

**Final Evaluation Report of Project GCP/RAF/455/GFF  
entitled**

**"Sustainable Management of the Wildlife and Bushmeat  
Sector in Central Africa"**

**GEFID 3777**

**FINAL REPORT**

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## List of acronyms and abbreviations

LGO	Local Government Officials
ACFAP	Agence Congolaise pour la Faune et les Aires protégées
AEFFB	Executing Agency for the Activities of the Forest and Wood Sector
MA&D	Market Analysis and Development
AGACL	Association de Gestion de l'Aire de Chasse de Liouesso
IGA	Income Generating Activities
ANPN	National Agency for National Parks
NTA	National Technical Assistant
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
CIRAD	Agricultural Research Centre for International Development
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
NPC	National Project Coordinator
COMIFAC	Central African Forest Commission
SC	Steering Committee
COVAREF	Wildlife management committees
LTA	Lead Technical Advisor
ECOFAC	Program for the Conservation and Development of Fragile Ecosystems in Central Africa
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
LoA	Letter of Agreement
LTO	Lead Technical Officer
MECNDD	Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development (DRC)
MEDDEFCEP	Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries (CAR)
MEFDDE	Ministry of Forest Economy, Sustainable Development and Environment (Congo)
MEFPE	Minister of Forest Economy, Fisheries and Environment, in charge of the protection and management of ecosystems (Gabon)
OED	FAO Office of Evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NAP	National Action Plan
LP	Local population
PNEFEB-2	Second National Program for Environment, Forests, Water and Biodiversity
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Products
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
AWP	Annual Work Plan
TFP	Technical and Financial Partners
AFM	Administration and Financial Manager
RAPAC	Central African Network of Protected Areas
RC	Republic of Congo
CAR	Central African Republic
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
PIR	Project implementation report
ToR	Terms of reference
TRAFFIC	Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
EU	European Union
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
ZIC-GC	Community-managed Hunting Zones
ZCV	Village Hunting Zones
ZCC	Community Hunting Zone

## Executive Summary

- This report presents the results of the final evaluation of the GCP/RAF/455/GFF project entitled "Sustainable Management of the Wildlife and Bushmeat Sector in Central Africa", funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented between 2012 and 2017. The total project budget at the design stage was US\$ 12,174,900, of which US\$ 4,245,200 was financed by GEF and US\$ 7,929,700 by co-financing in kind or in cash.
- The **overall objective** of the project "Sustainable Management of the Wildlife and Bushmeat Sector in Central Africa" is to demonstrate that participatory wildlife management can be a viable strategy to safeguard the functions, integrity and biodiversity of the forest ecosystem in the Congo Basin. Its development objective is to strengthen and increase the sustainability of local communities' livelihoods in the Congo Basin.
- The **specific objectives** are as follows: (i) In relation to the project, the legal framework in the four countries should provide a clear, solid and direct basis for the development of participatory wildlife management, (ii) Participatory wildlife management should carry out in the communities targeted by the project and can be replicated elsewhere, and (iii) Communities and support institutions should have the necessary capacity to continue to develop and implement participatory wildlife management. The project consists of 4 components: (i) component 1 or policy and legal reform, (ii) component 2 or tools for participatory wildlife management, (iii) component 3 or capacity building and development, and (iv) component 4 or project management, monitoring and evaluation.
- The project is being implemented in 4 countries of the Congo Basin (Republic of Congo, Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central African Republic (CAR)) in a context where a wildlife conservation approach has so far predominated. The project has been implemented since September 2012 as part of a partnership between FAO, CIRAD, CIFOR and IUCN, with GEF funding and co-funding from the above-mentioned partners.
- **The final evaluation of the project aims at:** (i) assessing whether the project has achieved its general development and conservation objectives, (ii) verifying whether the implementation of the project is satisfactory, (iii) assessing the impact of the project, and (iv) analyzing the sustainability of the project effects. The evaluation also aims at promoting learning and knowledge sharing among partners and drawing lessons that will contribute to the design and implementation of similar future programs.
- Evaluation questions were formulated to guide the evaluation in analyzing: (i) the relevance of the project to the needs of the communities, to the needs expressed at regional and national level, and (ii) the effectiveness and impact of the project, particularly with regard to the implementation of the components. The evaluation also specifically analyzed the effects and impacts of the project on the most vulnerable populations and target groups, such as women.
- To answer the evaluation questions and produce general findings, the evaluation relied on triangulation of information collected at different levels: sub-regional, national and local. Information collection modalities included: a comprehensive literature review, semi-directive interviews, group meetings, and field observations. The interview guides were adapted

according to the stakeholders met and the type of meeting (individual or group) and their level of involvement in the implementation of the project.

- The evaluation covered all the activities undertaken under the various components and subcomponents of the project since its inception in 2012. The evaluation analyzed the progress of the project in the 4 countries and covered all categories of beneficiaries and stakeholders involved in implementation.

## **Findings according to the evaluation criteria**

The main findings of the evaluation are presented below, grouped by evaluation criteria and questions.

### **Relevance**

#### **To what extent is the design of the project and its activities responsive to identified needs?**

##### **Key findings**

- *The project is linked to national strategies and priorities in the 4 countries*
- *The project is based on the priority axes of intervention and the strategic axes of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan 2.*
- *It is relevant to the needs of the local population who derive part of their livelihoods from wildlife resources.*
- *The project more explicitly takes into account the direct participation of the local population in wildlife management.*
- *The project intervenes at a strategic and local level with strong community empowerment.*

### **Effectiveness**

#### **Component 1**

##### **To what extent have the countries' legal frameworks provided an appropriate basis for participatory wildlife management?**

##### **Key findings**

- *The strategy has been developed as well as the 3 NAPs; the analysis of the legal texts has been carried out at the end of the project, but the national laws have not yet been revised*
- *Community Forests have been established in Gabon and the DRC (Conventions and ministerial orders).*
- *The organization of hunting and land management is difficult where rights and uses overlap, particularly where the community hunting zone is partially or totally included in the forest concession.*

#### **Component 2**

##### **To what extent is participatory wildlife management carried out in the communities targeted by the project?**

### **Key findings**

- *Associations/cooperatives have been structured as well as multi-stakeholder platforms, but the functionality of these structures is limited due to lack of funding and weak local governance*
- *Simple Management Plans have been developed and the first plan was implemented in the Ovan Community Forest, but during this implementation phase, local communities gave priority to logging over hunting.*
- *Practical Diagnostic Guidelines for Community Hunting Management as well as a practical guide for the development of the sector and a book on participatory wildlife management have been produced*
- *Some measures have been taken by communities to prevent the hunting of protected species by non-Community hunters, however integrated and participatory wildlife management through the implementation of hunting plans is not yet effective.*

### **To what extent has the project achieved the expected results in relation to the most vulnerable populations and target groups such as women?**

#### **Key findings**

- *A synthesis of the reference situation of livestock populations at the project intervention sites in Gabon, Congo and DRC was carried out by CIRAD*
- *Communities are now aware of the importance of a sustainable and participatory management of their land's resources*
- *The adoption of monitoring techniques or indicators by communities for resource monitoring is limited*
- *In general, no activities were developed for the benefit of vulnerable populations and women due to the lack of a funding mechanism*
- *Training will only benefit the most vulnerable groups and women if activities are developed.*

### **Component 3**

#### **To what extent have beneficiary communities and institutions built adequate capacities to further develop and implement participatory wildlife management?**

#### **Key findings**

- *As tools were developed and diagnoses made, efforts were made to build the capacity of beneficiaries.*
- *Institutional capacity building has been initiated at the national level, NPCs have mainly benefited from it.*
- *There is still a long way to go to achieve the desired result in terms of adequate capacity to implement participatory wildlife management.*

Impact



**To what extent has the project made progress towards achieving its preset conservation and development objectives?**

**Key finding**

*Despite the significant progress made by the project towards these objectives and which could provide a strong base for similar efforts in the future, the project is close to its end date and has not achieved its preset conservation and development objectives.*

**Conclusions and recommendations**

**Conclusion 1.** Certain progress have contributed to consolidating the transition from the conservation paradigm to the paradigm combining conservation and participatory management approaches for bushmeat.

**Conclusion 2.** Continuous coordination throughout the duration of the project could have substantially improved the implementation of the project, which was essential given the design of the implementation mechanism and the main theme addressed in this project – participatory wildlife management.

**Conclusion 3.** A functional monitoring and evaluation system could have improved project implementation. The lack of a monitoring and evaluation system increased the challenge of coordination.

**Conclusion 4.** A clear strategy establishing priorities in the management of project implementation from the start of the project, determining the coherence of actions, would also have helped to optimize the project's outcomes.

**Conclusion 5.** A more structured management of the project's financial and human resources could have facilitated implementation.

**Recommendation 1.** The mission recommends that **FAO** reconsider the implementation model for this type of complex projects, particularly in response to the geographical spread of activities and the diversity of stakeholders involved.

**Recommendation 2.** Given the complexity of the project and the different levels of intervention, the evaluation mission recommends that **FAO** and **GEF**: increase the duration of the implementation of similar projects to at least 7 years to finalize the development of hunting plans; use the income from the implementation of simple management plans to finance the implementation of hunting plans; and revise national laws on the basis of text analyses.

**Recommendation 3.** The evaluation mission recommends that **COMIFAC** strengthen advocacy to encourage the countries concerned to include in their budgets the implementation of the National Action Plans or at least a part of them that would contribute to the development of participatory wildlife management.

**Recommendation 4.** The mission recommends that **FAO** conduct the analysis of legal texts from the beginning of the project. Given the importance of legal aspects, in the future, if such a project

were to be repeated, it would be necessary to ensure that a thorough analysis of existing texts and laws and their effective implementation from the start of the project in all sectors relating to the problem of bushmeat hunting and marketing.

**Recommendation 5.** The mission recommends that **FAO** involve wildlife conservation organizations, from the outset of the project, in discussions on changing the regulatory framework.

**Recommendation 6.** The mission recommends that **FAO** scale similar projects to the actual co-financing amounts.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose and scope of the Evaluation

1. The evaluation aims at providing an assessment of the results achieved by this project to the governments of beneficiary countries, GEF, beneficiaries and other local, national and international partners, as well as to FAO itself, and to ensure accountability for the resources used and promote transparency. The evaluation also aims at promoting learning and knowledge sharing among partners and drawing lessons that will contribute to the design and implementation of similar future programs. Other important users of the evaluation are FAO as a whole, with its divisions at Headquarters and decentralized offices, as well as its development partners, who will also benefit from and could be inspired by the lessons learned and good practices identified. The consultation efforts made by the evaluation mission have mobilized stakeholders – who will use the results of the assessment – more strongly around the theme of participatory wildlife management.

2. This evaluation is of strategic importance for the sub-region, the countries concerned, FAO and GEF as well as their partners. First of all, because of this problem: bushmeat is an important source of protein for forest communities, a source of income for categories that do not have access to other employment opportunities because bushmeat is sold locally or in neighboring localities. And although it is prohibited by law, bushmeat is indeed marketed. In addition, partners with various contributions are involved: this project is original in that it is an action-research type. Finally, the analysis of FAO's role as project implementer makes it possible to draw lessons on the adequacy of the institutional set-up in the light of the results obtained.

3. The evaluation covered all the activities undertaken under the various components and subcomponents of the project since its inception in 2012. The evaluation analyzed the progress of the project in the 4 countries and covered all categories of beneficiaries and stakeholders involved in implementation.

4. The mid-term evaluation was an important source of information for this final evaluation and the results achieved since the mid-term evaluation have received particular attention.

5. The evaluation also focused on the reconstructed theory of change and the actual changes that occurred as a result of the project implementation. The changes achieved were assessed in terms of the means, time and institutional arrangements actually used and put in place during the implementation of the project.

### 1.2 Evaluation questions

6. The evaluation questions are presented in the evaluation Terms of Reference.

7. The first evaluation question refers to the evaluation of the project relevance to the needs of the communities, to the needs expressed at the regional and national levels. The second evaluation question refers to the evaluation of the project's effectiveness and impact, including the evaluation of the implementation of the project's components. The evaluation also specifically analyzed the effects and impacts of the project on the most vulnerable populations and target groups, such as women.

8. In addition, in accordance with the GEF evaluation guidelines, the evaluation will assess and analyze: (i) the materialization of co-financing and (ii) the quality of project monitoring and evaluation.

### 1.3 Methodology

9. To answer the evaluation questions and produce general findings, the evaluation relied on triangulation of information collected at different levels: sub-regional, national and local.

10. An evaluation matrix was previously developed by integrating the evaluation questions. For each of these, sub-questions were set, methods of collecting information to answer them were defined and the actors to be targeted were identified. In addition, data collection tools were: semi-directive interviews, literature review or group meetings. The interview guides were adapted according to the stakeholders met and the type of meeting (individual or group) and their level of involvement in the implementation of the project. Here are the different steps followed by the project's evaluation mission:

11. **First step.** A literature review was conducted prior to the mission's visit to the two targeted countries, Congo and Gabon. The project document, the mid-term evaluation report, the various socio-economic and ecological guides and diagnoses, the final publication of the project, the annual progress reports and the PIRs were consulted<sup>1</sup>.

12. **Second step.** A first 2-day visit was organized in Gabon, at the FAO Sub-Regional Coordination Headquarters, during which the International Consultant in charge of coordinating the implementation of the project was thoroughly interviewed to have a detailed presentation of the project. The mission team also held a briefing session with the FAO Sub-Regional Coordinator.

13. **Third step.** The evaluation team then travelled to Congo: (i) it first visited the Liouesso site in Ouessou, Republic of Congo, and held field group meetings with hunters, women group, the Executive of the Association de Gestion de l'Aire de Chasse de Liouesso (AGACL), the President of the Association des Commerçants de Viande de Brousse, the NGOs with which the project collaborated, the Sub-prefect of Mokeko, the IFO Director for Environmental and Social issues and the Direction Departmental Directorate of Water and Forests.

14. **Fourth step.** The evaluation team then spent 1 day in Brazzaville and had the opportunity to meet with the National Project Coordinator (NPC), the Wildlife Director, and World Conservation Society (WCS) officials.

15. **Fifth step.** The evaluation team travelled to Gabon and attended the closing workshop of the project on 21 and 22 June 2017. Beforehand and during the workshop, it met various stakeholders from the 4 countries involved in the project as well as the project partners: IUCN, CIRAD, CIFOR, NPC and National Technical Assistant of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the 2 project facilitators in the Gabon sites, the NPC and the National Technical Assistant of the Central African Republic as well as COMIFAC. Other meetings were held with the Director of Community Forests and the Deputy Director of Water and Forests at the Ministry of Forest Economy, Fisheries and Environment, responsible for the protection and management of ecosystems in Libreville, as well as with the Director General of the Wood sector agency, resource persons (ANPN, Stirling University), Sustainable Development Manager of Rougier Gabon, Brainforest. A meeting was held

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<sup>1</sup>A complete list of the reviewed documents and reports is presented in Appendix 2.

with the LTO in Rome on 9 June 2017 and a second one in Libreville on the eve of the project's closing workshop. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the stakeholders interviewed.

16. **Sixth step.** The evaluation mission team then went to the Ovan site (Gabon) for two days. Group meetings were held with hunters, women, community chiefs and the Cooperative Committee. Before leaving, the team held a meeting with the community delegates, the interface between the community and the Cooperative. The team also met with the Prefect of the Department and the Mayor of Ovan. The team visited the Ovan Community Forest, the project site.

17. **Seventh step.** Back in Libreville, the Team met with the Legal Advisor to the Minister of Forest Economy, Fisheries and Environment, in charge of ecosystem protection and management, the Executive Secretary of the Central African Network of Protected Areas (RAPAC). Parallel meetings were held at the FAO Sub-Regional Office with the Administrative and Financial Manager, the Assistant to the Sustainable Wildlife and Bushmeat Sector Management Project, and the Human Resources Assistant.

18. **Eighth step.** Interviews were conducted via Skype with the FAO Representative in the Republic of Congo and the FAO Representative in CAR, the first CTA of the Sustainable Wildlife and Bushmeat Management Project. A session to present the initial findings of the mission to the International Consultant in charge of project coordination was held in Libreville on 28 June 2017 before the mission's departure. The mission paid a courtesy visit to the FAO Subregional Coordinator at the end of the mission: the preliminary findings and recommendations addressed to FAO were briefly presented.

## 1.4 Challenges

19. Here are the main challenges encountered by the evaluation mission of the sustainable wildlife and bushmeat sector management project:

- the timetable set for the field mission did not allow all countries and sites to be visited;
  - the dispersion of the project team due to the set-up and the very nature of the project favored sporadic and partial interviews with some team members but did not allow the team to support the final evaluation mission from its start to its completion. This limited the opportunity for teams to better learn and understand project implementation thanks to the final evaluation;
  - the absence of consolidated and certified annual financial reports clearly presenting co-financing, the difficulty of having detailed financial data on project activities per component, and the inconsistency of financial data presented in the various reports<sup>2</sup>; and
  - the inadequacy of the project's monitoring and evaluation system and the absence of a consolidated baseline situation study and mid-term & final impact studies that would have helped to establish result and impact indicators.
- the evaluation team had access to incomplete documentation: minutes of the Steering Committees for the DRC, Draft Hunting Plans, etc.

20. Each finding will be illustrated by examples taken as a priority in the sites visited; if examples are taken from sites in the two non-visited countries (DRC and CAR), there will be footnotes to show that these observations are based on information collected during discussions with stakeholders

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<sup>2</sup>The mission was unable to access detailed financial data at the sub-regional or country level.

but not on findings in the field. The information collected on project implementation in the DRC and CAR sites is less detailed than that collected in the sites visited in Gabon and Congo: in the visited sites, discussions were held with beneficiaries to cross-check the information provided by the project teams and other partners and to assess the project results, while this was not the case in the sites that were not visited.

## 1.5 Structure of the report

21. The report is divided into 4 main sections, namely: (i) an introduction presenting the objectives of the evaluation, methodology, evaluation questions and challenges encountered, (ii) a reconstruction of the background and context of the project including a description of the project, characterization of the context, a reconstruction of the project theory of change at the beginning of the project, (iii) presentation of the findings per evaluation criteria, (iv) a final section on conclusions and recommendations.

## 2. Background and context of the project

### 2.1 Project description

22. The conservation objective of project GCP/RAF/455/GFF entitled "Sustainable Management of the Wildlife and Bushmeat Sector in Central Africa" is to demonstrate that participatory wildlife management can be a viable strategy to safeguard the function, integrity and biodiversity of the forest ecosystem in the Congo Basin. Its development objective is to strengthen and increase the sustainability of local communities' livelihoods in the Congo Basin.

23. The project consists of 4 components which are themselves divided into subcomponents: (i) Component 1 on Policy and legal reform, which includes a first subcomponent on the regional strategy for wildlife management and national policies and a second subcomponent on laws and regulations for participatory wildlife management, (ii) component 2 on the development of tools for participatory wildlife management, which includes a first subcomponent for the development of field tools, a second subcomponent for the implementation of sustainable financing and incentives, a third subcomponent on wildlife monitoring and evaluation and a fourth subcomponent to develop knowledge management tools and an awareness raising component, (iv) component 3 focuses on capacity building which includes capacity building within communities and capacity building to support communities as well as reproductive and adaptive capacity building and (iv) component 4 on project management, monitoring and evaluation.

24. The project was implemented through a partnership involving FAO, implementing partners such as research institutes (CIRAD, CIFOR), NGOs, RAPAC and COMIFAC. The project was to be co-financed by GEF, FAO, CIFOR and CIRAD as well as RAPAC, the governments of the Central African Republic, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Gabon. The total project budget at the design stage was US\$ 12,174,900, of which US\$ 4,245,200 was financed by GEF and US\$ 7,929,700 by co-financing in kind or in cash. The highest co-financing was provided by FAO, IUCN, the Government of the Central African Republic, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Government of Gabon, the Government of the Republic of Congo, and local communities, namely, US\$ 1,500,000, US\$ 1,000,000, US\$ 45,000,000, US\$ 424,000, US\$ 61,000,000 and US\$ 125,000,000 respectively.

25. At the outset, the project had to be implemented in 8 pilot sites, i.e. 2 per country: The results obtained in the first 8 pilot sites were to be scaled up at 8 other sites to reach 16 sites, and then again at 16 other sites adjacent to the previous sites to reach a total of 32 sites. The first sites selected are: (i) those of Liby-Féré-Galafondo and Moloukou-Moule-Londo in the Central African Republic, (ii) the Ngombe Forest and the Sibiti-Zanaga site in the Republic of Congo, (iii) the Epulu-Mambasa site and the Maduda forest in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and (iv) the Djoutou and Nguekwala-Ovan sites in Gabon.

26. The executing agency is FAO and the institutional arrangements of project implementation at the design includes: (i) a Project Steering Committee that includes representatives of the main co-financing organizations, (ii) a National Steering Committee (NSC) that includes donors and NGOs involved in community-based natural resource management in each country, (iii) the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) responsible for project management and technical assistance, (iv) the National Project Coordinator (NPC) also responsible for project management and technical assistance at the government level, (v) a National Technical Advisor (NTA) responsible for technical assistance in the field, and (vi) a Regional Scientific Advisory Group (RSAG) responsible for providing peer review of any proposed main activities.

## 2.2 Context

27. The project was implemented in a context where the approach to protecting the fauna and flora inherited from the colonial era predominates. Forest communities in the Congo Basin derive their livelihoods from Hunting/Gathering and, secondarily, from agriculture. Indeed, given the high forest cover, communities do not have the necessary equipment for felling and grubbing and adequate means to cultivate large areas and develop cash crops. Cultivated areas are generally located around homes and each family, depending on the available family labor force, can cultivate 1 to 2 hectares and practice hand cultivation.

28. The project was developed in a context where customary rights of access and control of forests and natural resources are weakened. This is due in particular to: (i) regulatory frameworks established during the colonial period which govern forest estates making them state-owned forests; (ii) the involvement of forest operators; and (iii) internal migration including the settlement of non-natives in forest lands, the exodus of notables to provincial localities, and rural exodus. Moreover, unregulated hunting and poaching have led to the depletion of certain species, which has led to more stringent protection rules. However, there are still substantial populations of resilient species in the forests of the Congo Basin, particularly with regard to duikers, brush-tailed porcupine and small rodents. Hunting these species is a source of protein for forest communities. However, the distinction between self-subsistence hunting and commercial hunting remains undefined.

29. Forest ecosystems in the 4 countries have been largely invested by forest companies exploiting wood and encroaching or overlapping on village lands: in Congo, more than 70% of the forest area is classified and exploited, which limits any initiative to improve communities' access rights to land and natural resources. In Gabon, the situation is less clear-cut in the sense that large portions of forests, though allocated, are still unexploited, and there is a possibility that communities have more access and control over the resources of their land. In the Democratic

Republic of Congo, the forest area is so large that there are large untapped forests, just as there are also forests in the CAR that are untapped.

30. At the time of project design, the regulatory frameworks of the 4 countries were different in terms of sustainable wildlife and bushmeat management. Indeed, none of these texts includes any practical provision for the marketing of bushmeat: (i) in Congo, although a new law on wildlife and protected areas was issued in 2008 and incorporates very explicit provisions for participatory wildlife management, there is no implementing legislation, (ii) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, there are no provisions for community empowerment in wildlife management, (iii) in the Central African Republic, wildlife laws and regulations do not give communities the authority to control wildlife resources and there are no provisions for sustainable harvesting of animals. However, bushmeat traders can obtain a legal permit from the Ministry of Commerce to market bushmeat, and (iv) in Gabon, there are no legal provisions for community empowerment in wildlife management.

31. In general, sustainable wildlife management involves the overlapping of several rights such as land rights and access to forest resources, given that wildlife evolves and reproduces on a forest territory.

## 2.3 Theory of change

32. *Scope of the change to be brought about in the field.* In the project document, it was planned to work in 2 sites per country, for a total of 8 sites. It was planned to replicate the project results in 8 additional sites before scaling up at 16 additional sites. This scaling up was intended not only to contribute to the scaling up of participatory wildlife and bushmeat management, but also to compare and learn from the different models developed in the field in different contexts.

33. The approach used is participatory and based on a multiple partnership, in particular with CIFOR and CIRAD technical partners –responsible for developing implementation tools in the selected sites – but also with government partners in each country. The partnership also extended to national NGOs, private operators (Foresters).

34. *Link between components and subcomponents.* At the design stage, a link is established between components and subcomponents. The approach used considers 3 levels of intervention ranging from the most general to the most specific: the regional level, the national level and the local level. Component 1 involves first developing a sub-regional strategy for participatory wildlife and bushmeat management to harmonize regulatory and policy frameworks in countries exploiting the Congo Basin common forest. At the same time, the project aimed at working on national regulatory frameworks in order to move from a conservation approach to a mixed approach combining conservation and participatory wildlife & bushmeat management in national policies.

35. At the design stage, component 2 is logically linked to component 1 and promotes it in the sense that the review of policies and regulatory frameworks at the national level will allow the establishment of management rules at the local level and, thus, the participatory wildlife and bushmeat management by communities – which is an objective towards which all the subcomponents of component 2 converge. The reform of regulatory frameworks will be based on lessons learned and good practices learned and developed at the pilot sites. First of all, there is



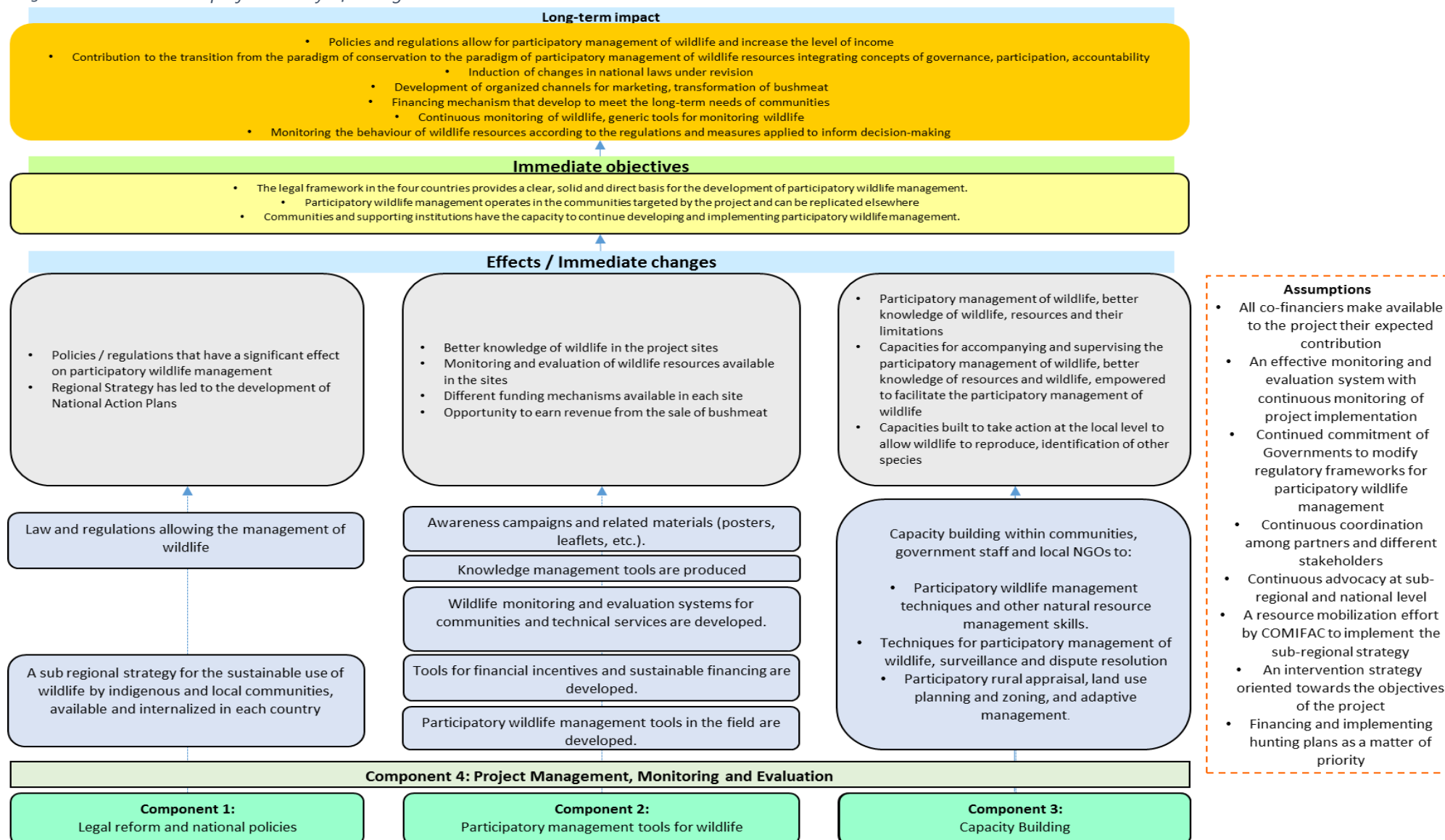
subcomponent 2.1 whose objective is to develop tools for the implementation of participatory wildlife management, to which is linked subcomponent 2.2, which provides for the implementation of funding mechanisms for participatory wildlife and bushmeat management. Once initiated, participatory bushmeat management requires monitoring and evaluation of the state and evolution of wildlife, which is provided for in subcomponent 2.3. Subcomponent 2.4. is linked to the other sub-components, in the sense that it aims at managing the knowledge generated by participatory wildlife and bushmeat management.

36. At the design stage, component 3 is also linked to component 2 and its first 2 subcomponents as it provides for capacity building within communities and capacity building to support communities as a prerequisite for the management and supervision of sustainable wildlife management. The third subcomponent complements the first two; once communities and institutions are able to manage wildlife in a participatory manner, they must acquire additional capacities and skills to replicate and sustain the approach.

37. *Causal relationships between outputs, outcomes and expected effects/impacts.* The regional strategy provides a regional framework for harmonizing policies and regulations at the national level. This framework must not only address the challenges encountered in participatory wildlife and bushmeat management – most importantly the illegal marketing of bushmeat – but also, introduce a new mixed paradigm combining conservation and participatory management. The contribution to the change in national policies should make it possible to change the regulatory texts (through the publication of implementing texts, decrees, etc.) authorizing the sustainable management of bushmeat and its marketing: the legalization of bushmeat marketing will have a definite impact on income levels, the development of the bushmeat sector and the local economy. Similarly, participatory wildlife management tools and funding mechanisms will allow for sound and sustainable wildlife management at selected sites. The capacity building sessions will contribute to building the capacity for participatory wildlife management as well as that needed to oversee participatory wildlife management: thus, the negative impact on protected species will be limited and wildlife management will be sustainable and will not endanger species.

38. *Expected changes.* The changes expected in the short term are: (i) setting in the 4 countries a harmonized framework allowing participatory wildlife and bushmeat management that will help control the evolution of fauna on a large scale, (iii) bushmeat sectors developing at the country level and contributing to national GDP, (ii) communities benefiting from the financial fallouts of effective participatory wildlife and bushmeat management in the sites and, iii) some sustainability in participatory wildlife and bushmeat management that will ensure biodiversity conservation as well as the evolution and development of the sector on a large scale.

Diagram 1: Reconstituted project theory of change



### 3. Findings according to the evaluation criteria

#### 3.1 Relevance

##### **To what extent is the design of the project and its activities responsive to identified needs?**

##### **Key findings**

- *The project is linked to national strategies and priorities in the 4 countries*
- *The project is based on the priority axes of intervention and the strategic axes of the COMIFAC Convergence Plan 2.*
- *It is relevant to the needs of the local population who derive part of their livelihoods from wildlife resources.*
- *The project more explicitly takes into account the direct participation of the local population in wildlife management.*
- *The project intervenes at a strategic and local level with strong community empowerment.*

40. **Policies and strategies.** The project entitled "Sustainable management of wildlife and bushmeat sector in Central Africa" is linked to the national strategies and priorities of the four countries, in particular the National Development Program (NDP 2012-2016) in Congo, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper: Reduce extreme poverty (PRSP2 2011-2015) in CAR (Pillar 3), the Emerging Gabon Strategic Plan (Vision 2025 and Strategic Orientations 2011-2016) (Pillar 1) of Gabon and the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (GPRSP 2; 2011-2015) in the DRC (Pillar 2). The project perfectly meets FAO's five strategic priorities and objectives, including the second and third, which are respectively: "make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable" and "reduce rural poverty".

41. The project is structured according to the intervention priorities and is in line with the strategic objectives of the Central African Forest Commission's (COMIFAC) Convergence Plan 2 for the sustainable management of Central African forest ecosystems, in particular axis 1, which concerns the harmonization of forest and environmental policies, axis 3 and 5, which respectively concern the sustainable management and use of forest resources and socio-economic development and multi-stakeholder participation.

42. The project is aligned with the forest ecosystem conservation and sustainable management policies of the four countries that have made international commitments related to wildlife management and protection, including (i) the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and (ii) the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

43. **Stakeholder needs.** The project is relevant to the needs of the local communities who mainly derive their livelihoods from wildlife resources. In particular, the most vulnerable groups, such as young people, earn their income from hunting in addition to animal protein. The project is all the more relevant as participatory wildlife management takes place in a complex context where the protection and conservation approach predominates, constraining access to wildlife resources. The interests of forest concessionaires, line ministries and communities converge around participatory wildlife management: (i) the line Ministries through their supervision to promote sustainable management of forest ecosystems, (ii) concessionaires who ensure that wildlife

management will not be an obstacle to the certification of its forest management, and (iii) communities which continue to benefit from the income/proteins generated by hunting activity in a sustainable manner.

44. **Design.** The project is based on the findings of the inadequacy of traditional land tenure systems and local rules governing wildlife use, the growth of bushmeat markets, the widespread availability of firearms and metal traps, poor governance and inadequate legal frameworks. The failure of top-down regulations and law enforcement has led to the overexploitation of both protected and unprotected species in the countries of the Congo Basin. The project more explicitly addresses the issue of local community direct participation in wildlife management through the development of necessary tools and capacity building.

45. Component 1 is considered very relevant; it provides a strategic framework at the sub-regional level that can be implemented in each of the four target countries of the project and in the other 6 remaining COMIFAC countries. This strategic framework provides a clear, strong and direct basis for the development of participatory wildlife management. It also provides for a review of national policies and regulatory frameworks, which should help to set the conditions for promoting participatory wildlife and bushmeat management.

46. Component 2 is also relevant because it will generate the necessary tools for participatory wildlife management in the communities targeted by the project. Component 3 is also relevant and is in line with component 2 as it aims at building community capacities and support institutions to further develop and implement participatory wildlife management. Thus components 2 and 3 shall not only contribute to promoting participatory wildlife and bushmeat management once the sub-regional strategy is elaborated and the national regulatory frameworks adjusted, but also support them.

47. In its design, the project incorporates lessons learned from experiences and the use of adapted tools in other wildlife management projects in Central Africa such as: (i) the experience of Hunting Zones (ZICs) in Cameroon with the Wildlife Management Committees (COVAREFs) and, (ii) the experiences of community forestry and the provisional tools produced, in particular TRAFFIC's Central African Bushmeat Monitoring System (SYVBAC).

48. **Strategy and intervention logic.** The aim of the project is to intervene both at the level of sustainable development strategies for the participatory sustainable management of wildlife and the bushmeat sector, and at the local level, on sites. The intervention logic is double: (i) on the one hand, both the strategic and legislative frameworks for the participatory sustainable management of wildlife and bushmeat (sub-regional strategy, national action plan, forest code, etc.) and the technical tools needed in the long term for the participatory sustainable management of wildlife and bushmeat (simple management plan, hunting plan, etc.) are reformed/strengthened; (ii) on the other hand, innovative experiments in community-based wildlife and bushmeat management will be conducted in the sites in collaboration with the target communities of the four countries, at both the socio-organizational and economic levels, with the participation of communities and partner organizations. The implementation of activities at three levels (sub-regional, national and local) is complex because the achievement of results is done at different speeds (the revision of regulatory frameworks takes a long time) and the implementation of participatory wildlife management models in the sites is determined by the review of national regulatory frameworks.

49. At the local level, the field approach involves strong empowerment of local communities, based on detailed diagnoses and analyses of targeted forest ecosystems. The project targets more

vulnerable sites and groups with a direct interest in participatory wildlife management. The approach of local support for local beneficiaries adopted by National Technical Assistants (NTAs), facilitators, international NGOs (IUCN) and international research institutes (CIFOR, and CIRAD), is an appropriate response to imbue project teams with the realities on the ground and promote ownership of the project by beneficiaries.

50. However, the number of partners involved in implementation suggests the need for continued and strong coordination.

51. Despite its consistent and relevant design, it is worth noting that the project formulation is very ambitious and addresses issues related to legal and political reforms. Moreover, the time required to achieve the results, mainly those of component 1, is significantly underestimated. The risk associated with the provision of counterpart funds by the states has not been well taken into account in the formulation of the project. The logical framework has some weaknesses, particularly in terms of result indicators. This influences the performance of the monitoring system, including monitoring progress towards expected results.

### 3.2 Effectiveness

#### **Component 1**

##### **To what extent have the countries' legal frameworks provided an appropriate basis for participatory wildlife management?**

##### **Key findings**

- *The strategy has been developed as well as the 3 NAPs; the analysis of the legal texts has been carried out at the end of the project but the national laws have not yet been revised*
- *Community Forests have been established in Gabon and the DRC (Conventions and ministerial orders).*
- *The organization of hunting and land management is difficult where rights and uses overlap, particularly where the community hunting zone is partially or totally included in the forest concession.*

##### *Subcomponent 1.1. Development of the wildlife management strategy*

52. **The regional strategy for wildlife management was developed and validated through a participatory and inclusive process.** As part of the implementation of **component 1**, the regional strategy for wildlife management was produced, adopted and published by the COMIFAC Council of Ministers in January 2015. It can be seen that the procedures for preparing and validating the regional strategy document for wildlife management are numerous, time-consuming and consuming in terms of human and financial resources: a consultant was recruited to prepare the document, a sub-regional validation workshop was organized in Kigali (Rwanda) in 2014, people had to attend a workshop organized by the COMIFAC sub-working group "Protected Areas and Fauna" in Libreville in 2014 for the presentation of the strategy and its validation and finally a technical validation by COMIFAC took place before the validation and adoption of the document by the Council of Ministers in Bujumbura (Burundi) in January 2015. It took about 1.5 years to start developing the strategy and this was due to the following: (i) there was confusion during discussions within the implementation team between subcomponent 1.1. (strategy development) and subcomponent 1.2. (review of regulatory frameworks, (ii) there was a long debate on the profile of

the consultant to be recruited and the formulation process, and (iii) the clarification on co-financing took time<sup>3</sup>.

53. **Three (03) National Action Plans for Gabon, Congo and CAR were prepared and validated respectively in November 2016, August 2016 and February 2017.** In the DRC, a Plan for the harmonization of the National Environment, Forests, Water and Biodiversity Program (PNEFEB II) and the internalization of the sub-regional strategy for the sustainable use of wildlife by indigenous and local communities was developed and validated in June 2016. These National Plans are budgeted and there is a need to mobilize financial resources to implement them.

#### *Subcomponent 1.2. Review of national regulatory frameworks*

54. **An analysis of laws and regulations, which is essential to the review of national regulatory frameworks, was carried out** late at the end of the project in 2016 by the FAO Legal Service for 3 countries (Congo, Gabon and DRC) while it conditions the revision of national regulatory and policy frameworks: without prior analysis, any change in national laws can lead to further confusion and make law enforcement more problematic. Since the project is closed, the monitoring of the regulatory framework review and the contribution of the project to the amendment of national laws of countries are not guaranteed. In Gabon, the project seized the opportunity offered by the forestry code review in 2015 to integrate into the draft forestry code the provisions relating to participatory wildlife management and the marketing of hunting meat

55. The analysis of the legal framework in the project's target countries revealed the following observations:

- I. hunting takes place on a given territory governed by access rights and in a particular ecosystem, the forest, whose use is also governed by access rights. Hunting takes place in an area where several access rights of different kinds are overlapping;
- II. it has overlapping regulations (generic repeal formula), non-harmonized sectorial texts);
- III. despite the existence of various types of hunting and related authorizations (tourist hunting, sport hunting, traditional or customary hunting, commercial and rural hunting, etc.) which serve different purposes, sectorial laws often consider hunting as a single activity, without making important distinctions with regard to its practice;
- IV. non-recognition of customary land rights; lack of clarity regarding a notion of subsistence and food needs;
- V. lack of specific provisions for the trade in the products deriving from the different types of hunting;
- VI. inadequacy between the concern to preserve certain species and the authorization of certain traditional equipment and practices;
- VII. the absence of hunting plans and rules;
- VIII. the absence of regulations for the monitoring, sanitary control and traceability of hunting products and a discrepancy between regulations and the reality on the ground; and
- IX. lack of law enforcement.

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<sup>3</sup> PIR, July 2012-June 2013.



## **Component 2**

### **To what extent is participatory wildlife management carried out in the communities targeted by the project?**

#### **Key findings**

- *Associations/cooperatives have been structured as well as multi-stakeholder platforms but the functionality of these structures is limited due to lack of funding and weak local governance*
- *Simple Management Plans have been developed and the first plan was implemented in the Ovan Community Forest, but during this implementation phase, local communities gave priority to logging over hunting*
- *Practical Diagnostic Guidelines for Community Hunting Management as well as a practical guide for the development of the sector and a book on participatory wildlife management have been produced*
- *Some measures have been taken by communities to prevent the hunting of protected species by non-Community hunters, however integrated and participatory wildlife management through the implementation of hunting plans is not yet effective.*

56. **Component 2** focuses on participatory wildlife management. This model was to be developed in the communities targeted by the project and replicated elsewhere.

57. **Despite the establishment of Community Forests in Ovan and Djoutou (Gabon), Baego and Maduda<sup>4</sup> in the DRC and the implementation of the SMP in Ovan (Gabon) with the support of the project, participatory wildlife management on the basis of a finalized hunting plan has not yet been achieved in the communities targeted by the project.**

58. To develop the activities, FAO signed Letters of Agreement with technical and institutional partners including CIRAD, CIFOR, IUCN, Brainforest, local NGOs and the Community Forestry Directorate of the Ministry of Forest Economy, Fisheries and Environment, responsible for the protection and management of Gabon's ecosystems.

#### *Subcomponent 2.1. Awareness raising*

59. **The delineation of the Management Units took place in all the project sites.** This delineation depended on the specific context of each site: (i) forest operators were present in the Ngombe Forest, and this led to an overlap of the Community Hunting Management Unit with the FMU, (ii) forest operators were present in Ovan (Gabon) but there were community forest spaces that are not under concession and, (iii) in Baego in the DRC, the delineation of the Management Unit initiated at the start of the project was relaunched in 2015 because the targeted communities did not own the area.

60. **Different models of the Participatory Wildlife Management Unit have been set up depending on the regulatory context of the countries.** In Gabon, two final community forest award agreements have been signed between the legal entities (cooperatives) of community forest

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<sup>4</sup> 5 community forests have been established in the DRC.

management and the Ministry of Forest Economy, Fisheries and Environment, in charge of the protection and management of ecosystems for the allocation of community forests in Ovan and Djoutou. In Congo (Ngombe), the tripartite agreement (Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development, IFO and local communities) for the setting up of a community hunting zone in the IFO concession could not be finalized. In the DRC, ministerial orders allocating local community forests have been issued by provincial ministries for the setting up of 5 local community forest concessions in the project sites.

61. Choosing the community forestry option instead of hunting grounds has limitations for the project in Gabon; the simple management plan for the Ovan Community Forest is implemented for timber exploitation and not for the participatory management of wildlife and the bushmeat sector as intended by the project. Timber exploitation is beyond the control of the communities and is managed by the multi-actor platform managed by the local authorities. The project's objectives have been diverted to the exploitation of timber, the profits of which are used to finance social projects (electrification) in an uncertain governance context that limits community empowerment.

62. The community hunting zones established in Congo are overlapping with the forest concession already exploited as part of a management plan by the IFO forest group. The forest concessionaire approved the idea of the project but did not want to sign an agreement at the end of the project binding him to the association for fear of being forced to finance income-generating activities.

63. The project helped in **structuring communities and facilitating the formation of associations/Cooperatives such as in Ovan (Cooperatives) and Liouesso (Associations) with statutes and internal regulations. However, these associations or cooperatives are not yet functional.** The project also helped to strengthen multi-stakeholder platforms in sites where they existed, such as Liouesso, and to facilitate their establishment in other sites. In the DRC, in Baego (Kisangani), 3 associations were set up, one for notables, one for women and one for bushmeat sellers: the project supported the associations in establishing their statutes and internal regulations<sup>5</sup>.

64. In Liouesso (Congo), due to lack of funding, no income-generating activities could be developed by the association, as the members of the Steering Committee were based in remote villages and it was not easy for them to meet to plan activities.

65. **Structured communities have adopted some measures such as granting hunting permits to hunters who do not belong to the community and deferred grazing or raising awareness to prevent the hunting of protected species.** In Liouesso, thanks to the data collected, the association was able to sensitize hunters on not hunting certain protected species. As a result of its existence, the Liouesso association (Congo) has strengthened the control of hunters from outside the country: unless they poach, they must obtain the association's approval before hunting. In the three community forests in Kisangani, external hunters must obtain the approval of the Local Community Forest management structure and pay access fees. In Maduda, there was no hunting in the hunting zone for three years (2015-2018), except in fields where traditional rodent traps are allowed to protect crops.

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<sup>5</sup>The evaluation mission could not cross-check this information because it did not visit the project sites in the DRC.



66. Thanks to the project, the Liouesso (Congo), Ovan (Gabon) and Kisangani (DRC) associations were able to identify existing weapons in the community area: in Liouesso, in particular, thanks to the authority of landowners, weapons that had not been declared because they were old could be identified. However, this draft organization of hunting is limited by the challenge of having firearms and hunting licenses because they are too expensive and require additional transport costs.

67. There is a local draft organization of the bushmeat sector in Liouesso (Congo) thanks to the links established between the association and bushmeat traders. However, the development of the bushmeat sector is restricted by the law which prohibits the sale/purchase of bushmeat and by the fact that the association does not have the means to further organize hunting.

68. In Ovan, Gabon, the challenge of timber exploitation, which is very lucrative, and the interference of the authorities have not help in stabilizing the Association's Executive Committee. Since November 2016, an interim president supported by a Secretary General but without a treasurer has been managing the cooperative to the great dissatisfaction of the delegates elected by the communities, who are calling for elections to be held as soon as possible so that the cooperative can benefit from timber exploitation in the community forest.

69. The Rougier forest operators in Gabon and IFO in Congo wanted to contribute to the implementation of the project, in particular by participating in the mapping exercise, hoping that this would enable them to structure the hunting activity in their concession to meet the needs of forest management certification. However, at the end of the project, the hunting grounds remained without status, quotas were not set, the monitoring index was not established, hunting plans were not completed, species were hunted and their behavior was not well known by the communities, all these prevented the organization of hunting and the management of hunting grounds. A draft charter was prepared in collaboration with IFO, which refused to sign it, Rougier having withdrawn from the implementation of the project quite early because of a difference in design in terms of management.

70. In Congo, the forest area granted to local communities as a community area is 90,000 hectares. All forests in northern Congo are already classified as protected areas or forest concessions.

#### *Subcomponent 2.2. Field tools.*

71. Communities are beginning to show signs of impatience and are demanding the implementation of the project even in sites where most activities have been carried out. This is confirmed by a recommendation of the fourth meeting of the project sub-regional steering committee held from 04 to 05 March 2016 in Kinshasa: It appeared that the conditions were not met at some sites to achieve the desired effect of the project; it was considered to reduce project support at these sites (Ingolo 1 (Congo); Maduda (DRC) and Moloukou (CAR). It was therefore recommended that the project focus from 2016 on sites with a greater chance of success, including Liouesso (Congo), Djoutou (Gabon), Beago (DRC) and Nguengueli (CAR). The diagnoses and tools produced and presented in the following paragraph do not directly meet the needs of the populations and none of the tools are completely appropriate and used by the communities. The tools developed do not really allow for operational monitoring of resource management at the community level.

72. **Simple Management Plans (SMP) have been developed:(i) the implementation of the Simple Community Forest Management Plan of Ngokoela (Ovan) has started, (ii) a draft Simple**

Management Plan has been prepared in Liouesso but its validation and implementation has not started, and (iii) the local community forests of the Maduda sites and the 3 community forests (Uma B-Tshopo, Medi Bapo and Gradi B-Mogo) in DRC also have a SMP and a CAP whose implementation has started. Community Action Plans have been developed whenever there was a SMP. The preparation of Hunting Plans was initiated but not completed, mainly because of the poor capacity of facilitators and communities at the national level with regard to the recommended methods. It was planned, as part of a LOA between the project and CIRAD, to develop a hunting plan for each site, which was not carried out. Only a framework for the development of a hunting plan was produced. Table 1 presents the progress in the development and implementation of these various plans. Simple Management Plans are eclectic and include different types of activities related to fishing, agriculture and hunting. Hunting is one activity to be developed among others and the proposed activities have not received particular attention: priority has not been given to the implementation of hunting activities.

Table 1: Progress in the development and implementation of the various plans

	Development	Implementation
<b>Simple Management Plans</b>	Gabon: +	Gabon: +
	Congo: +	Congo: -
	CAR <sup>6</sup> : +	CAR: -
	DRC <sup>7</sup> : + <sup>8</sup>	DRC: +
<b>Community Action Plan</b>	Gabon: +	Gabon: -
	Congo: +	Congo: -
	CAR: -	CAR: -
	DRC:-	DRC: -
<b>Hunting plan</b>	Gabon: -	Gabon: -
	Congo: -	Congo: -
	CAR: -	CAR: -
	DRC: -	DRC: -

- Negative, +positive, Source: Interviews, SMP, 2017

### Subcomponent 2.3. Knowledge management tools

73. The various partnerships developed as part of the implementation of the project resulted in the following outputs: **(i) a practical guide and examples of application in Central Africa on the in-depth diagnosis for the implementation of community-based village hunting management (2017)**, **(ii) a practical guide on the development of the sector (2017)**, **(iii) a book on local communities and sustainable wildlife use in Central Africa (2017)**. The project's achievements in terms of knowledge and participatory management models have been capitalized in the development of a global Program for sustainable wildlife management to improve the living conditions of local populations funded by the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) to the tune of 45 million euros.

<sup>6</sup> The evaluation mission did not cross-check the information collected from the implementation team because it did not have the opportunity to visit the sites in the CAR. The mission did not have access to the CAR's SMPs in either electronic or paper format.

<sup>7</sup> The evaluation mission did not cross-check the information collected from the implementation team because it did not have the opportunity to visit the sites in the DRC. The mission did not have access to the DRC's SMPs in either electronic or paper format.

<sup>8</sup> 7 plans were developed in the DRC, 1 in the CAR and 1 incomplete in the CAR.

**To what extent has the project achieved the expected results in relation to the most vulnerable populations and target groups such as women?**

**Key findings**

- *A synthesis of the reference situation of livestock populations at the project intervention sites in Gabon, Congo and DRC was carried out by CIRAD*
- *Communities are now aware of the importance of a sustainable and participatory management of their land's resources;*
- *The adoption of monitoring techniques or indicators by communities for resource monitoring is limited*
- *In general, no activities were developed for the benefit of vulnerable populations and women due to the lack of a funding mechanism*
- *Training will only benefit the most vulnerable groups and women if activities are developed.*

*Subcomponent 2.4. Sustainable financing and incentives.*

74. **So far, no dedicated funding mechanism has been set up to finance income-generating activities which would enable the funding of participatory wildlife management.** Some income-generating activities have been developed namely in Ovan, Gabon, through timber exploitation; the mechanism for redistributing the income generated is not yet functional and the income is not used to implement the sustainable wildlife management model. Similarly, in the DRC, income-generating activities have been developed, such as collective ponds, but they do not directly concern hunting as indicated on page 35 of the project document ('Sustainable financing' and incentives'). In Liouesso, Congo, the forest operator finances a local development fund (up to US\$ 70,000 per year) not dedicated to hunting and covering all the villages in the concession (1 million hectares).

*Subcomponent 2.5. Wildlife monitoring.*

75. A global synthesis of the reference situation of livestock populations covering the period between July 2015 and June 2016, was conducted at the project intervention sites by CIRAD.

76. **Communities are now aware of the importance of a sustainable and participatory management of their land's resources;** but the adoption of monitoring techniques or indicators for the monitoring of the resource by communities is still limited. Wildlife inventories were conducted at all targeted sites but in a deferred and differentiated manner, as part of student dissertations. Studies entitled Wildlife Mapping and Index Tracking were carried out at the Ingolo (Congo- and Liouesso (Congo) sites. In Ovan (Gabon) and Baego Kisangani, mixed studies combining analysis of the sector and inventory of the resource were carried out. In Phalanga (DRC) in the Lower Congo, there has been a faunal diagnosis based on hunting management. The dates of presentation of this work are shown in Table 2<sup>9</sup>. These inventories are baseline studies: a monitoring of the resource (quantity, species hunted) was carried out with the communities that recorded in notebooks the quantities and species hunted per hunter. However, these notebooks were taken over by project staff, and the data analysis was not returned to the communities. Similarly, photos taken by trap cameras were viewed by hunters, but the analysis of the data in terms of the presence of species/frequency in the demarcated areas was not returned to the

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<sup>9</sup> These are the dates of presentation of the reports or studies conducted by the students.

communities as concerns the Ovan site. Concerning the DRC, results and photos were projected in Maduda, Baego and even in the community forests of Uma B-Tshopo, Medi Bapo and Gradi B-Mogo<sup>10</sup>.

*Table 2: Resource and bushmeat sector inventory studies*

Sites	Resource evaluation studies	Mixed studies	Date
<b>Ingolo (Congo)</b>	Wildlife mapping and index tracking	-	October 2014
<b>Liouesso (Congo)</b>	Mapping of a village land and index tracking of wildlife	-	November 2014
<b>Ovan (Gabon)</b>	-	Sector and inventory (Transect)	October 2015
<b>Baego Kisangani (DRC)</b>	-	Wildlife and sector diagnosis	September 2014
<b>Phalanga Maduda (DRC)</b>	Faunal diagnosis	-	October 2014
<b>Phalanga Maduda (DRC)</b>		Diagnosis Hunting activities/Bushmeat sector	2015

Source: Study reports, 2014, 2015

77. Several *challenges* underpinned by the apparent lack of coordination have hampered the implementation of Component 2 activities. The most important are: (i) absence of FAO teams, such as the Gabonese NTA, who was not site-based after partners refused to facilitate participatory management processes due to lack of co-financing, the inefficiency of the CAR NTA which was periodically or due to changes in implementation modalities (withdrawal of partners from implementation), or the inefficiency of NTAs due to the impossibility of implementing activities in two sites far apart from each other, (ii) the lack of communication between partners and stakeholders; For example, CIFOR was not involved in the other components of the project (1 and 3); (iii) the lack of focus on the development and implementation of hunting plans as a priority, (iv) the time-limited, one-year renewable LoAs did not allow CIFOR/CIRAD partners to work in a sustainable way; they thus worked on a case-by-case basis, (v) there was no shared project implementation strategy between the different partners at the outset of the project and from the design phase; this was due to the absence of a theory of change, and the lack of cohesion of the project team due to the number of countries involved and the dispersion of sites, (vi) the choice of sites that was not reasoned from the outset and was not defined according to available funding and, (vii) states that did not agree to take exceptional regulatory measures, partners and local communities that did not accept the responsibility to innovate.

### **Component 3**

***To what extent have supporting communities and institutions built adequate capacities to further develop and implement participatory wildlife management?***

#### **Key findings**

- *As tools were developed and diagnoses made, efforts were made to build the capacity of beneficiaries*
- *Institutional capacity building has been initiated at the national level, NPCs have mainly benefited from it*

<sup>10</sup> The evaluation mission could not cross-check this information because it did not visit the project sites in the DRC.

- *There is still a long way to go to achieve the desired result in terms of adequate capacity to implement participatory wildlife management.*

78. **Component 3 focuses on building the capacity of communities and support institutions to further develop and implement participatory wildlife management.**

79. Workshops were organized at the regional level for the benefit of field/national staff, such as the one held in 2015, aimed at building technical capacity in facilitating simple management plan development processes, including the hunting plan planning and process development workshop held from 12 to 14 October 2016 in Brazzaville.

80. **In general, training accompanied the implementation of Component 2 activities, most often through launching/monitoring workshops on the implementation of one of Component 2 activities:** (i) For example, the capacities of beneficiaries and officials representing the local government were strengthened during the launching workshops for the establishment of community forests in Ovan and Djoutou (Gabon), (ii) similarly, three water and forest agents were trained in bushmeat data collection, and six people in Liouesso, Ingolo1, Ibe and Ingolo2 villages in Congo were trained in demographic data collection.

81. **Communities and other stakeholders were broadly introduced to the following themes during the implementation of the various activities of component 2, namely:** (i) GOSS data collection methods and the Kobocollect tool at sessions held in particular in Djoutou, Ingolo 1 and Liouesso, (ii) Participatory Wildlife Management, (iii) Regulatory Provisions for Forest Resource Management, (iv) Community Forest or ACC Establishment Process, (iv) Community Forestry and Sustainable Natural Resource Management, (v) The Process for Developing Natural Resource Management Rules, (vi) The Process for Developing Community Action Plans, (vii) The Process for Developing ACC or CF Simple Management Plans, (viii) Management of a community organization (association or cooperative), (ix) Techniques used to carry out layering and inventory work, (x) Use of technical field tools (GPS, Compass, Map, Clisimeter). Table 3 presents the themes to which the local population (LP) and local government officials (LGOs) have been initiated. The evaluation mission however considers the figures presented in this table with caution given the difficulties encountered by the project team such as the suspension of activities in the CAR for 2 years, the suspension of activities in the second site in the RC and Gabon. The initiation of populations and local authorities was incomplete and fragmented.

*Table 3: Themes addressed during the various training or capacity building sessions*

Main themes addressed	DRC		R. Congo		Gabon		CAR		Total
	LGO <sup>11</sup>	LP	LG O	LP	LG O	LP	LG O	LP	
Participatory wildlife management	27	248	0	34	17	120	15	192	653
Regulatory provisions for forest resource management	76	168	0	0	15	125	15	192	591
Community forest or ACC establishment process	14	241	10	98	23	134	15	192	727
Community forestry and sustainable natural resource management	18	115	0	34	15	130	15	192	519
Process for developing natural resource management rules	31	115	25	180	17	140	13	150	671

<sup>11</sup> LGO: Local Government Officials, LP: Local population

Process for Developing Community Action Plans	42	143	15	188	23	105	13	150	679
Process for Developing ACC or CF Simple Management Plans	14	148	20	230	26	150	13	150	751
Management of a community organization (association or cooperative)	12	65	4	34	12	95	15	192	429
Techniques used to carry out layering and inventory work	11	60	0	8	25	25	8	22	159
Use of technical field tools (GPS, Compass, Map, Clisimeter)	11	60	0	3	15	10	8	22	129
The use of Smartphones and the Kobocollect application	10	55	0	23	15	20	2	4	129
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>1418</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>1054</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>1458</b>	<b>5437</b>

Source: Progress report July-December 2015

82. Foreign and national students were also trained as part of the implementation of the project, particularly during the preparation of the diagnoses. These students were supervised by experts from CIRAD, CIFOR and sometimes by NTAs. Table 2 summarizes students' work carried out during the implementation of the project.

83. **Training sessions were organized to build the capacities of the target populations, local authorities and civil servants involved in the implementation of the project.** In Gabon, a capacity building mission for associations took place in July 2016. Similarly, in Maduda, a workshop was organized for the benefit of communities, which resulted in the setup of two companies (ICG-MAP - Phalanga Mbuda Common Interest Group and PRODELUT - Luangu and Tsundi Development Program)<sup>12</sup>. Specific training sessions were organized at the Gabon, Congo and DRC sites on wildlife data monitoring using the GOSS and Kobocollect method as well as on Market Analysis and Development (MA&D).

### 3.3 Impact

#### **To what extent has the project made progress towards achieving its preset conservation and development objectives?**

##### **Key finding**

*Despite the significant progress made by the project towards these objectives and which could provide a strong base for similar efforts in the future, the project is close to its end date and has not achieved its preset conservation and development objectives.*

84. **Overall assessment.** Impact analysis is limited to the analysis of potential impact and initial observations. At the current stage of implementation, there is no significant real impact of the field achievements, given that hunting plans do not exist and not all validated SMPs are fully implemented: the only implemented SMP does not give priority to hunting but to timber exploitation, which should have been a preliminary stage during which the community would have generated income to finance the hunting plan.

85. **Assessment per component.** As for Component 1: Building on the impacts of other projects (Gabon), the project made it possible to initiate the paradigm shift from the protection of wildlife

<sup>12</sup> The evaluation team did not travel to the DRC: It was not able to cross-check the information collected from the project team with information collected from other sources.

in all directions to a paradigm where conservation is combined with participatory exploitation to help improve food security and family income.

86. The impact of the project on national policies and their supporting regulations – at different levels – is not yet concrete and is not yet guaranteed given that this process of legal text review has not been completed. For the project's impact to materialize, governments will need to ensure consistency between national policies and regulations and the sub-regional strategy and to complete the processes of reviewing these policies using their own resources or those of similar projects.

87. At the national level, Wildlife and Bushmeat Marketing departments have been set up, namely in Gabon, or have been strengthened thanks to the project activities (Congo).

88. With regard to *Component 2*, the existence of associations and cooperatives – although lacking operating resources, without finalized and operational tools for sustainable wildlife management – and the development of fisheries and agriculture can be an element of sustainability provided that they become operational quickly and that they set up endogenous financing mechanisms. The participatory structuring of the communities into cooperatives has raised awareness of the sustainable management of their land's resources (Ovan and Liouesso).

89. *With regard to Component 3*, once communities develop income-generating activities and make associations/cooperatives functional, they will be able to make use of the training received. The beneficiaries received training as part of the implementation of component 2: they received training on Market Analysis and Development (MA&D), the use of data collection tools, and were introduced to the different tools used in the diagnosis process. As for project staff, one of the main training courses<sup>13</sup> provided was an introduction to facilitating the process of developing the SMP and hunting plans (October 2016).

### 3.4 Efficiency

#### 3.4.1 Key findings related to co-financing, project monitoring & evaluation quality and implementation and execution quality

- *The recommendations of the mid-term evaluation were only partially implemented*
- *The complex design and institutional set-up limited the implementation of the project*
- *The absence of a formalized monitoring and evaluation system had a negative effect on reporting and project implementation: the development of an M&E system was aborted from the start of the project*
- *The Partnership was partially effective because the number and nature of expected outputs had been reduced*
- *Implementation focused on research activities led by CIFOR and CIRAD to the detriment of an operational orientation of the project*
- *All strategic and orientation decisions of the project were taken within the framework of sub-regional steering committees or extraordinary meetings*

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<sup>13</sup> The complete list of training courses is presented in Table 3.



- *Three technical workshops bringing together the project teams and technical partners (CIFOR, CIRAD, IUCN) more specifically determined the overall implementation approach.*
- *Sporadic and discontinuous coordination did not allow regular monitoring of the partnership and the implementation of activities*
- *Co-financing was not fully effective*

90. **The recommendations of the mid-term evaluation were partially implemented.** The recruitment of the International Consultant assuming CTA responsibilities was carried out at the end of November 2016, whereas the mid-term evaluation recommended it in July 2015. Advocacy with the Ministries for the rapid adoption of laws on wildlife and bushmeat management and for the timely implementation of component 2 activities has been partially achieved: no laws have been amended to date. The M&E system has not been put in place, the gender strategy has not been developed and national policies for participatory wildlife management have not been implemented.

91. **The complex design and institutional set-up limited the implementation of the project:** there were 4 countries of intervention with remote/country sites, different levels of implementation (sub-regional, national and local), a change in the composition of the project team compared to what was foreseen in the formulation report and only 1 budgeted vehicle that was made available to the project team in Gabon.

92. The project objectives were ambitious with an unrealistic logical framework in terms of outputs and outcomes; this led to a continuous and late adaptation of targets at the activity level. The multiplication of sites at the design stage was unrealistic compared to the funds available, as evidenced by the abandonment of sites in the process of implementation: The Sub-Regional Steering Committee of 4 and 5 March 2016, i.e. a year and a half before the end of the project, decided to concentrate efforts on a limited number of sites.

93. **The partnership was partially effective because the number and nature of the outputs expected and included in the formulation report and even in the LoAs signed after 2014, were reduced as the project was implemented.** In one of the LoAs between the project and CIRAD, it was planned to develop a hunting plan for each site and this was not fully implemented. The development of hunting plans was initiated by a self-assessment of achievements per pilot site to identify the information available to conduct this exercise: only one site had enough information. Despite this, the development of hunting management plans began in 3 sites whose results were not considered satisfactory<sup>14</sup> by the project team, which preferred not to involve the communities further in this process due to time constraints.

94. During the Steering Committees, the requirements of conservation NGOs for greater technical rigor led to a focus **on the implementation of research activities led by CIFOR and CIRAD rather than a more operational orientation of the project.** The diagnostic reports prepared by the students are of very high quality, and could have been the basis for the development of guides and publications. A cognitive research approach was favored over operational/action research, which was intended to help initiate the implementation of pilot models for participatory wildlife management.

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<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that the evaluation team did not have access to the draft hunting management plans.



95. **While this project is supposed to be pilot and experimental, it has been restricted by existing legislation, and sporadic coordination:** given the innovative nature of the project, no advocacy has been conducted at the local level to allow the emergence of a model where bushmeat marketing would be authorized locally. The international consultant responsible for coordination<sup>15</sup> was recruited late in 2016, which did not significantly improve the effectiveness of the project as there was a simultaneous termination of on-site facilitator/NTA contract.

96. The sub-regional governance body played its role effectively and supported operational decisions aiming at adjusting the project implementation modalities in order to address various constraints, including constraints related to finance, insecurity in CAR or coordination. **All strategic and orientation decisions of the project were taken within the framework of sub-regional steering committees or extraordinary meetings.** Among them: (i) the decision to terminate the CTA contract taken during the sub-regional extraordinary meeting of 28 February 2014 and, (ii) the decision to focus on one site per country taken during the Steering Committee meeting held from 4 to 5 March 2016, (iii) the decision to restart activities in the CAR taken during the Steering Committee meeting of 28 February 2014 and, (iv) the budget reviews which were successively decided during the Steering Committees of 3 March 2015 and 4/5 March 2016.

97. **There has been no systematic and regular organization of steering committee meetings to review progress reports and national AWP:** for example, the Sub-Regional Steering Committee did not hold a session in 2013, it is not certain that the DRC held Steering Committees as there are no minutes, and the CAR only held one in 2013. Gabon and the Republic of Congo held 3 National Steering Committees in 2013, 2015 and 2016, and 2012, 2015 and 2016 respectively. Table 4 presents the dates of the sub-regional and national steering committees.

98. The content of the National Steering Committees' reports rarely include a statement of project expenditure, except the 2013 Steering Committee in Gabon.

*Table 4: Dates of the Steering Committees meetings at sub-regional and national level*

Type of Committee / Year of organization	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Sub-regional Steering Committee</b>	December		24 January 28 February (extraordinary meeting)	3 March	4-5 March	21-22 June
<b>National Steering Committee</b>						
<b>Republic of Congo</b>	11-13 December			20 January	8 January	
<b>Democratic Republic of Congo</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Gabon</b>		27 November		15 January	7 December	
<b>Central African Republic</b>		8 August				

Source: Minutes of the Steering Committees, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2017

<sup>15</sup> As recommended by the Mid-Term Evaluation and also by the 2015 Steering Committee, which recommended that the recruitment of a Regional Coordinator be included in the budget review.

99. **The intervention strategy is top-down and discontinuous, as evidenced by sub-regional planning, which comes before by national planning in some cases** (cf. organization of Steering Committees) and/or the organization of sub-regional and national Steering Committees at very different dates. Thus, the National Steering Committees were either scheduled after the Sub-Regional Steering Committees except in 2015 or the dates of the Steering Committees' meetings at both levels were very different (2016), which confirms the real limits of the project's implementation and coordination mechanism.

100. **The absence of a formalized *monitoring and evaluation* system had a negative effect on reporting and project implementation:** there was no real-time monitoring of activities to make the necessary decisions despite the various support from international consultants; this support was not capitalized by the project due to lack of coordination.

101. The M&E System was non-existent throughout the project although a draft M&E system was developed as early as 2013 and missions were conducted in all intervention countries to initiate the implementation of this system and establish a baseline situation. This process was not completed since the second mission of the Consultant recruited on this subject did not take place: the data collection and processing system was not implemented although it had advantages. Indeed, the recommended system established a link between ecological and socio-economic studies/diagnostics as well as wildlife inventories, which should have served as baseline studies and project monitoring and evaluation indicators. This system also provided for impact studies at mid-term and at the end of the project. These could have informed the mid-term and final evaluations of the project. Moreover, the monitoring and evaluation system could have been used as a partnership management tool. The absence of a monitoring and evaluation system delayed operational decision-making: it was only the annual Steering Committees that took a number of these decisions.

102. Regular progress reports on the project were prepared annually and sent to the GEF using the donor format called Progress Implementation Report (PIR). The physical and financial implementation rates are not included in the various progress reports. There was no review of the logical framework at mid-term, although the mid-term evaluation mission stressed that the project could not achieve the expected objectives: this resulted in uneven reporting using indicators that were not in line with the initial indicators included in the logical framework. In addition, the reporting was not fully in line with what was foreseen in the formulation report, since the quarterly implementation reports provided for in the project document had not been prepared. There are almost no semi-annual or annual reports per country, except for Gabon.

*Table 5<sup>16</sup>: Semi-annual and annual reports produced at project level and per country*

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Semi-annual report</b>					
<b>All the project</b>		July-December	July-December	January-June July-December	
<b>Gabon</b>	January-June	January-June	January-June		
<b>Annual report</b>			Progress report		Completion report

<sup>16</sup> This table has been prepared on the basis of documents provided by the sub-regional coordination.

PIR	July 2013	2012-June	July 2014	2013-June	July 2015	2014-June	July 2016	2015-June	July 2017	2016-June
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Source: Sub-regional Coordination, 2017

103. **Three technical workshops<sup>17</sup> bringing together the project teams and technical partners (CIFOR, CIRAD, IUCN) more specifically determined the overall implementation approach.** The objective of these workshops was to guide the project technically and more specifically: (i) the first workshop focused on defining an overview of the process to be facilitated by the project as well as the approaches and tools to be used during the diagnostic phase, (ii) the second workshop focused on an analysis of the tools to be used during the preparation of a roadmap for phase 2 of the participatory management process at the pilot site level and (iii) the third workshop focused on building technical capacity in facilitating the processes for developing simple management plans and presenting a model for organizing hunting. In addition, a technical workshop was held in Brazzaville in October 2016 on technical capacity building in facilitating hunting plan development processes.

104. **Sporadic and discontinuous coordination did not allow regular monitoring of the partnership and the implementation of activities.** This is evidenced by the recruitment on three occasions of an international consultant to prepare annual progress reports and PIRs. The preparation of annual or semi-annual reports<sup>18</sup> was also delayed in some cases: for example, the progress report from July to December 2014 was prepared as part of a consultation from April to June 2015 and that from July to December 2015, as part of a consultation from April to July 2016. On the other hand, reporting to the GEF was done on time: the PIR covering the period July 2014 to July 2015 was drafted as part of the consultation from April to July 2015 and the one covering the period July 2015 to July 2016, as part of the consultation from April to July 2016.

105. The project coordination was further impacted by the fact that there was no international coordinating consultant (like CTA) except for a few months during the last three years of the project, despite the existence of funds and in accordance with what was foreseen in the formulation report. However, as early as 2014, the mid-term evaluation mission and the Steering Committee recommended that a CTA be recruited as early as 2015. The International Consultant responsible for the tasks of a CTA was finally recruited late – for 10 months, at the end of the project – at a time when NTA contracts were expiring, and field activities were almost complete.

106. Financial monitoring of the project was not easy given that: (i) the Fund Manager was located in the Sub-Regional Coordination, national planning was sometimes delayed (AWP), (ii) the Fund Manager did not have an overall annual and country budget at the beginning of each year and (iii) expenses were recorded on the project budget code but were deferred, making it difficult to monitor the remaining funds and therefore to make real-time decisions on new activities to be developed or on the direction to be given to the project at sub-regional and national levels. The unstructured budget management and uneven information in the various progress reports had a negative impact on the implementation of the project and the achievement of the expected results.

<sup>17</sup> These workshops were held in November 2013, 7-8 January 2015 and 5-11 July 2015.

<sup>18</sup> According to the project document, the semi-annual report (and by extension the annual report) must be prepared no later than one month after the end of the relevant semester (see Project Document, page 109, Semi-annual Project Report).

The executing agency, FAO, did not develop a "baby budget project" at the national level for the implementation of the project despite the recommendation of the mid-term evaluation mission.

107. **Co-financing has not been fully effective on part of Governments, CIFOR, IUCN due to lack of fund-raising**, only one co-financing has been reported: RAPAC reimbursed FAO for the development of the sub-regional strategy. The partnerships announced in the project have been converted into LoA service delivery contracts for CIFOR, CIRAD, IUCN, Brainforest, the Ministry of Forest Economy, Fisheries and Environment, responsible for the protection and management of ecosystems through the Community Forest Directorate. Thanks to LoAs, government involvement has led to a better appropriation and participation of the staff of the Ministry of Forest Economy, Fisheries and Environment, responsible for the protection and management of ecosystems in Gabon compared to other countries, although the initial objectives were diverted to timber exploitation (Ovan). However, FAO and the governments of Gabon, Congo, DRC and CAR contributed mainly in the form of time spent by their officials (NPC, Drivers, Administrative Assistants, Sub-regional NTA in the case of Gabon).

108. In the absence of periodic, consolidated and certified financial reports, the evaluation mission assessed the actual co-financing of the project on the basis of the information collected and cross-checked. To calculate the contribution of each stakeholder, the evaluation mission made a number of assumptions: (i) the contribution of governments consists in providing the project with the NPC, the driver and the administrative assistant. The full salaries of these three people (although the NPC did not work full-time) were recorded as contributions in kind from governments<sup>19</sup>, (ii) the contribution of CIRAD and CIFOR, in the form of expertise, was estimated on the basis of their statements mentioned in the invoices sent to the project. The evaluation mission assumed that the contribution of CIFOR and CIRAD was the same for all LOAS, (ii) IUCN's contribution was established on the basis of the signed LOA and its amendment for a service to be provided in the CAR, and is equivalent to the salary of IUCN staff, (iii) the contribution of the beneficiary communities was not recorded as presented by the project because there are no tangible elements of this contribution in the field other than participation in some training or meetings and, (iv) the FAO contribution was estimated on the basis of the approximate salary of the LTO/CTA throughout the project, plus an amount corresponding to the rental costs of the premises where NTAs and administrative assistants were hosted, the rental costs of CTA accommodation in the regional office. Table 6 therefore presents the co-financing of the project as estimated by the final evaluation mission. The rate of co-financing mobilized and executed at the end of the project amounts to approximately 25 per cent of the co-financing provided for in the formulation.

*Table 6: Reconstitution of stakeholder contributions*

Partners	Estimate of co-financing received	Initial forecasts
CAR	156,000	450,000
DRC	156,000	424,000
Gabon	156,000	610,000
CAR	157,500	878,000
FAO	990,000	2,000,000
IUCN	13,000	1,000,000
RAPAC	36,000	145,000
Rare	-	30,000

<sup>19</sup> In the case of Gabon and the DRC only, a space has been allocated by the government to host the NTA. The calculation assumptions adopted are optimistic and cover these contributions for these two countries.

Rougier	-	653,700
COMIFAC	-	35,000
CIFOR	80,000	160,000
CIRAD	276,000	150,000
INCEF	-	144,000
Local communities	-	1,250,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,020,500</b>	<b>7,929,700</b>

Source: Final Evaluation Mission for the Project relating to the sustainable Management of the Wildlife and Bushmeat Sector, 2017

### 3.4.2 Main findings relating to the analysis of financial implementation

- *Outsourcing the drafting of progress reports and PIRs reduces efficiency*
- *Co-financing has been partially carried out in some cases and replaced by LoAs for the benefit of organizations co-financing the project*
- *The proportion of funds that was given to communities was limited even in terms of capacity building*
- *Human Resource Management was not optimal because the project failed to entrust the administrative assistance with the implementation of the M&E system, even though she had the necessary skills and qualifications*
- *The Statement of Expenditure is presented as part of GEF funds only; the disbursement rate of GEF funding is 101% while the Overall Financial Execution/Disbursement Rate is close to 50%*
- *There has been an increase in expenses and transaction costs as the project moved on, due to the dispersion of sites, the repetition of similar studies on the same site, the organization of many workshops*
- *There was an overrun in some categories; travel, operating costs, professional salaries multiplied by 2.6, 11.5, 4.2*

109. The lack of financial monitoring per year and per component and sub-component does not allow the physical implementation rate to be compared with the overall financial implementation rate and per component/sub-component.

110. Project teams at the national level do not have real-time information on budget consumption, which limits their visibility with regard to the implementation of activities in the field. Indeed, they do not know the cumulative amount of disbursements made for their project at a time nor the amount available for the rest of the year.

111. **It would have been more efficient to have progress reports written by the project team members rather than** by an international consultant who was not involved in the implementation of the project.

112. *Assessment per component. As concerns the implementation of Component 1, the process of validating the strategy but also the National Action Plans (NAPs) was cumbersome and time-consuming in relation to the duration of the project and financial resources in terms of workshops organized for this purpose.*

113. For Component 2, FAO has signed LoAs with international organizations (CIFOR, CIRAD, IUCN), local NGOs (Brainforest, Gabon environment), for the development of wildlife monitoring

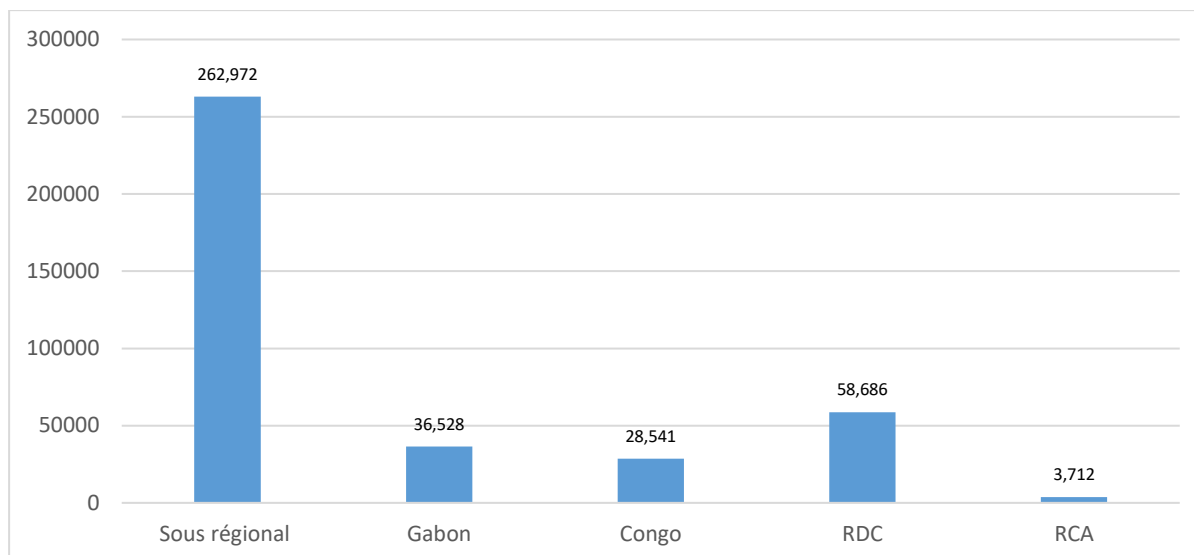
and management tools. At the level of the entire project, co-financing was not fully mobilized, particularly from the technical partners (CIFOR-IUCN) who, at the time of project design, were expected to contribute to implementation but who, in implementation, acted partly as service providers and partly as contributors. The LoAs signed with the partners who were supposed to co-finance thus consumed part of the funds that could have been allocated to further develop activities in the field.

114. In addition, FAO signed LoAs with the Community Forest Directorate of the Ministry of Forest Economy, Fisheries and Environment responsible for the protection and sustainable management of wildlife for the establishment/management of community forests (delimitation, inventories, SMP) in Gabon. The development of simple community forest management plans by the Community Forest Directorate of the Ministry of Forest Economy, Fisheries and Environment in charge of the Protection and Sustainable Management of Ecosystems - MEFPE (Gabon) through a LoA, is not in question but could be rethought in terms of efficiency by including this activity in the contribution of the Gabonese government. It is also a limiting factor in the potential sustainability of the project's effects, as the contribution of the Community Forest Directorate remains very limited and that of the Executing Agency for the Activities of the Forest and Wood Sector (AEAFFB) responsible for monitoring and implementing the SMP, is not established.

115. With regard to *Component 3*, **the part of the budget allocated to the beneficiaries is very limited because the capacity building carried out for the beneficiaries is ad hoc** and does not allow optimal appropriation of the tools developed, the implementation of the SMPs and hunting plans whereas it is the only way to induce financial benefits on the communities.

116. It appears that the amount allocated to training is unequal between the sub-regional and national levels. In the case of the CAR, this is in part the result of the slow implementation of project activities due to political and security instability. This confirms the observation that few resources have been earmarked for field activities, including training. Diagram 2 shows the amounts allocated to training at the sub-regional and national levels.

*Diagram 2: Amounts allocated to training at the national and sub-regional levels*



Source: Presentation during the Project Closing Workshop, 21-22 June 2017

117. **Component 4.** Table 7 presents the physical implementation rates of the different components obtained according to the different analyses and cross-references of the evaluators. The overall physical execution rate of the project is 30%.

Table 7: Project execution Completed/planned

	Planned	Completed
<b>Objective/Achievement</b>		
<b>Objective</b>		
Forest area (under participatory wildlife management) where the population of protected species is stable or increasing	90,000 hectares	0%
Forest area where the reproduction of participatory wildlife management started	118,000 hectares	0% Even in Ovan, there is no participatory wildlife management but only wood
Forest area (under participatory wildlife management) or a sustainable financing system is in place and an adequate percentage of hunting income is invested in wildlife monitoring and management costs	60,000 hectares	0%
<b>Achievement 1</b>		
Regional Strategy for Wildlife Management and National Policies	Strategy produced and validated by ministers and each country having a national policy	100%
Legal texts in favor of participatory wildlife management	Laws and regulations allowing participatory wildlife management. At least 3 countries have implemented these regulations	20%
<b>Achievement 2</b>		
Forest area where simple and practical indicators of wildlife populations are used by community managers to monitor and establish local regulations for hunting on community lands	90,000	0
Knowledge and information on participatory wildlife management in the rainforests of the four countries	Publication and distribution in each country of an advanced manual for the reproduction and adaptation of participatory wildlife management	100%
<b>Achievement 3</b>		



<b>Building the capacities of communities to plan and implement local strategies for the sustainable management of wildlife resources in the future</b>	75% of community members are aware of participatory wildlife management arrangements in pilot sites, 50% understand these arrangements, 40% participate in adaptive management reviews of each site	0%, 0%, 0%
<b>Use of prohibited technologies to capture animals in areas subject to participatory wildlife management</b>	80% of supervision visits found no evidence of the use of prohibited technologies	0%
<b>Number of cases of encroachment and illegal hunting each year</b>	50% reduction of illegal hunting cases perpetrated by external hunters in 16 villages Less than 20 cases of illegal hunting by community members in each village.	20%
<b>Achievement 4</b>		
<b>Project management efficiency</b>	Activities implemented on time and on budget	40%
<b>Project reporting and dissemination of project results and lessons learned</b>	Progress is reported accurately and in a timely manner and results are widely disseminated to contribute to replication and sustainability after the end of the project.	50%
<b>Overall physical execution rate</b>		<b>30%</b>

118. **The project team could have better managed the human resources at its disposal.** In particular with regard to the setting up of a monitoring and evaluation system. Despite expenses incurred to develop a monitoring and evaluation system, the latter was not implemented, although the project had specialized resources – namely the project assistant at the sub-regional coordination of Libreville, who holds a Master's degree in Monitoring and Evaluation<sup>20</sup>. An allowance increase would have made it possible to provide the project with a specialized resource at a lower cost, who would have contributed to a closer monitoring of the project's implementation and would certainly have improved the project's effectiveness. Especially since the Steering Committee increased at least twice the allowances and/or salaries of NTAs: the first time, the increase of the allowances allocated to drivers and assistants was justified. There was therefore no capitalization of the monitoring and evaluation work carried out from 2013 in the four countries by international consultants and the monitoring and evaluation assistant – who remained in her role as administrative assistant.

119. **Expenditure is presented by category and country but only as part of GEF funding.** RAPAC is the only partner that contributed US\$ 36,000 to the financing of the strategy. The mid-term evaluation mission had already noted that CIFOR and IUCN were able to mobilize the co-financing provided for in the project document. Instead of providing this full co-financing, the project funding was encumbered by the amounts of LoAs signed with these organizations, which became service providers, but also contributed in kind, in expert man-days<sup>21</sup>. There is no presentation of expenditures on the overall financing of the project integrating GEF funding and co-financing (FAO, IUCN, CIRAD, CIFOR, Governments of Congo, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Gabon). The analysis of the efficiency of the project at the global level will therefore be partial although the final evaluation mission will try to assess the

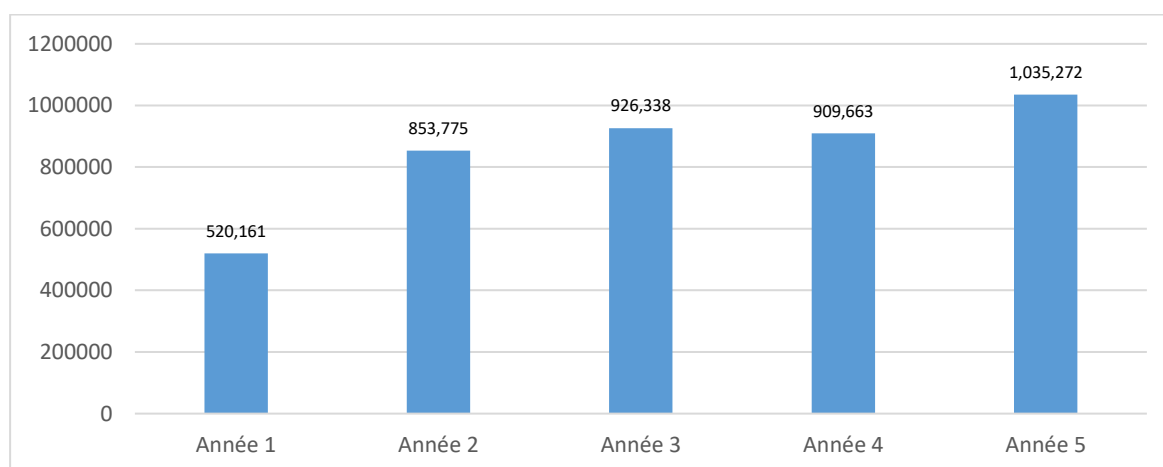
<sup>20</sup> This information is included in the minutes of the 1st session of the Steering Committee in Gabon, 27 November 2013.

<sup>21</sup> The breakdown of this contribution is presented in Table 6.



impact of the unleveraged funds on the financial performance of the project and, by extension, on its implementation.

*Diagram 3: Evolution of annual disbursements on GEF funding*



Source: Project Coordination, 2017

120. Governments did not make premises systematically available to the project as provided for in the project document: only Gabon made premises available to the NTA and the administrative assistant, and space was provided for the NTA in the premises of the Department of Nature conservation in the DRC. Similarly, Gabon was to provide two or three vehicles for the projects, which did not happen. The available means of transport did not allow the teams to be operational on all sites: only the Gabon project team had a vehicle, the Congo team had an old vehicle left by a closed project. Another FAO vehicle was assigned to the project team in the CAR. Transport means were limited in relation to the number of sites (8): 2 vehicles were available when at least 8 would have been required.

121. According to figures provided by the project coordination, the financial implementation rate of the project is 89.6%. **The implementation rate for GEF funding is 100%** while the implementation rate for counterpart funds is 83%. The final evaluation mission simulated the amounts paid by FAO and governments to try to calculate a financial implementation rate that is closer to reality. Considering that CIFOR, IUCN and Governments have not been able to mobilize the necessary resources for co-financing and if the amounts provided by the Governments in kind to cover the salaries<sup>22</sup> of the NPC, Driver and Assistant are calculated, the financial implementation rate of the project is about 50%, which remains unsatisfactory: the implementation rate of GEF funding is 101% and that of counterpart funds is about 25% (see Paragraph 112).

122. The intervention/implementation strategy/scheme is cumbersome and time-consuming and requires financial resources. Expenditure and transaction costs increased as the project progressed because of the following reasons: (i) 4 different organizations were on the same site (Brainforest, IUCN, CIFOR, CIRAD, Gabon Environment) for the same study or complementary/similar studies (such as socio-economic diagnoses in Gabon) or studies were duplicated<sup>23</sup> which attests to a lack of planning and strategic vision during the first two years of

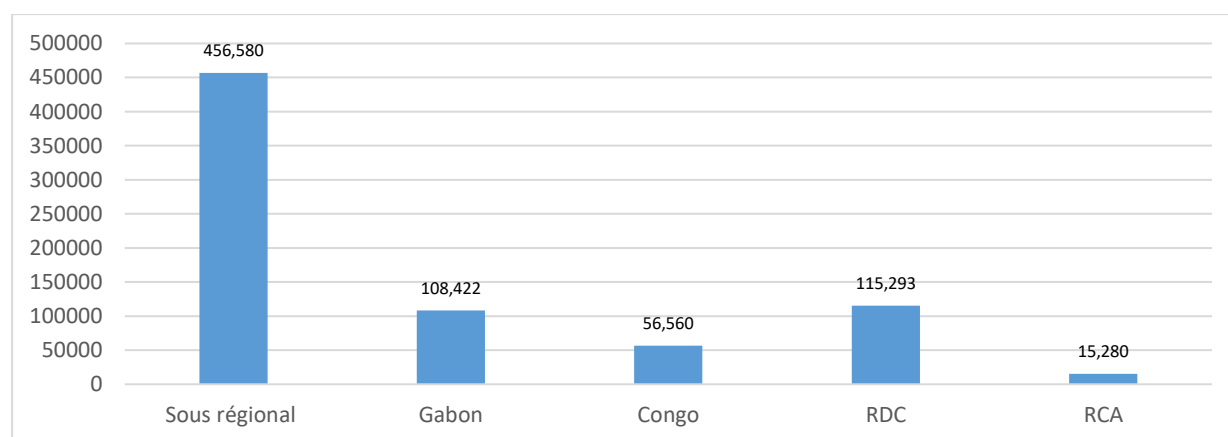
<sup>22</sup> It was considered that NPCs spent 100% of their time on the project, which remains far from reality except in the case of Gabon, possibly.

<sup>23</sup> In the DRC, the socio-economic diagnosis was done for a second time after 2015 because there was a change of site.

implementation<sup>24</sup>, (ii) the dispersion of sites contributed to the increase of travel expenses (sub-regional workshops, Steering Committees on FAO, (iii) the systematic organization of workshops at different levels/countries but also within the sub-region has been very costly, the workshop outcomes were not often applied on sites, (iv) the multiplication of Steering Committees, at country and sub-regional level, one of whose main mandates was to review and validate the AWP and annual reports, hindered implementation and, (iv) sites were too numerous compared to the existing budget.

123. Overruns in certain categories of expenditure or underestimation of the funds to be allocated to these categories during project formulation (travel, operating costs, salaries, etc.) hinder the implementation of field activities for the benefit of communities: the budget was used despite the absence of results on the ground<sup>25</sup>. Thus, the categories of expenditure relating to official travel, professional salaries and operating costs were multiplied by 2.6, 4.2 and 11.5 respectively. Figure 4 clearly shows that travel expenses at the sub-regional level<sup>26</sup> far exceeded travel expenses at the national level.

*Diagram 4: Comparison of travel expenditures at the sub-regional and national levels*



Source: Presentation during the Project Closing Workshop, 21-22 June 2017

### 3.5 Potential sustainability of project effects and reproducibility

#### 3.5.1 Conditions to be put in place and potential sustainability of impacts

124. With regard to *Component 1*, the 4 countries (Gabon, Congo, CAR and DRC) supported COMIFAC, which led the formulation of the sub-regional strategy. This shows the commitment of the 4 countries to work towards participatory wildlife management. COMIFAC, if it has the means, will be able to ensure the sustainability of the effects of component 1 by monitoring the revision of policies at national level in the 4 countries targeted by the project; in the long term, the outcomes

<sup>24</sup> See Minutes of the 2014 Gabon Steering Committee Meeting, paragraphs 3. Financial statement (points 1 and 3 of the recommendations), 4. 2014 Proposed work plan and 5. Miscellaneous (item 3), minutes of the Steering Committee meeting of 28 February 2014, paragraph Review of the Annual Work Plan and associated Budget.

<sup>25</sup> Transaction costs increased as adaptation measures taken in the implementation of the project were implemented: withdrawal of partner organizations from the implementation of activities, recruitment of facilitators, abandonment of sites, etc.

<sup>26</sup> The purpose of these trips was to attend the various Steering Committee workshops, the various workshops as part of the development of the sub-regional strategy, technical workshops

of component 1 would be replicated in the other 6 COMIFAC countries, i.e. induction of the preparation of NAPs and revision of regulatory frameworks.

125. The formulation of the sub-regional strategy, the reference framework for participatory wildlife management, could have a significant long-term impact as it will determine changes in national policies related to participatory wildlife and bushmeat management.

126. Building on the impacts of other projects (such as the Mangrove Ecosystem Management Projects in Congo and Cameroon), the project made it possible to initiate a paradigm shift from the protection of wildlife in all directions to a paradigm where conservation is combined with participatory exploitation to help improve food security and family income. This paradigm shift would be all the more possible as it could be consolidated and supported by the Bushmeat Marketing and Wildlife Departments, stakeholders in the project.

127. The NAPs developed in the 4 countries can be implemented provided that resources are mobilized by the states and that they are a priority at the national level. If COMIFAC succeeds in mobilizing resources, it will replicate the preparation of NAPs in all 10 COMIFAC countries.

128. *With regard to Components 2 and 3*, the choice of activities was not initially made in consultation with the communities and community ownership was limited: communities are still waiting for the implementation of project activities.

129. The level of structuring of associations (Congo) and the absence of joint activity may jeopardize the very functioning of these associations, which should be at the center of the implementation of the community area management plan and the hunting plan and its development; even in cases where there are cooperatives (Gabon) with income from leasing, poor governance may jeopardize the sustainability of the effects of the activities.

130. The sustainability of the effects and impacts of component 2 seems to be compromised given that funding mechanisms in the pilot sites have not been set up, apart from those in Ovan (Gabon) and Liouesso (Congo). In Ovan, if new office members are elected and good governance conditions are established, timber income can contribute to the financing of the hunting plan. If cooperatives develop financing mechanisms, they will be able to take advantage of the tools and training they receive. New European Union funding is being negotiated between the various partners (ACP countries, CIFOR, CIRAD, FAO, WCS) for the implementation of a global project whose objectives are similar to those of this project: conservation NGOs will be involved in the implementation of the project and if Congo, DRC and Gabon are among the recipient countries, the sites selected will be the same as those of the participatory wildlife and bushmeat management project. Some form of sustainability will be possible if the sites targeted by the participatory wildlife management project are re-selected.

131. The capacities and experiences acquired by communities during the implementation of the project could be used and strengthened if hunting and management plans are implemented: as a result, the effects of capacity-building activities and the experience gained during the development of diagnostics, SMPs and hunting plans would be acquired and used to promote participatory and sound wildlife management.

132. The involvement of landowners and village chiefs (Liouesso) and community chiefs in Ovan in local community structures facilitates the management approach introduced and is a guarantee of sustainability.

133. If they continue to be functional and play a supervisory role for associations/cooperatives without interfering with their functioning and respecting the minimum rules of good governance, subject to the availability of funds for the development of income-generating activities, the platforms can make the project's effects sustainable. For the time being, interference by local authorities in the functioning of associations/cooperatives is a danger to their functioning and sustainability. The agreements signed between the Ministry and the associations/cooperatives in some cases (Ovan) could be a guarantee of sustainability if they were aimed at participatory wildlife management.

134. The tools developed without the empowerment of national structures (including research) or national students minimize the transfer of skills and somewhat weaken ownership and thus sustainability.

135. The Project is appreciated by the various line Ministries in the 4 countries but ownership may be limited because they did not have the leadership in implementation as they were subject to FAO procedures: the line Ministries were not responsible for the implementation of the project.

136. In the event that the line Ministries continue to work to use the outcomes of the project, particularly with regard to the revision of the regulatory framework, it will be possible to include, in the medium term, the authorization of marketing products from hunting – provided that advocacy work is carried out by the civil society organizations concerned with the development of the sector (Associations of Management Units, bushmeat marketing associations, etc.).

137. Financial aspects could be another obstacle to potential sustainability because the failure of states to contribute does not augur well for the monitoring and sustainability of achievements or the implementation of future results.

### **3.5.2 Reproducibility**

138. On the basis of the participatory wildlife management strategy, the NAPs developed in 4 countries under the project can be replicated to the other 6 COMIFAC member countries.

139. It was not possible to scale up the project results obtained in the first 8 sites at 8 other sites to reach 16, and 32 at the end of the project. This was due to the complex set-up, the multiplication of intervention levels, the diversified partnership and the action-research nature of the project.

140. The reproducibility of the project's effects may also be challenged by the complexity of overlapping rights (communities, foresters) in the same area at least in Gabon and Congo and to a lesser extent in the DRC and CAR. Indeed, when Forests and Community Hunting Zones overlap concessions, and that foresters, because of their certification, must contribute to wildlife conservation, it is difficult for communities to implement their hunting plans: this will require a major effort of consultation and collaboration.

## 3.6 Analysis of cross-cutting issues

### 3.6.1 Gender

141. The project document mentions the role that women play in the bushmeat chain and therefore the need for them to be empowered in the activities that will be developed. But they are not targeted as such by the project because women are not involved in hunting. However, there is no real systematization of the disaggregation of indicators by gender: no gender-sensitive performance indicators were formulated during the design and implementation of the project. Similarly, there is no reference to the youth, which is one of the most vulnerable groups, which engages in hunting for lack of other employment opportunities: in Liouesso, 80% of hunting activities are carried out by young people, some young graduates who temporarily migrated to Ouessou, have even returned to their home villages in Liouesso to engage in hunting.

142. Nevertheless, the evaluation mission noted a strong presence of women in associations, legal entities managing hunting zones and community forests in Liouesso (Congo) and Ovan (Gabon). In the DRC, the mission noted committees dedicated specifically to women, which are responsible for monitoring work in the community forest. Women played a crucial role in bringing about the electrification project. There is a significant number of women participating in project activities in the field. Women speak freely during meetings. The mission also noted at the Liouesso site that women traders based in Ouessou were greatly involved in the bushmeat trade. The main constraint is that these women work in small localities and are not strictly speaking resident in the Forest Management Units.

143. In Congo, in Liouesso, the Association des commerçants de Viande de Brousse (association of bushmeat traders), composed mainly of women, established links with the hunters of the Management Unit and participated in the various ADM training courses (1/3 of the beneficiaries of these courses were women). In the DRC, women's participation varied according to the type of meeting: 10% in structuring meetings, 20% in mapping capacity building sessions, and no women during more technical capacity building sessions (GPS and compass use) in the Kisangani Basin site (Progress Report, 2015).

144. However, it is not yet possible to really assess gender mainstreaming and the economic aspects of income-generating activities planned by the project, as these actions have not yet been implemented. Similarly, the evaluation mission noted that the gender strategy advocated by the mid-term evaluation was not developed during the second phase of the project.

### 3.6.2 Indigenous peoples

145. In the four countries (Congo, Gabon, CAR and DRC) targeted by the project, indigenous peoples are pygmies. These populations have been extensively studied and described in their lifestyles and cultures. But their status has been the subject of much debate in the countries concerned, with regard to their integration into economic and social development programs. Thus, many NGOs (especially international) and donors (see World Bank OP 4.10 on Indigenous Peoples) insist that Indigenous Peoples be taken into account in their cultural specificities and lifestyles, as part of the dominant economic model. Other government actors, on the other hand, consider that since pygmies are fully-fledged nationals, this distinction is not necessary nor applicable, or even harmful, in a perspective of equal rights and opportunities. The recognition of indigenous peoples

and specific policies is not uniform across the 4 project countries: (i) Congo and Gabon have Development Plan for Indigenous Peoples although Gabon's constitution does not recognize the existence of indigenous peoples differentiated from other ethnic groups, (ii) Congo has a specific law on indigenous peoples which has never been implemented due to the lack of accusatory decrees and the CAR has ratified International Labor Organization Convention 169 on Indigenous Peoples and (iii) there is a COMIFAC Directive on Indigenous Peoples at the sub-regional level.

146. The project document does not mention indigenous peoples, however, at the pilot sites of Liouesso (Congo) and Zanaga (Congo), indigenous peoples participated in the activities of the Bushmeat project. Indigenous peoples are represented in associations/cooperatives, although they are a minority: in Liouesso, for example, only two people belonging to indigenous peoples are members of the Executive Committee. In Ovan, there is a social differentiation between the original inhabitants of the Forest and the newcomers: several ethnic groups live together and are represented almost equally among the delegates, appointed/elected by the communities to represent them.

147. Generally speaking, women and indigenous people are represented – but always in a minority – in the bodies set up in these associations (between 10 to 20 or 30%) as in Congo (Executive Committee; Comité des Sages (Committee of Wise) Persons, Supervisory Committee); and this limits participation in decision-making.

## **4.** Conclusions and recommendations

### **4.1** General conclusions

**Conclusion 1. Certain progress have contributed to consolidating the transition from the conservation paradigm to the paradigm combining conservation and participatory management approaches for bushmeat.**

148. The development of the participatory wildlife and bushmeat management strategy demonstrates the commitment of States that have realized that this sector is a substantial livelihood for forest people. However, the project has not achieved its overall environmental conservation objective nor its development objective, since participatory wildlife management is not initiated in the intervention sites and communities do not yet derive income from this activity.

149. This is explained by: (i) the political dimension of the theme, which requires including all stakeholders and conducting ongoing advocacy, (ii) the levels of intervention with different rhythm such as the revision of policies and regulatory frameworks and the development of Simple Management Plans and Hunting Plans and their implementation on the ground, and (iii) the overall coordination considerations detailed in conclusion 2.

150. However, progress has indeed been made, in particular: (i) the development of the sub-regional strategy for participatory wildlife and bushmeat management, (ii) the gradual paradigm shift recognizing the importance of bushmeat as a source of animal protein and income for forest communities and the need to manage this resource in a sustainable manner so that people continue to benefit from it, (iii) the development of NAPs that will eventually provide reference frameworks

and (iv) significant progress has been made in mastering the lands analyzed and the behavior of the resource.

**Conclusion 2: Continuous coordination throughout the duration of the project could have substantially improved the implementation of the project, which was essential given the design of the implementation mechanism and the main theme addressed in this project – participatory wildlife management.**

151. A more appropriate coordination mechanism could have improved implementation at 5 levels: (i) At the level of the project team, which was to be managed closely. Indeed, the project team was difficult to manage because the NTAs/facilitators were numerous and difficult to monitor due to: the multiplicity of sites, the distance between countries and sites, continuous defections or changes (such as the withdrawal of CIFOR and CIRAD from implementation) which led to changes in the implementation mechanism throughout the project, and changes in the team. (ii) Implementation management at different levels (sub-regional), national and local) required strong coordination, as stakeholders' interventions were part of different registers (policies, revision of regulatory frameworks and operational action in the field) and the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders were not very well defined. (iii) The management of the partners was itself difficult because the partners involved had divergent interests (CIFOR and CIRAD, IUCN). CIRAD and CIFOR were more oriented towards cognitive research whereas there was a need to maintain a balance between Research and Action. (iv) The management of government partners was not also easy given the specificity of each situation and context and the different levels of commitment in the implementation of the project; particular attention had to be paid to government partners as they are responsible for monitoring and ensuring a minimum sustainability of the effects of project activities upon completion. (iv) Theme management in a context where the conservation approach is dominant also required an understanding of the highly political dimension of the Participatory Wildlife and Bushmeat Management project, where continued participation in the debates or Steering Committees of conservation NGOs was a necessity.

**Conclusion 3: A functional monitoring and evaluation system could have improved project implementation.**

152. The lack of a monitoring and evaluation system exacerbated the challenge of coordination. Generally, the M&E manager, because of his or her cross-cutting role, contributes to the coordination of the project by analyzing the monitoring and evaluation indicators and providing a real-time report on the progress of the project. These real-time reports could have helped the project team to make quick decisions and improve project implementation.

**Conclusion 4: A clear strategy establishing priorities in the management of project implementation from the start of the project, determining the coherence of actions, would also have helped to optimize the project's outcomes.**

153. Indeed, particularly because of discontinuity in coordination or due to a lack of human and financial resources or time allocated to coordination, the implementation strategy adopted an approach of solving problems and challenges as they arise in a very short term and with a total lack of anticipation. As a result, the implementation strategy did not contribute to the achievement of the overall objectives of the project and the relation to participatory wildlife management got lost.



Proof of this: (i) there was a poor planning between the countries and the Sub-Regional Coordination; (ii) the project diverged repeatedly from the expected objectives, the most striking example is the logging in Ovan, Gabon; and (iii) the project did not give priority to the target groups, hunters, despite the knowledge about resources, hunting methods, lands made available through student work carried out as part of the project.

**Conclusion 5: A more structured management of the project's financial and human resources could have facilitated implementation.**

154. Financial monitoring did not allow for regular real-time expenditure reports at sub-regional and country level, which prevented strategic decisions from being taken: as evidenced by the fact that the second sites (Congo, Gabon) were abandoned very late and at an advanced stage (SMPs were being developed), whereas it was possible to stop activities in these sites earlier, transfer resources to the first sites, and initiate participatory wildlife management. Thus, the concrete outcomes of the project now depend on a second financing or the monitoring by the line Ministries. The expected co-financing was not fully implemented; this limited the project's ability to achieve its quantitative objectives.

## 4.2 Recommendations

**Recommendation 1: The mission recommends that FAO reconsider the implementation model for this type of complex projects, particularly in response to the geographical spread of activities and the diversity of stakeholders involved.**

155. The mission recommends that FAO reconsider the implementation model for multi-country projects involving different categories of stakeholders. These projects require an additional coordination effort, which must be taken into account in the establishment of the project management unit. The evaluation mission recommends that 100% coordination dedicated to the project be put in place. For such a project, including legal and technical aspects (wildlife, country legislation, etc.), the recruitment of a wildlife expert and a permanent legal expert as well as an M&E manager is essential, as these experts must be an integral part of the Project Management Unit.

156. The mission also recommends that FAO create dedicated project accounting, if a similar project is implemented in the future. This will allow real-time monitoring of resource availability, strategic decision-making on implementation, and better traceability of expenditures. This will facilitate project management. The mission also recommends, in the case of a similar project, that the management of funds in countries be decentralized to the FAO Representations and that a system of periodic replenishment of funds be established on the basis of the submission of the statement of expenditure and the necessary supporting documents.

**Recommendation 2: Given the complexity of the project and the different levels of intervention, the evaluation mission recommends that FAO and GEF: increase the duration of the implementation of similar projects to at least 7 years to finalize the development of hunting plans; use the income from the implementation of simple management plans to finance the implementation of hunting plans; and revise national laws on the basis of text analyses.**



**Recommendation 3: Specifically, the evaluation mission recommends that COMIFAC strengthen advocacy to encourage the countries concerned to include in their budgets the implementation of the NAPs or at least a part of them that would contribute to the development of participatory wildlife management**

157. The mission recommends that FAO and COMIFAC strengthen advocacy with countries to integrate the different dimensions of natural resource management (wildlife and flora) into a comprehensive regional development and natural resource management plan and not into sectorial plans. The mission recommends strengthening advocacy so that the countries concerned by the project mobilize funds or include in their budgets the implementation of the NAP axes directly related to participatory wildlife and bushmeat management, in cases where governments recognize that bushmeat is an important source of income and protein for part of the population.

**Recommendation 4: The mission recommends that FAO conduct the analysis of legal texts from the beginning of the project.**

158. Given the importance of legal aspects, in the future, if such a project was to be repeated, it would be necessary to ensure that a thorough analysis of existing texts and laws and their effective implementation from the start of the project in all sectors relating to the problem of bushmeat hunting and marketing. This would provide concrete elements to be incorporated into the laws at mid-term and would give the line Ministries time to effectively revise the laws. An *analysis of the legal framework* governing community-based wildlife management is not limited to hunting regulations but must consider the rights of local communities with regard to access to and control over the resource, participation in resource management, conservation and use of the resource.

**Recommendation 5: The mission recommends that FAO involve wildlife conservation organizations, from the outset of the project, in discussions on changing the regulatory framework.**

159. The mission recommends that, based on the following findings, FAO strengthen discussion with NGOs and other stakeholders involved in conservation to convince them of the merits of the approach: (i) bushmeat contributes to the food security of forest communities, (ii) there are different categories of hunters, with different means, (iii) not all hunters are a danger to wildlife and (iv) the demographic pressure on wildlife is different from one country to another and, in some cases, it is not a danger to wildlife.

160. The mission recommends that NGOs and conservation institutions, including national ones, be involved in discussions, including discussions on changing the regulatory framework, so that they can bring their expertise and ideas and guarantee a sound management of wildlife.

**Recommendation 6: The mission recommends that FAO scale similar projects to the actual co-financing amounts.**

161. In the future, the mission recommends that FAO ensure that the project is not sized on potential co-financing: thus, written co-financing commitments by partners should be an integral part of the formulation report. This would ensure that there is a guarantee of existing resources to be used for implementation from the kickoff of the project. This would ease implementation and

reduce uncertainties about the availability of planned financial resources. In the absence of co-financing, the logical framework must be revised and the project's quantitative objectives reduced.

## 5. Lessons learned

162. The main lessons learned are as follows.

163. Theme. Participatory wildlife management is a sensitive issue that concerns stakeholders with divergent interests who need to be involved in implementation (within bodies such as the Steering Committees) to ensure it.

164. Wildlife resources. There is certainly human pressure on wildlife resources, but it must be put into perspective given the state of the resource as demonstrated by wildlife inventories, the different demographic situations in the various countries<sup>27</sup>, and the behavior of the most prized species (duikers, brush-tailed porcupine, etc.).

165. Design. The objectives of the project were too ambitious, in terms of the number of targeted sites and the results to be achieved, given the action-research approach that was adopted. The institutional set-up characterized by the multiplication of partners of different kinds (research, ministries, NGOs) was not adapted to an action-research project. An institutional set-up involving fewer partners would facilitate the implementation of action-research projects and allow the achievement of the project objectives.

166. Intervention strategy. The intervention strategy (3 different levels, 4 countries, 8 sites at the kickoff) was not suitable for an action-research project to be implemented over a 5-year period. The time allocated to the implementation of the project was unrealistic in relation to the number of targeted countries, the number of sites considered, the issue addressed which was largely controversial with the existence of external pressure groups having a negative influence on the project. In the future, it will be worth limiting the number of sites, harmonizing the use of human and financial resources and optimizing the time allocated to implementation in order to achieve the expected results.

167. Implementation staff. The implementation staff (CTA, NTA, etc.) was largely insufficient to achieve the expected results. Moreover, this staff was regularly reviewed and adjusted during the life of the project: NTAs responsible for the implementation of the project in two sites at the kickoff the project, then doubling of NTAs or recruitment of facilitators – depending on the defections of NTAs (Gabon, CAR, etc.) – to have a technical assistant or site facilitator.

168. Implementation. The lack of coordination due to the fact that the CTA position remained vacant for half of the project's duration or was not initially properly budgeted explains why the project's objectives were not achieved, and why the project diverged from its main purpose, which was to promote participatory wildlife management and bushmeat marketing. The NPC's limited contribution and accountability to implementation has not contributed to improve the monitoring of field activities and may have a negative impact on the sustainability of the project effects.

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<sup>27</sup> In Gabon, forests are very sparsely populated.

169. Co-financing. In the absence of a written commitment from the co-financiers, they are unlikely to contribute as much as expected and this prevents the project from achieving its objectives. Funds must be mobilized before the project is designed, so that sizing is carried out on the basis of actual funding: sizing a project on the basis of resources not yet mobilized is a risk factor that jeopardizes the implementation of the project and its success.

*Appendix 1: List of people consulted*

	Jean Claude Nguingiri	Lead Technical Officer for Project GCP/RAF/455/GFF	FAO /Rome
	Marc DUMAS JOHANSEN	GEF Unit - TCID FAO	FAO /Rome
	Alessandra TOMASSI	FAO legal expert – LEGN	FAO /Rome
	Eugenio SARTORETTO	FAO legal expert – LEGN	FAO /Rome
	Arnoud Steeman	Former Lead Technical Advisor (CTA) for Project GCP/RAF/455/GFF entitled "Sustainable Management of the Wildlife and Bushmeat Sector in Central Africa"	AHT GROUP AG/ Liberia
	Hélder MUTEIA	Coordinator of the FAO Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa in Gabon	FAO/Gabon
	Sandra Ratiarison	Regional Coordinator for Project GCP/RAF/455/GFF entitled "Sustainable Management of the Wildlife and Bushmeat Sector in Central Africa"	FAO/Gabon
	Huguette BILOHO ESSONO	Program Assistant	FAO/Gabon
	Abdon BIVIGOU	Technical Assistant to the Sub-Regional Coordination of the FAO SFC project	FAO/Gabon
	Léna ILAMA	FAO SFC Young professional	FAO/Gabon

	Apolline MEDZEY ME SIMA	Administrative Assistant at the Sub- Regional Coordination	FAO/Gabon
	Anicet Aimé MAGANGA	FAO SFC Administration and Financial Manager	FAO/Gabon
	Bouyi Tania	Human Resource Assistant	FAO/Gabon
	Serge Roland PAMBOU	National Coordinator/Director of Bushmeat Marketing	Minister of Forest Economy, Fisheries and Environment, in charge of the protection and management of ecosystems/Gabon
	Célestine MENGUE	Director of Hunting	Minister of Forest Economy, Fisheries, Environment and in charge of the protection and management of ecosystems/Gabon
	Gaspard NANEKOULA	Legal Advisor	Minister of Forest Economy, Fisheries, Environment and in charge of the protection and management of ecosystems/Gabon
	NDUME ENGONE Charles Hervé	Director of Community Forests	Minister of Forest Economy, Fisheries, Environment and in charge of the protection and management of ecosystems/Gabon
	MAPAGA Delphin	Deputy Managing Director 2	Ministry of Forest Economy, Fisheries, Environment/Gabon
	N'SITOU MABIALA	Director General	Executing Agency for the Activities of the Forest and Wood Sector, in charge of the protection and management of ecosystems/Gabon
	Eric CHEZEAUX	Sustainable Development Officer	Rougier/Gabon
	Omer NTOUGOU	Executive Secretary	RAPAC/Gabon

	Raymond PENDI	Official of the Directorate of the marketing of hunting products	Ministry of Forest Economy, Fisheries, Environment/Gabon
	Joseph NGOWOU	Former facilitator at the Djoutou Site	Project GCP/RAF/455/GFF "Sustainable Management of the Wildlife and Bushmeat Sector in Central Africa"/Gabon
	Kate ABERNETHY	Researcher	Stirling University / IRET/Gabon
	Olivier MEYE Obiang	Lawyer/Expert OI-FLEGT	Brainforest/Gabon
	Anne Marie ObiangNdong	Focal point Hunting and Bushmeat	ANPN
	Timothe MALEMBA	Prefect of the department	Ministry of Internal affairs/Gabon
	EKAMKAM Martin Luther	Mayor of Evan	Ministry of Internal affairs/Gabon
	NGUIMBI Landry	Chief of the Water and Forest section	Ministry of Forest Economy, Fisheries, Environment/Gabon
	NDENGA Jean Pierre (Nkaritom)  MPONG Samuel (Elata-Bakota)	Community chiefs	Ovan Village/Gabon
	MADJO Delphine (manager)  BOBEBE Yvette (secretary)	Women groups and cooperative member	Ovan Village/Gabon
	NZE Jean Pierre	Hunter, Ngoriki community	Ovan Village/Gabon

	NYABEKE Joseph	Hunter, Bakoto community	Ovan Village/Gabon
	NDINGA Binga Pierre	Hunter, Nkariton community	Ovan Village/Gabon
	Suze Percy Filippini	FAO Representative	FAO/Congo
	Frédéric Lambert BOCKANDZA-PACO	National Project Coordinator / Director General of the Congolese Wildlife and Protected Areas Agency	"MEFDDE"/Congo
	Jean Bosco NGANONGO	Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas (DFAP)	"MEFDDE"/Congo
	Alain Noël Ampolo,	National Technical Assistant (NTA) of the Bushmeat project	FAO/Congo
	Antoine Couturier	Director of Environment and Social issues	IFO/ Congo
	NSIETE Jacques	Departmental Director of the Shanga Forest Economy (DDFES)	Ministry of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development / Congo
	Marius SAYA MABA,	FAO Program Officer	FAO/Congo
	OBA	Sub-prefect of MOKEKO	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Decentralisation/Congo
	Thomas EKOKO	Chief of the Association pour la gestion de l'aire communautaire outpost	"AGACL" Liouesso/ Congo
	Gérard IBONGA	Secretary in charge of Conservation and Hunting for the Association de Gestion de l'Aire de Chasse de Liouesso "AGACL"	"AGACL" Liouesso/Congo
	Eugène MPANDZO	Chief of service, Wildlife and Protected Areas	Ministry of Financial Economy and Sustainable Development Ouessou/Congo

	Athanase MEKILICK	President of Association Viande de Brousse/Routiers	Ouesso/Congo
	Guy Aimé Florent MALANDA	Coordinator	PROGEPP-PNOK/Congo
	Maurice DJENGUE	President of Association de Gestion de l'Aire de Chasse de Liouesso "AGACL"	"AGACL" Liouesso/Congo
	AMPIEH Calvin	President	NGO OCBE VertOuessou/Congo
	Mole Banda	President	APETDS NGO Ouesso/Congo
	AKOUABOTH Nestor	Head of Cabinet, MOKEKO Sub-prefecture	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Decentralisation/Congo
	Norbert GAMI	Lead Advisor in Socio Economics	WCS/Congo
	WIELAND Michelle	Coordinator	Regional WCS/DRC
	Brigitte MBUYI BILONDA	National Technical Assistant DRC	FAO/DRC
	Dieudonné KALO	National Coordinator - Director/Chief of service, Department of Nature conservation	Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development (MECNDD)/DRC
	Djengo BOSULU Frédéric	Director in charge of forest management (DGF)	Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development (MECNDD)/DRC
	Nestor WALIWA	Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas	Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries/CAR
	Jérémie NDALLOT	National Project Coordinator	Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries/CAR



	Jean-Alexandre Scaglia	FAO Representative	FAO/CAR
	Chouaibou NCHOUTPOUEN	Biodiversity Program Officer	COMIFAC/Cameroon
	Denis MAHONGOL	Forest and Trade Program Officer – TRAFFIC – Central Africa	IUCN/Cameroon
	Gervais ONDOUA	Manager of the VDB Project	IUCN/Cameroon
	Sébastien LE BEL	Researcher	CIRAD/France
	Daniel CORNELIS	Researcher	CIRAD/France
	Nathalie VAN VLIET	Researcher	CIFOR/France

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## Evaluation as per the GEF criteria

The table below presents an assessment of the project's performance as per GEF criteria.

*Table 1: Evaluation of project outcomes as per GEF criteria*

Evaluation criteria	Rating	Comments
<b>Evaluation / Rating of Project Outcomes:</b>		
<b>Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU), Unable to Assess (UA)</b>		
<b>Overall evaluation for each outcome</b>		
<b>Relevance of outcomes</b>	S	The final evaluation mission recognizes the relevance of the project at different levels (sub-regional, national and local). There is a need to develop a common vision but also to regulate wildlife management and harmonize national regulatory frameworks as bushmeat is a staple of forest peoples in the Congo Basin. At the end of the project, the outcomes are to be considered as potential and not yet fully expressed as: the legal texts (component 1) have not yet been modified, the ability of the communities to plan and implement local strategies for wildlife management (Component 3) is not yet proven and the use of banned technologies for the capture of animals in areas subject to participatory wildlife management (Component 3) is not effective. The project outcomes could come to fruition if: (i) hunting plans are finalized and implemented, (ii) participatory wildlife management becomes effective, and (iii) funding mechanisms are developed by the associations / cooperatives to structure and develop the bush meat sector.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	MU	Despite the progress made, especially with regards to component 1, with the formulation of the sub-regional strategy and the creation of 2 Community Forests in Gabon and 5 in the DRC, first phase, leading to participative management of wildlife and the bush meat sector, the effectiveness of the project is limited because of the complexity of the design, the very ambitious objectives and the limited financial resources due to the non-availability of counterpart funding. The implementation mechanism and the available financial resources have not resulted in an optimal level of effectiveness, in which most of the activities planned in the design, and the relative outcomes, would be achieved. Evidence of this is the reduction in the number of sites and the fact that no participative wildlife management example has materialized at the sites.

<b>Efficiency</b>	MU	<p>The strategy / intervention measure / implementation mechanism is cumbersome, very costly and time consuming. Expenditure as well as transaction costs have increased as implementation of the project progresses, especially because of the systematic organization of workshops at different levels. The financial execution rate / disbursement rate of the project, calculated as expenditure as compared to forecast at design stage, rises to 50%, as a result of the non-mobilization of counterpart funding, be they governmental or partners. According to the assessment of the final evaluation team, the physical execution rate is close to 30%<sup>28</sup>. This means that with the available resources, only 30% of the project could be executed. This has an impact on the project objectives which remain [only] partially achieved. Implementation has been more efficient in the case of Gabon because the implementation of the PSG [Simple Forest Management Plan] has taken into account the establishment of a LOA with the Government of Gabon, this model, however, has not been adopted in other countries.</p>
<b>Evaluation / Rating of Sustainability:</b>		
<b>Likely (L), Moderately Likely (ML), Moderately Unlikely (MU), Unlikely (U), Unable to Assess (UA)</b>		
<b>General evaluation of sustainability</b>		
<b>Financial resources</b>	MU	<p>Although a Community Forest was established in Ovan (Gabon) and logging activity started, no general funding mechanisms have been set up at sites level in order for the associations / cooperatives to develop the bush meat sector. The project supported the training in beekeeping of some members of the Ovan and Djoutou communities and in horticulture in Ngombé with an aim to develop the activities that can provide the revenue [needed] to start participatory management activities: this training is aimed at individuals and even if the [individual] trainees give themselves to those activities, it will remain necessary to find a mechanism to finance hunting as a collective activity. If a specific fund for participatory wildlife management is created, a fund to which loggers could contribute, then the associations / cooperatives could develop activities that would help them structure the sector but also applying the rules of participatory management of wildlife.</p>
<b>Socio-political risks</b>	ML	<p>In the case of CAR, the socio-political events had a very negative effect on the execution of the project. The outcomes reached are still limited, except for a paradigm shift from a conservation approach to a mixed conservation / wise use approach to the resource. There are outbreaks of instability in the</p>

<sup>28</sup> See Table 7 for component and subcomponent execution

		DRC. The socio - political climate has not entirely stabilized since the latest presidential elections in Gabon and in the Congo. At this stage, it is likely that socio-political events will negatively affect progress in the bush meat sector and in participatory wildlife management. There was an outbreak of Ebola in the DRC at the end of the project and the development of the bush meat sector may increase the health risk.
<b>Institutional Risks</b>	L	The associations / cooperatives did not develop any joint activities except for the cooperative in the Ovan site (Gabon) and the associations in Bayego and Maduda. The latter developed logging but not the participative management of hunting. The institutions whose creation was facilitated by this project are still fragile and, if they are not strengthened, they will not be able to play their role of bringing together and representing the interests of the community. These institutions are all the more fragile as they are expected to handle areas and issues beyond their capabilities (Ngombe, Ovan) and where other rights overlap, especially those of the loggers, who are better equipped with both human and financial resources. Equally, if these associations / cooperatives are not strengthened in particular on governance aspects, they will not be able to play their role of bringing together and representing the interests of the community and will have difficulty interacting with local authorities, whose role is crucial, especially when the stakes are high.
<b>Environmental risks</b>	MU	At the moment, the still limited impact of the project cannot generate any environmental risks. If the hunting plans are developed, validated and implemented, continuous monitoring of the resource will become necessary to assess impact on the main species consumed and marketed. There are collateral / induced environmental risks, for example in the Ovan Community Forest (Gabon) because of the way in which tenure tenants harvest the timber without respecting the regulations, especially the minimum cutting diameter and the volumes allowed per year.
<b>M &amp; E Evaluation / Rating:</b>		
<b>Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU), Unable to Assess (UA)</b>		
<b>General quality evaluation M &amp; E</b>		
<b>Design of the monitoring and evaluation system</b>	MU	The design of a monitoring and evaluation system was initiated in 2013. A monitoring and evaluation mission composed of an international consultant and FAO Gabon staff ([who were the] monitoring and evaluation expert at the time of the mission and the administrative manager at the time of the final evaluation of the project [respectively]) proposed a more operational project monitoring and evaluation system, and developed a system to collect information to feed the different files. However, this

		system was simply ignored, and the project was implemented without a monitoring and evaluation system, despite it being commissioned by the project with considerable financial resources (engaging two people in four countries). This draft system developed attempted to set up a method to collect information from all partners: the diagnostic studies (socio-economic, environmental) as well as the resource inventories were considered as reference studies. The reference values of the different project indicators defined in these studies would be updated as the project was implemented. However, the monitoring and evaluation system was not finalized.
<b>Establishment of the Monitoring and Evaluation System</b>	U	The monitoring and evaluation system was not put in place despite the recommendation of the mid-term review mission. No provision was made for this system to be launched even if the project's Administrative Assistant was qualified to implement it, with an increase in compensation.
<b>Evaluation / Rating of Implementation and Execution</b>		
<b>Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU), Unable to Assess (UA)</b>		
<b>Quality of implementation</b>	<b>MU</b>	The coordination of this project was complex because of the number of different types of partners involved, the different levels of intervention (sub-regional, national, local), the number of sites targeted, the distance between the different members of the project's team, the political instability in CAR and the clear political dimension of the project. Despite the efforts made, coordination <sup>29</sup> was a problem in the implementation of the project because it was sporadic and intermittent. Indeed, after the departure of the CTA [Chief Technical Advisor], the STSO [Lead Technical Support Officer] had to cover the role of the CTA in addition to their technical tasks within the Sub Regional Coordination. The Consultant due to take over the CTA responsibilities wasn't recruited until November 2016, when the contracts of the NTAs [National Technical Assistants] and facilitators expired, despite the mid-term evaluation recommending her recruitment as of July 2015.
<b>Quality of execution</b>	<b>MU</b>	Given the coordination and monitoring problems, the overly ambitious objectives set at the time of the [project's] design, but also the fact that the project was only implemented by using GEF funding because the level of counterpart funding provided by the different partners was limited, implementation was moderately inadequate because it was not coordinated and slowed down by the need to make decisions that were not aligned with the initial

<sup>29</sup> See page 60 of the Formulation Report: 4.3.4 Lead Technical Advisor and Long-Term Expert in Capacity Building. A Lead Technical Advisor (STO) will be hired full-time for the first two years of the project. The same person or a replacement will then be hired for three months a year for years 3 and 4, and for 4 months for year 5.



		<p>design such as the establishment of LOAs with partners, the recruitment of facilitators on the 2nd sites. The good quality reference studies (diagnostics, etc.) in some cases arrived too late (2015); and at some sites (Baego Kisangani), a new delimitation of the Management Unit proved necessary. The hunting plans, prior to the participatory management of the wildlife were not finalized nor implemented.</p>
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