suggested implementers of the recommendations. Lessons should have wider applicability to other initiatives across the region, the area of intervention, and for the future.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP CO in Gabon. The UNDP CO will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluators team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government etc.

EVALUATION TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the evaluation will be 26 days according to the following plan:

Activity	Timing	Completion Date
Preparation	2 days	20 November 2017
Evaluation Mission	12 days	05 December 2017
Draft Evaluation Report	10 days	22 December 2017
Final Report	2 days	22 December 2017

EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

The evaluation team is expected to deliver the following:

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
Inception Report	Evaluator provides clarifications on timing and method	No later than 2 weeks before the evaluation mission.	Evaluator submits to UNDP CO
Presentation	Initial Findings	End of evaluation mission	To project management, UNDP CO

¹⁴ A useful tool for gauging progress to impact is the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method developed by the GEF Evaluation Office:

Draft Final Report	Full report, (per annexed template) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the evaluation mission	Sent to CO, reviewed by RTA, PCU, GEF OFPs
Final Report*	Revised report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to CO for uploading to UNDP ERC.

*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator is required also to provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

TEAM COMPOSITION

The evaluation team will be composed of 1 international evaluator who will receive support from the Country Office and IP. The consultant shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. Experience with GEF financed projects is an advantage. The evaluator selected should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities.

The Team members must present the following qualifications:

- Master's degree in Environmental Sciences, Natural Resources Management, Water Resources Management or other closely related field (20 points)
- Minimum 7 years of relevant professional experience (20 points)
- Knowledge of UNDP and GEF evaluations (15 points)
- Previous experience with results-based monitoring and evaluation methodologies (15 points)
- Technical knowledge in the targeted focal area(s) (10 points)
- Experience working in Africa (10 points).
- Fluency in English and French, both oral and written, is required (10 points).

EVALUATOR ETHICS

Evaluation consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a Code of Conduct (Annex E) upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the [UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'](#)

PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

%	Milestone
10%	At contract signing
40%	Following submission and approval of the 1ST draft terminal evaluation report
50%	Following submission and approval (UNDP-CO and UNDP RTA) of the final terminal evaluation report

APPLICATION PROCESS

Individual consultants are invited to submit applications together with their CV for these positions. The application should contain a current and complete C.V. with indication of the e-mail and phone contact. Shortlisted candidates will be requested to submit a price offer indicating the total cost of the assignment (including daily fee, per diem and travel costs).

UNDP applies a fair and transparent selection process that will take into account the competencies/skills of the applicants as well as their financial proposals. Qualified women and members of social minorities are encouraged to apply.

ANNEX 2 – SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR THE TE OF THE PROJECT PIMS 4183

JEUDI 23 novembre	VENDREDI 24 novembre	SAMEDI 25 novembre	Dimanche 26 novembre	Lundi 27 novembre 2017	MARDI 28 novembre	MERCREDI 29 novembre
Rencontre Mme Franca Cossu, questions logistiques	M. Steeve Pwaty, Ch. Études – DG Écosystèmes Aquatiques / Min. Forêts, Mer et Environnement	M. Faustin Ondamba, CNP UCP	Analyse de documents	Mme Marie-Claire Paiz, The Nature Conservancy	M. Christian Nzamba Aris, Ch. Études – DF Forêts / Min. Forêts, Mer et Environnement	M. Daniel Adang Evouna, Directeur et autre personnel, SEEG
Briefing Sécurité Bureau Pays Gabon	M. Fabrice Nziengui, Ch. Questions environnementales / Min. Énergie				Recherche des TT de référence	M. Eric Van Mierlo, BSG
Rencontre avec M. Stephen Jackson, CR/RR PNUD					M. Nazaire Mandamba, Conservateur PN Monts de Cristal	Mme Claudine Angoue, CRESS
Présentation Modélisation services hydrologiques – Mme Marie-Claire Paiz, TNC	Mme Solange Ngouessono, Chef Service Zones Humides / ANPN	Analyse de documents		Ajustement de la planification des rencontres et de la mission de terrain Analyse de documents	WCS Gabon, M. Gaspard Abitsi et M. Martin Hega	Mme Dyana Bourobou, Wild Consulting
Présentation Étude aspects législatifs et institutionnels – Mme Ada Edou Mijola Joana	Planification et documents					M. Rodric Mba, AAF UCP
JEUDI 30 novembre	VENDREDI 1 ^{er} décembre	SAMEDI 2 décembre	Dimanche 3 décembre	Lundi 4 décembre		
Field Mission (see annex 3)			Analyse de documents Préparation du debriefing	M. Lee White, Directeur ANPN		
				Débriefing de la mission d'évaluation finale au PNUD		

ANNEX 3 – ITINERARY AND PURPOSE OF FIELD VISITS

DATE	LOCATION	TIME	ACTIVITIES
30 Nov	Parc National des Monts de Cristal / Province de l'Estuaire	8:00	Departure from Libreville
		14:00	Visit of the Kinguélé hydroelectric dam and of SEEG facilities
		16:00	Meeting with the NP Manager and ecoguards and work session to complete the METT
			Night at the Monts de Cristal NP
1 Dec	Médouneu / Province de Médouneu	7:00	Departure from the Monts de Cristal NP
		12:00	Akoga Village – Meeting with representatives of local communities
		16:00	Meeting at the Médouneu prefecture
			Night in Médouneu
2 Dec	Villages	8:00	Departure from Médouneu
		9:30	Nzogbot Village – Meeting with representatives of local communities
		11:00	Binguile Village – Meeting with representatives of local communities
		12:30	Mveng Ayong Village – Meeting with representatives of local communities
		18:00	Return to Libreville

ANNEX 4. LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Government of Gabon

Ministry of Forests, Sea and Environment

Dir. Environment: Ms Ada Edou Mijola Joana, Assistant to the Legal and Institutional Consultant

Dir. Forests: Mr Aris Christian Nzamba, Research officer

Dir. Aquatic Ecosystems: Mr Steeve Pwaty, Research officer

Ministry of Tourism and National Parks / National Parks Agency

Mr Lee White, CBE, Executive Secretary

Mr Nazaire Mandamba, Monts de Cristal National Park Conservateur

Ms Solange Ngouessono, Chief of Humid Zones Service

Ministry of Water and Energy

Mr Fabrice Nziengui, Officer in charge of Environment

Medouneu Prefecture:

Mr Ernest Nzoumba Mouedy, Prefect of the Department of Haut-Komo in Medouneu

Mr Edmond Mba Nkoghe, Secretary General of the Prefecture

Mr Jean Firmin Kete, Commissioner of the city of Medouneu

Project Coordination Unit within DGE:

Mr Faustin Ondamba Ombanda, Project Coordinator

Mr Rodric Mba, Administrative and Financial Assistant

UNDP-Gabon Country Office

Mr Stephen Jackson, Resident Coordinator of the UN System / UNDP Resident Representative

Ms Franca Cossu, Assistant Program Officer

Mr Celestin Tsassa, Senior Economist

Private Sector

SEEG:

Mr Daniel Adang Evouna, Director

Mr Désiré Meba, System Technical Director

Mr Guy Christian Okongo, Generators Maintenance

Ms Edwige Dilebon, Chief Service Performance/Environment

Mr Yves Davy Ndimina, Eng. Performance/Environment

BSG Forestry Company: Mr Eric Van Mierlo, Deputy General Director

Civil Society

Local communities

Ms Marguerite Ntoutoum, Akoga Village Representative in the Local Committee, President of the Local Association Ayebe Environment, Member of the Advisory Committee for Local Management of the National Park

Mr Pierre, Elected delegate, Nzogbot Village Representative in the Local Committee

Mr Patrick Essone Mba, Binguile Village Representative in the Local Committee and *Rapporteur* of the Advisory Committee for Local Management of the National Park

National Consulting Firm: Wild Consulting: Ms Dyana Bourobou

Research Institute: CRESS Sociology Research Center of Gabon/Univ. Omar Bongo: Ms Claudine Angoué

International NGOs

Wildlife Conservation Society - Gabon:

Mr Gaspard Abeti – Country Director

Mr Martin Hega – Monts de Cristal Project Manager

The Nature Conservancy: Ms Marie Claire Paiz, Gabon Program Director

*Although included in the list of persons to interview in the TORs, the GEF National Focal Point and Director General of the Environment, Mr. Louis Léandre Ebobola Tsiba could not be met as he was unavailable for the duration of the mission as well as Mr. Alfred Mouity, Project Assistant Coordinator. No representative of the Ministry in charge of Agriculture, of the Ministry in charge of Finance, of the Ministry of Mines and of Mining Companies was interviewed as these stakeholders identified in the ProDoc did not actually participate in the project.

ANNEX 5. ASSESSMENT MATRIX FOR EVALUATION. QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INTERVIEWS WITH PROJECT TEAM AND PARTNERS ON PROJECT MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Section of the report	Questions	Source of information
But de l'évaluation finale	Attentes spécifiques plus précises que telles que mentionnées dans les TDRs?	Entretiens avec : Le CR / RR PNUD L'Unité de Coordination du Projet Comité de pilotage
Conception du Projet (Design)		
Appropriation nationale	Cohérence du projet avec des plans d'action nationaux de développement, environnementaux, de conservation de la biodiversité, et de gestion durable des terres et avec la stratégie du DSRP	Stratégie Nationale et Plan d'Action pour la Biodiversité du Gabon, Plan d'action du Gabon de lutte à la désertification et autres plans d'action environnementaux / de développement, Document de Stratégie de Réduction de la Pauvreté
Participation des parties concernées dans les étapes de conception	Les partenaires et bénéficiaires ont-ils été consultés au cours de la phase de préparation du projet?	PIF, CEO ER Représentant du Gouvernement Autorités locales et partenaires
Liens entre le projet et les autres interventions dans le secteur	Y a-t-il d'autres projets qui collaborent ou complètent les interventions du projet? Des projets qui se concentrent sur la conservation de la biodiversité et des habitats/écosystèmes, la gestion durable des ressources naturelles, la dégradation et la réhabilitation des sols, l'intégration des préoccupations pour la BD et la GDT dans la planification du développement? Quelle est la relation / coordination / communication entre ce projet et les autres?	Chargé de programme du PNUD Coordination du projet
MISE EN OEUVRE DU PROJET		
Approche de mise en oeuvre		
Utilisation du cadre logique comme outil de gestion au cours de la mise en œuvre	Le CL a-t-il été utilisé au cours du projet pour faire le suivi des résultats (autrement que pour compléter le PIR) avec les partenaires de mise en oeuvre? et ré-évaluer les risques et hypothèses?	Coordination du projet
Planification annuelle	Comment les plans de travail annuels ont-ils été développés? Les partenaires ont-ils été impliqués dans le développement ou la validation des plans de travail?	Coordination du projet Partenaires de mise en œuvre du projet
Gestion adaptive reflétée dans l'élaboration des plans de travail	Le plan de travail a-t-il été révisé / adapté en fonction des résultats du suivi / évaluation des résultats et des leçons apprises?	Coordination du projet
Suivi et évaluation		
Comité de pilotage du projet	Quel rôle principal le CP a-t-il joué dans le projet ? Le Comité de pilotage a-t-il été utile pour résoudre des problèmes critiques au cours de la mise en œuvre du projet? Quelles sont les principales décisions prises par le CP au cours du projet ? Qui jouera ce rôle après le projet ?	Coordination du projet Partenaires de mise en œuvre du projet
Rapports trimestriels d'avancement	Comment les différentes unités ont-elles été coordonnées pour faire le suivi des résultats, la préparation des rapports trimestriels et annuels? Combien de rapports (narratifs et financiers) / formats devaient être soumis? À qui?	Coordination du projet Partenaires de mise en œuvre du projet
Suivi et rapports annuels	À quelle fréquence les indicateurs de résultats du CL ont-ils été mesurés?	Coordination du projet
Définition d'indicateurs appropriés (SMART)	Les indicateurs ont-ils été changés / modifiés au cours du projet?	Coordination du projet
	Le PNUD ou le FEM ont-ils fourni de l'aide / des conseils pour identifier des indicateurs appropriés ou améliorer les indicateurs du ProDoc?	Coordination du projet

Section of the report	Questions	Source of information
Appropriation nationale	Le projet a-t-il contribué à développer ou appuyer un cadre réglementaire et politique? Le pays adopte-t-il de nouvelles réglementations ou politiques qui appuient les objectifs du projet?	Chargé de programme du PNUD Représentant du Gouvernement
Participation des parties concernées		
Participation des partenaires et utilisateurs des ressources locaux dans la mise en œuvre du projet et la prise de décision	Étaient-ils impliqués et comment?	Coordinateur national du projet Comités locaux / communautés locales au sein du BV
Mécanismes de diffusion de l'information dans la mise en œuvre du projet	Le projet a-t-il développé une stratégie de communication? Comment la communication a-t-elle été établie à travers la structure du projet et avec les partenaires?	Coordinateur national du projet Partenaires de mise en œuvre du projet et autres parties concernées
Plan de financement, état des dépenses et efficience		
Plan de financement et contributions versées	Demander le tableau	Comptable du projet
	S'il y a des écarts importants entre les montants promis et versés, y a-t-il des explications spécifiques?	Comptable du projet / Coordinateur national du projet
	Le projet a-t-il eu un effet de levier (<i>leverage effect</i>) pour mobiliser des contributions additionnelles d'autres partenaires? Demander le détail des montants, partenaires et allocation des fonds	Coordinateur national du projet Comptable du projet
État des dépenses par résultat et source de cofinancement de mai 2012 à novembre 2017	Demander les tableaux	Comptable du projet
	Y a-t-il eu des révisions importantes du budget? Ont-elles fait l'objet de décisions du comité de pilotage du projet?	Comptable du projet / Coordinateur national du projet
	S'il y a des écarts importants entre le budget et les montants réalisés, y a-t-il des explications précises?	Comptable du projet Coordinateur national du projet
Contribution en nature des communautés locales	Est-il possible d'estimer la contribution des communautés locales dans les diverses interventions tout au long de la durée du projet?	Comptable du projet / Coordinateur national du projet
Coût des principales réalisations sous chaque composante	Demander les tableaux	Comptable du projet
Planifier pour la durabilité	Le projet a-t-il développé une stratégie de durabilité? Est-elle celle qui a été prévue dans le ProDoc?	Coordinateur national du projet
	Quelles sont les modalités institutionnelles et les mécanismes financiers en place pour assurer la durabilité des résultats du projet?	Coordinateur national du projet
Modalités d'exécution et de mise en œuvre		
Questions de mise en œuvre	Mécanismes de coordination de tous les acteurs / partenaires	Coordinateur national du projet Partenaires de mise en œuvre du projet
Gestion financière	Gestion par le PNUD et coordination des partenaires de mise en œuvre du projet	Coordinateur national du projet Partenaires de mise en œuvre du projet

ANNEX 6. QUESTIONS TO DOCUMENT RESULTS BASED ON LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

	Indicator	Baseline	EOP target	Means of verification	Risks and assumptions	Other questions
Objectif global Amélioration de la biodiversité et des services environnementaux du bassin versant de Mbé et amélioration des moyens de subsistance des communautés dépendantes grâce à une sensibilisation et une valorisation accrues des services environnementaux fournis par le bassin versant						1. Quelles sont les indications de l'amélioration ou stabilité des services écosystémiques visés (eau, biodiversité)? 2. En quoi le projet a-t-il contribué à l'atteinte de cet objectif global? 3. Peut-on mesurer une réduction des pressions sur le BV ? telle que la réduction de la coupe de bois ou l'amélioration des pratiques agricoles et forestières favorisant une meilleure GDT et réduction de l'érosion? la réduction de la chasse sur la faune sauvage?
Objectif Spécifique du projet Concevoir un mécanisme de financement durable pour la protection à long terme du bassin versant boisé de la rivière Mbé, tout en renforçant le cadre juridique, politique et institutionnel nécessaire pour assurer son adoption et sa mise en œuvre réussie	1. A collaborative framework proposed and initiated	None	Collaboration between key institutions involved in PES exists by EOP	Meeting reports Annual reports	<u>Risks:</u> There may be political pressure to shape the PES system to achieve non-environmental goals, such as assisting politically-favored groups irrespective of likely environmental impact. <u>Assumption:</u> Project will receive high-level government support	1. Est-ce que ce cadre de collaboration fonctionne de manière autonome? 2. Qui est responsable d'initier le processus de collaboration ou concertation ? / qui en a la capacité ? 3. Est-ce qu'il y a un intérêt significatif pour maintenir le processus au-delà du projet et y investir les ressources nécessaires? 4. Ces ressources sont-elles disponibles ?
	2. Establish a baseline for populations of selected biodiversity indicators and conservation target species in the watershed and control areas	None	Baseline exists for watershed and control site at end of project	Survey reports		1. Est-ce qu'un Inventaire de la bd a été réalisé pour l'ensemble du BV et le site contrôle? 2. Est-ce qu'une BDD a été constituée à cet effet? 3. Est-elle sécurisée dans une institution? 4. Qui gère la bdd? 5. À qui est-elle accessible et comment la consulter?
	3. % of watershed with management plan taking into account watershed protection and biodiversity conservation	None	30%	Report		1. Ces plans ont-ils été réalisés? 2. Quelle proportion / superficie du bassin versant est couverte par ces plans? 3. Quelles sont les superficies où les pratiques forestières et agricoles permettent une stabilisation des sols et des écosystèmes / habitats pour la biodiversité ? 4. Quelles sont les mesures de gestion qui tiennent compte de la protection du BV et de la conservation de la bd? 5. Qui dispose de ces plans? 6. Qui participe à la conception des plans de gestion ? / Qui a la capacité de mettre à jour ces plans ? 7. Est-ce que les coûts de mise en œuvre des plans ont été estimés? 8. Ces plans ont-ils une valeur légale qui protégerait les investissements des communautés si les terrains étaient revendiqués pour une exploitation/utilisation différente ?
	4. Revenue distribution (sharing) mechanism proposed with guidelines to	None	Mechanism and guidelines exist	Report on mechanisms and guidelines		1. Est-ce que ces mécanismes et directives sont disponibles? 2. Qui en connaît l'existence? 3. Qui a été impliqué dans leur conception? 4. Le partage semble-t-il équitable pour les communautés locales au sein du BV?

	Indicator	Baseline	EOP target	Means of verification	Risks and assumptions	Other questions
	orient funds to watershed protection					5. Quelle proportion des besoins en ressources financières pour assurer la mise en œuvre des plans de gestion sont couverts par un tel mécanisme?
Effet 1 : Outcome 1 – Legal, policy and institutional framework provide enabling support for—and key institutions have improved capacity to design, manage, implement, monitor and learn lessons from a PES scheme for the MBÉ watershed	5. Inter-ministerial coordination in proposed collaborative framework, biannual meetings	None	2 inter-ministerial meetings per year beginning PY2	Framework and meetings	<u>Risks:</u> Lack of capacity of national institutions, NGOs, and academic institutions to support long-term development of environmental service markets in Gabon.	1. En quoi ce cadre de coordination est différent du cadre visé par l'indicateur 1? 2. Est-ce que ce cadre de collaboration fonctionne de manière autonome? 3. Qui est responsable d'initier le processus de collaboration ou concertation ? / qui en a la capacité ? 4. Quelles sont les ressources requises pour maintenir le processus au-delà du projet ? Ces ressources sont-elles disponibles ? 5. Est-ce qu'il y a des indices d'une volonté politique claire de poursuivre le fonctionnement de ce cadre au-delà du projet?
	6. At the end of project (EOP), a national policy is drafted	None	Proposal for harmonizing sectoral policies agreed by EOP	Drafted policy	Lack of political will or economic/ financial incentives on the part of key stakeholders to help develop and participate in efforts to replicate and/or scale up the project's piloted PES markets to a national level	1. Le document a-t-il été élaboré? 2. Qui a participé à son élaboration? 3. A-t-il été validé? adopté? A-t-il une valeur légale? 4. Quels secteurs sont intégrés dans la politique?
	7. Central government training needs assessed and implemented	None	Training needs assessment completed by end of PY1	Needs assessment, certificate/ attained, trip and progress reports	Assumption: PES will gradually become a national priority for Gabon as knowledge and information is made available	1. comment les besoins en connaissances ont-ils été identifiés ? 2. Le programme de formation a-t-il ciblé des capacités à développer (ou des formations thématiques et théoriques)? Si oui, lesquelles? 3. Qui sont les acteurs qui ont été ciblés et ont bénéficié des formations? 4. Est-ce que le programme de formation était appuyé par du matériel didactique pour permettre aux personnes formées de rafraîchir leurs connaissances et de former de nouveaux fonctionnaires de manière récurrente? 5. Est-ce que la formation était suffisante et adéquate
	8. Number of staff of key agencies trained in PES best practices	None	60-100% of relevant central government staff have received training necessary to design, manage and monitor and replicate PES scheme by EOP (short courses, study tours, fieldwork etc.)	Training and progress reports		1. Quel est l'effet de ces formations ? 2. Quels changements dans les pratiques des bénéficiaires des formations découlent de ces nouvelles connaissances ? 3. Leur perception ou compréhension des services environnementaux apportés par le bassin versant a-t-elle changé ?

	Indicator	Baseline	EOP target	Means of verification	Risks and assumptions	Other questions
	9. Number of people who know about PES as a means of watershed protection for the Congo basin expanded	None	At least 3 articles reporting on the design of the PES scheme	Publications and annual reports		<p>1. Quels sujets ont été traités dans les articles ou publications ?</p> <p>2. Quel public était ciblé ? ça peut représenter combien de lecteurs?</p> <p>3. Le moyen de diffusion était-il approprié pour joindre le public cible ? Ho et Fe?</p> <p>4. Une stratégie de communication a-t-elle été développée pour le projet ?</p> <p>5. Cet indicateur a-t-il été mesuré séparément pour les ho et les fe ? et pour les jeunes ?</p>
Effet 2 : Outcome 2 – A pilot PES scheme that rewards the maintenance, improvement or adoption of conservation-friendly land uses, together with an associated monitoring plan, are designed	10. PES mechanisms designed and contract developed between buyers and sellers;	None	Detailed proposal for PES scheme is drafted by EOP	Reports	<u>Risks:</u> Low participation rate of land users - ES providers are reluctant to bear the opportunity costs of mitigating current destructive activities such as forest destruction and bush meat trade.	<p>1. Est-ce que le mécanisme pour le paiement des services écosystémiques a été proposé? Validé? Par qui?</p> <p>2. Est-ce que le mécanisme PES a été présenté et expliqué aux parties concernées, acheteurs et fournisseurs?</p> <p>3. Quelle est la compréhension et l'appréciation (favorable ou défavorable) des acheteurs et fournisseurs du principe PES et du mécanisme proposé?</p>
	11. Major beneficiaries engaged by the end of Year 2		Contract for PES between SEEG and Government signed by EOP	Contract	Unwillingness of service buyers to participate due to free rider behavior Climate change is threatening the sustainability of the established PES scheme.	<p>1. Le contrat a-t-il été signé?</p> <p>2. Si non, où en est le processus de négociation?</p> <p>3. Quels sont les enjeux difficiles dans ces négociations?</p> <p>4. Est-ce que les parties disposaient de toutes les informations nécessaires et en format approprié pour être en mesure de négocier efficacement?</p> <p>5. Est-ce que les conditions suivantes ont été mises en place?</p> <p><i>A. Those who pay are fully aware of what it is that they are paying for</i></p> <p><i>B. Those that sell are proactively and deliberately engaging in resource use practices designed to secure the provision of services</i></p>
	12. Management plans of land units include provisions for watershed protection and biodiversity conservation		At the end of project, management plans exist for 100% of target area	Management plans and contracts	Difficulty in identifying changes in land use that would have the desired effect, particularly with regard to hydrological regulation.	<p>1. Quels sont les objectifs de ces plans d'aménagement et comment sont-ils définis ?</p> <p>2. Qui participe à la conception de ces plans?</p> <p>3. Les parties concernées par la mise en œuvre des plans en ont-elles une copie? Formulée de manière accessible?</p> <p>4. Est-ce que des enjeux fonciers ont été soulevés au cours de l'élaboration de ces plans?</p> <p>5. Quelle est la valeur juridique des plans? I.e. Les occupants ou utilisateurs de ces parcelles qui investissent dans l'amélioration de leurs pratiques sont-ils protégés?</p> <p>6. Quelles sont les superficies où les pratiques forestières et agricoles permettent une stabilisation des sols et des écosystèmes / habitats pour la biodiversité ?</p>
	13. Mechanisms for law enforcement in place		Law enforcement operational in key hotspots	Report	<u>Assumptions:</u> Increased awareness and as incentives will lead to a change in behaviour with	<p>1. Qui sont les acteurs responsables d'assurer l'application de la loi ?</p> <p>2. Quelle est leur motivation à intensifier l'application des lois?</p> <p>3. Disposent-ils de toutes les capacités nécessaires, matérielles/équipement, connaissances et mécanismes / protocoles de communication, pour effectuer leur travail de manière efficace?</p>

	Indicator	Baseline	EOP target	Means of verification	Risks and assumptions	Other questions
	14. Reported bush meat or frequency of bush meat sale through the Mbé		At EOP hunting for bush meat has decreased by 30%	Monitoring Report	respect to watershed protection and land use planning decisions. Baseline conditions in the selected areas can be extrapolated with high confidence level to other forested watershed areas and lessons learnt can be successfully disseminated.	<p>1. Quelle est la taille de la population au sein du BV ?</p> <p>2. Quelle proportion de cette population pratiquait la chasse?</p> <p>3. Quel est l'effet la restriction de la chasse au gibier sauvage sur l'alimentation au sein des ménages ? comme source de revenus?</p>
	15. Monitoring and evaluation plan for PES in the Mbé watershed developed		Monitoring and evaluation plan developed by Y-3 with methodologies peer reviewed and baselines established	Monitoring and evaluation plan		<p>1. Est-ce que ce plan de suivi-évaluation a été élaboré?</p> <p>2. Les situations de référence ont-elles été mesurées/établies?</p> <p>2. Est-ce que ce plan de suivi-évaluation a été mis en oeuvre? Si oui, à quelle fréquence?</p>
						<p>Aucun indicateur ne porte spécifiquement sur les communautés locales :</p> <p>1. Quelle est la compréhension des villageois du mécanisme de PES?</p> <p>2. Quelle est la motivation des villageois à s'impliquer pour la mise en œuvre des plans de gestion en attendant que des bénéfices monétaires soient générés ?</p> <p>3. Quelles sont les attentes des villageois par rapport à la mise en place d'un mécanisme de PES?</p> <p>4. Quelle est leur compréhension des effets bénéfiques de la gestion du BV ?</p> <p>5. Quelle structure organisationnelle est prévue pour encadrer la participation des communautés locales au mécanisme PES et pour défendre leurs intérêts dans ces négociations, tant en termes d'accès à la terre et aux ressources naturelles, que d'accès à une part équitable des paiements PES?</p> <p>6. Si des comités locaux ont été mis en place dans le cadre du projet, quelles sont les ressources requises pour en assurer le fonctionnement? De quelles ressources les comités disposeront-ils après le projet ?</p>

ANNEX 7: EVALUATION QUESTIONS (INDICATIVE LIST INCLUDED IN TORS)

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Relevance: How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?			
•	•	•	•
Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?			
•		•	•
Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?			
•	•	•	•
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
•	•	•	•
Impact: Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward, reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?			
•	•	•	•

ANNEX 8. TERMINAL EVALUATION RATING SCALES

Ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency, Overall Project Outcome Rating, M&E, IA & EA Execution 6. Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings 5. Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings 4. Moderately Satisfactory (MS): moderate shortcomings 3. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings 2. Unsatisfactory (U): major shortcomings 1. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe shortcomings	Sustainability ratings: 4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks 2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks 1. Unlikely (U): severe risks	Relevance ratings 2. Relevant (R) 1. Not relevant (NR)
Additional ratings where relevant: Not Applicable (N/A) Unable to Assess (U/A)		

ANNEX 9. LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

UNDP. Evaluation Office. 2012. *Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*. iii + 53 p.

Gaworecki M. 2017. Cash for conservation: Do payments for ecosystem services work? Mongabay Series: Conservation Effectiveness - <https://news.mongabay.com/2017/10/cash-for-conservation-do-payments-for-ecosystem-services-work>

Payments for Environmental Services and the Global Environment Facility: A STAP advisory document. 2010

Project development documents:

UNDP-GEF - Government of Gabon. 2011. Project Document.

CEO Endorsement Request (revised). 2011

Project Identification File (PIF). 2008

Technical studies conducted as part of the PPG phase:

Analyse des parties prenantes pour un potentiel mécanisme de Paiement pour Services Environnementaux (PSE) dans le bassin versant de la Mbé. 2009

Les mécanismes potentiels de Paiement pour Services Environnementaux (PSE) dans le bassin versant de la Mbé, 2009

Étude juridique et institutionnelle. 2009

Technical Documents developed as part of the project implementation:

Terms of Reference for Technical Studies in the Project

Report on Wildlife and Aquatic Biodiversity (Indicator # 2)

Diagnostic socioéconomique : Étude sociologique des communautés vivant dans le bassin de la Mbé et caractérisation des activités économiques. 2017

Hunink, J.E., M. de Klerk, F. de Boer, P. Droogers. 2017. Effectiveness of Improved Watershed Activities in Mbé River, Gabon. FutureWater Report 168. (Hydrology Report) downloadable from http://www.futurewater.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Gabon_Mbe_v12_FW168_lowres.pdf

Report on the analysis of political, institutional and legislative aspects

Project Management Documents:

Inception Workshop Report - October 2, 2012

Terms of Reference of the project technical team

Annual Workplans and budgets

Project Budget and financial data

Project internal monitoring and evaluation reports, including GEF tracking tools, at the beginning and end of the project

Annual reviews of the implementation of the project (PIRs 2013 - 2017)

Minutes of the Steering Committee Meetings (December 2015, May 2016, May 2017)

Annual Audit Report (2016)

National Documents

Country Programme Document and UNDAF Gabon

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

Environmental and Social Management Plan for the Crystal Mountains NP

ANNEX 10: EVALUATION CONSULTANT CODE OF CONDUCT AND AGREEMENT FORM

Evaluators:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form¹⁵

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: Dominique Roby

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at *Montreal* on *November 20, 2017*

Signature: 

¹⁵www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct

ANNEX 11: EVALUATION REPORT CLEARANCE FORM

Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared by

UNDP Country Office

Name: _____ Célestin Tsassa _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

UNDP GEF RTA

Name: _____ Saskia Marijnissen _____

Signature: 

Date: 23 March 2018

ANNEX 12: TE REPORT AUDIT TRAIL (TO BE COMPLETED IN A SEPARATE FILE)

To the comments received on **(date)** from the Terminal Evaluation of “Sustainable Management of the Mbé River Forested Watershed through the Development of a Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) Mechanism” (UNDP PIMS 4183)

The following comments were provided in track changes to the draft Terminal Evaluation report; they are referenced by institution (“Author” column) and by comment number (“#” column):

Author	#	Para No./ comment location	Comment/Feedback on the draft TE report	Evaluator response and actions taken

ANNEX 13. (ANNEXED IN A SEPARATE FILE) TERMINAL GEF TRACKING TOOL

ANNEX 14. RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDING MATRIX

<i>Risk Assessment Guiding Matrix</i>						
	Impact					
Probability		CRITICAL	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
	CERTAIN / IMMINENT	Critical	Critical	High	Medium	Low
	VERY LIKELY	Critical	High	High	Medium	Low
	LIKELY	High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
	MODERATELY LIKELY	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Negligible
	UNLIKELY	Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible	Considered to pose no determinable risk

ANNEX 15. REVIEW OF THE FORMULATION OF THE PROJECT EXPECTED RESULTS IN THE ENGLISH PRODOC AND IN THE VERSION TRANSLATED IN FRENCH. SIGNIFICANT AND MISLEADING INCONSISTENCIES IN THE TRANSLATION ARE HIGHLIGHTED.

English formulation - PRODOC	French translation – Part II	French translation – Résultats Stratégiques du Cadre de travail ¹⁶ SRF p. 61
Project objective: Design a sustainable financing mechanism for long-term protection of the Mbé River forested watershed , while strengthening the legal, policy and institutional framework necessary to ensure its adoption and successful implementation	<i>Skipped (missing) section in the translated document</i>	Objectif du projet : Établir un mécanisme de financement durable pour assurer une protection à long terme du barrage qui est d'une haute valeur dans la conservation
Outcome 1: Legal, policy and institutional framework provide enabling support for—and key institutions have improved capacity to design, manage, implement, monitor and learn lessons from—a PES scheme for the Mbé watershed	<i>Skipped (missing) section in the translated document</i>	Résultat 1: Cadre de travail Juridique, politique et institutionnel pour soutenir le projet PES du barrage de Mbé et les institutions clés ont la capacité et les ressources pour concevoir, gérer /améliorer et suivre le Plan PES et d'assimiler les leçons apprises du plan pilote
Output 1.1 Proposal for harmonization of national sectoral policies and legislation developed to support the implementation of PES scheme	<i>Skipped (missing) section in the translated document</i>	Production 1.1. Proposition pour l'harmonisation des politiques nationales sectorielles et juridiques développées pour soutenir l'amélioration du Plan PES
Output 1.2 Proposal for land use rights are developed to form a sound basis for designing a PES scheme.	<i>Skipped (missing) section in the translated document</i>	Production 1.2. Proposition développée pour les droits d'utilisation des terres pour former une base pour la conception et l'amélioration du Plan PES
Output 1.3. Effective coordination and information exchange structures developed that promote cross-sectoral information sharing and synergies among government agencies and key stakeholders with the ultimate view to establishing a PES institution/governance	Résultat 1.3. La coordination efficace et les structures d'échange d'information développée qui font la promotion du partage de cette même information de manière transversale et des synergies entre les agences du gouvernement et les parties prenantes avec la vision ultime d'établir une institution/autorité PES.	Production 1.3. Coordination efficace et espace d'échange d'information proposée qui fait la promotion du partage de l'information transversale et des synergies dans les agences du gouvernement et les parties prenantes clés avec la vision ultime d'établir une institution PES institution/autorité
Output 1.4 Staff of government agencies and other partner / support agencies trained in key aspects of PES including design, implementation and monitoring	Résultat 1.4 Le personnel des Agences du Gouvernement et d'autres partenaires/agences de soutien formées dans les aspects clés du PES y compris la conception, - l'exécution et le suivi	Production 1.4. Le personnel des agences gouvernementales et d'autres partenaires / les agences de soutien formées dans les aspects clés du PES y compris la conception, - l'amélioration et le suivi
Output 1.5. Lessons learned/ gained from the design process are disseminated and transferred to other watersheds in the country and Congo Basin	Résultat 1.5. Leçons apprises / avantages du processus de conception sont disséminés et transférés aux autres barrages du pays et dans le Bassin du Congo	Résultat 1.5. Leçons apprises/acquises à partir de ce processus de conception sont disséminées et transférées sur les autres barrages du pays et dans le Bassin du Congo
Outcome 2: A pilot PES scheme that rewards the maintenance, improvement or adoption of conservation-friendly land uses, together with an associated monitoring plan, are designed	Résultat 2: Un plan pilote PES qui récompense l'entretien, le développement ou l'adoption de la bonne conservation des terres utilisées est désigné et un plan de suivi pour évaluer sa réussite établi.	Résultat 2: Un plan pilote PES qui récompense la maintenance, l'amélioration ou l'adoption de la conservation – un test de bonne utilisation des terres dans le barrage de MBÉ est pratiqué et un plan de suivi pour évaluer sa réussite est également établi
Output 2.1 An education and persuasion process put in place to gain the support of important stakeholders, e.g. governments, private business and land owners	Production 2.1 Un processus d'éducation et convainquant mis en place pour obtenir le soutien des parties prenantes importantes, exemple le gouvernement, les opérateurs du secteur privé et les propriétaires des terres	Résultat 2.1. Un processus d'éducation et de persuasion mis en place pour obtenir le soutien d'importantes parties prenantes, e.g. gouvernements, le secteur privé et les propriétaires de terres

¹⁶ Résultats Stratégiques du Cadre de travail = Strategic Results of the Framework – poor translation for Strategic Results Framework which should be correctly translated into: *Cadre de Résultats Stratégiques*

Output 2.2 Ecosystem services in the Mbé watershed are defined, measured and assessed, including an assessment of the impacts of different land uses.	Résultat 2.2 Les services en rapport avec l'Ecosystème dans le barrage de la rivière Mbé sont définis, mesurés et évalués, y compris une estimation des impacts des différentes terres utilisées.	Résultat 2.2 Les services de l'Ecosystème dans le barrage de Mbé sont définis mesurés et évalués, y compris l'estimation des impacts sur l'utilisation des différentes terres
Output 2.3: Production with participation of all major stakeholders, of detailed PES schemes proposals tailored to the Gabon socioeconomic context	Résultat 2.3: Production avec la participation de toutes les parties prenantes majeures, des propositions de programmes détaillés du PES adapté au contexte socio-économique du Gabon	Information 2.3. Produire avec la participation de toutes les parties prenantes majeures, les propositions de plan PES détaillées adapté au contexte socio économique du Gabon
Output 2.4 A business plan developed to improve financial security and options for MBÉ watershed	Résultat 2.4 Un business plan développé pour exécuter la sécurité financière et les options du barrage de MBÉ	Résultat 2.4. Un plan d'affaires développé pour améliorer la sécurité financière et les options du barrage de MBÉ
Output 2.5. Guidelines and criteria for contracts between buyers and sellers developed and contracts negotiated and drafted.	Résultat 2.5. Les directives et critères de contacts entre les acheteurs et les vendeurs développés et les contrats négociés et les ébauches.	Production 2.5. Directives et critères de contrats développés entre acheteurs et vendeurs et contrats négociés et rédigés
Output 2.6. A proposal of a system for distribution of benefits designed and proposed to key stakeholders	Résultat 2.6. La proposition d'un système de distribution des bénéfices désignés et est faite aux parties prenantes	Production 2.6. Proposition d'un service désigné de distribution des bénéfices et des solution aux parties prenantes
Output 2.7 Monitoring systems for biodiversity, water quality using biological indicators established	Résultat 2.7 Systèmes de suivi pour la diversité, la qualité de l'eau utilisant les indicateurs biologiques établis	Production 2.7. Système de Suivi pour la biodiversité, la qualité de l'eau utilisée par l'utilisation des indicateurs biologiques établis
Output 2.8 Methodologies for monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of PES in Mbé developed	Résultat 2.8 Méthodologies pour le suivi-évaluation de l'efficacité du PES développé dans le Mbé	Production 2.8. Méthodologies pour le suivi-évaluation développées et testées sur l'efficacité du PES dans le Mbé

ANNEX 16. UNDP POLICY ON THE RECRUITMENT OF GOVERNMENT STAFF (2011) AND UN POLICY ON PAYMENT TO GOVERNMENT STAFF (1996) (EXCERPTS)

<https://popp.undp.org>

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. 2011. NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF UNDP SUPPORTED PROJECTS: GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

Personnel

Government staff

Since UNDP-supported projects form part of the development activities of the programme country, the Government assigns its own personnel to participate in project activities as part of their work responsibilities. Such personnel are referred to as “government staff”. **This category of staff is reflected in the government budget, not in the project budget.** Note: the government in-kind contribution should be reflected in the project document.

UNDP-supported personnel

The implementing partner is responsible for ensuring that job descriptions (sometimes called “terms of reference”) are prepared for all UNDP-supported personnel. The partners concerned must agree on their content. These must be updated and must clearly identify the outputs the person is expected to produce. Individual work plans are also recommended for all staff.

As general principles, the following must always apply:

- All personnel are recruited by the implementing partner (or its contractors) unless otherwise specified (e.g., UNDP provides support services, see below “Recruitment by UNDP”);
- The salaries and other entitlements of locally-recruited personnel must not exceed those within the United Nations system for comparable functions and types of contracts in the country concerned;
- The entitlements for travel of personnel funded by the project must not exceed those for UNDP staff;
- **UNDP adheres to the policy of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) on contracting government personnel, which disallows direct payments to government staff for their additional work contributions on donor-supported development projects. Government officials cannot be funded by UNDP projects since this would undermine ownership and sustainability.** (For more information, please see the [United Nations policy on payments to government staff](#));

UN POLICY ON PAYMENT TO GOVERNMENT STAFF - *(Joint Consultative Group On Policy Or JCGP)* April 1996

We are pleased to inform you that in the context of JCGP, we have agreed to a common approach for payments to government staff. Specifically, there are five principles which form a common approach and policy of the JCGP agreements in this area. These principles are:

- (1) **A clear statement or reiteration of policy by all members of the JCGP against any monetary compensation to government counterparts for their work/participation in donor-funded programmes or projects**
- (2) A recognition that in some countries that are facing serious economic difficulties which have drastically reduced the purchasing power of civil services salaries, the above policy cannot be applied at once. In these countries an exit strategy should be developed in close co-operation and consultation with other

donors and the government. Ideally this exit strategy would encourage and support civil service reform, and would co-ordinate donor payments to government staff, gradually reducing such payments as the reform takes effect.

- (3) In order to further this approach and, in order to ensure the widest possible participation of other donors, it is strongly recommended that this issue be pursued through Consultative Group Meetings and Round Tables. A precedent and example in this regards is the initiative in Uganda.
- (4) This relates to monetary or cash payments. Existing non-monetary incentives should not be discouraged, especially in-service and fellowship training. In most cases it is also justified to supplement government DSA payments to counterparts and other government officials for the purpose of undertaking joint monitoring visits to projects.
- (5) In a limited number of countries a situation may exist where the government is unable to provide the required support in personnel and other local costs and no realistic assumptions can be made for it to assume these responsibilities in the foreseeable future. Projects undertaken in these circumstances would be required to cover some or all the costs including the salaries or supplements to local staff.