

Decentralized Project/Programme Evaluation Series

Terminal evaluation of SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CAMEROONIAN COUNCILS

**GCP/CMR/033/GFF
GEF ID: 4800**

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Abstract

This report presents the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the terminal evaluation of the project "Sustainable Forest management under the authority of Cameroonian councils" (GCP/CMR/033/GFF; GEF ID: 4800). This project was financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the FAO along with the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF) the Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED), and the Association of Forest Communes of Cameroon (ACFCAM) as well as other national partners as executing agencies. Approved on the 13th of April 2015 for a period of four years, the project started on the 5th of April 2016 with an end date of 1st of March 2019. Three subsequent extensions brought its end date to the 31st of December 2022.

Evaluation participants from the FAO, government, beneficiaries, key informants, and partners took part through virtual, in-person interviews and focus group discussions during field visits to 5 (Mvangan and Akom II - South Region; Dzeng and Dimako - Eastern Region; and Ndikimeki - Central Region) out of the 17 council forest areas targeted by the project. This primary data was analysed using NVIVO 12, corroborated and triangulated with data gleaned from content analysis of secondary documentation.

The project was highly relevant to the needs of national governments and of Cameroonian councils, the FAO, and GEF despite gender and indigenous peoples' issues not being prioritized. Significant capacity building of local council officials, Peasant Forest Committees (PFCs) and Council Forest Cells (CFCs) were achieved on sustainable forest management issues and carbon management. However, due to significant delays, internal governance conflicts and personal issues within the FAO and between national government partners and executing agencies, the landmark paradigmatic change in forest management approach, whereby council forest management plans would integrate sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation and carbon management components have not been achieved. Revised documents for nine out of the 17 target council forests were being readied for assessment at validation by a national committee designated by MINFOF. Only 3,800ha of restoration and reforestation actions out of 56,200 ha planned were realized for lack of government co-financing. None of the planned databases for biodiversity conservation and carbon management have been established. The project is considered inefficient and the failure to apply a results management approach meant that action plans, budgets and recommendations emerging from monitoring and evaluation processes were not fully implemented. Project gains are likely to continue beyond the project but this is contingent on actions taken to address financial, institutional, social and environmental risks.

The evaluation provides 9 recommendations targeting the FAO, GEF, national government partners and local councils: (i) to urgently engage in an inclusive, participatory process to develop the project's exit strategy; (ii) consolidate the capacity building gains acquired to strengthen the pathway to the environmental and development impacts of the project; (iii) come to an agreement with government partners (MINFORF and MINEPDED). No effort should be spared in ensuring joint FAO/MINFORF field supervision visits to assess progress and ultimately validate of the 9 revised plans are organized; (iv) develop clear internal project guidelines which clarify the roles, scope and limits of different actors intervening in the project; (v) FAO review its matrix of responsibilities and clarify the modalities for addressing disagreements and conflicts within PTF; (vi) establish a mechanism for monitoring the technical delivery of projects by the PTF to address underlying project performance challenges; (vii) strengthen the management framework for delivering projects of this magnitude through having dedicated monitoring and evaluation team, procurement plan, specific financial management procedures and guidelines for partners and grievance mechanisms through which individuals who feel aggrieved can register their complaints; (viii) explore opportunities for a follow-on phase of this project to capitalise on and develop the gains achieved through this pilot initiative; and (ix) GEF provide funding for a follow up phase to guarantee impact.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ACFCAM	<i>Association of Council Forests of Cameroon</i>
Cam-Eco	<i>Cameroon Ecology</i>
CFC	<i>Council Forest Cells</i>
CONAC	<i>National Anti-Corruption Commission</i>
CTFC	<i>Council Forest Technical Centre</i>
GDP	<i>Gross Domestic Product</i>
GESP	<i>Growth and Employment Strategy Paper</i>
GIZ	<i>German International Cooperation</i>
FAO	<i>Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations</i>
FAOR	<i>Food and Agricultural Organisation Representative</i>
FLEGT	<i>Forest Lawn Enforcement Governance and Trade</i>
ICRAF	<i>International Centre for Research in Agroforestry</i>
IITA	<i>International Institute of Tropical Agriculture</i>
IRAD	<i>Institut de Recherche Agricole pour le Développement</i>
IUCN	<i>International Union for Conservation of Nature</i>
LDCF	<i>Least Developed Countries Fund</i>
MINEPDED	<i>Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development</i>
MINFOF	<i>Ministry of Forest and Wildlife</i>
NBSAP	<i>National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan</i>
NCCAP	<i>National Climate Change Adaptation Plan</i>
NDCs	<i>Nationally Determined Contributions</i>
ONACC	<i>National Observatory on Climate Change</i>
OCD	<i>Organization for Conservation and Development</i>
PFC	<i>Peasant Forest Committee</i>
PNDP	<i>National Community-Driven Development Programme</i>
PSC	<i>Project Steering Committee</i>
PTCM	<i>Project technical consultative mechanism</i>
REDD	<i>Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation</i>
SDGs	<i>Sustainable Development Goals</i>
SFM	<i>Sustainable Forest Management</i>
TOC	<i>Theory of Change</i>
UNFCCC	<i>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i>
VPA	<i>Voluntary Partnership agreement</i>

Map of Cameroon



Source: Cameroon map [online]. [accessed 09.10.2022] [Cameroon | Geospatial, location data for a better world \(un.org\)](https://www.un.org/locations/cameroon)

Executive summary

The project "Sustainable forest management under the authority of Cameroonian councils" is financed by the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and managed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The cost of the project is US\$ 21,423,333, of which a GEF allocation of US\$ 3,573,333 and a co-financing of US\$ 17,850,000 from partners. The project was approved on the 13th of April 2015 for a period of four years with an actual start date of 1st of June 2015. With significant delays, the project effectively started on the 5th of April 2016. The initial end date was 1st of March 2019 but considering the delayed start of the project an initial extension was granted up to the 29th of February 2020. Following the mid-term evaluation in 2019, two other no cost extensions (NCE) were granted for an end date of the 31st of December 2022. The latest NCE was approved in June 2022 whilst the final evaluation was fully underway.

The Global Environmental Objective of the project is to reduce deforestation and forest degradation in council forests to improve biodiversity conservation, reduce emissions and enhance carbon stocks. The Development Objective is to improve livelihoods of local communities by promoting sustainable income generating activities. The project is implemented through a direct execution modality with the FAO, national government agencies, and partner executing agencies focused on (i) Establishment of council forests for sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation; (ii) Capacity building to strengthen biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of council forests; (iii) Capacity building for forest carbon management; (iv) Ecosystem restoration and enhancement of carbon stocks in council forests; and (v) Monitoring and evaluation and dissemination of information.

The evaluation assessed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and coherence of the project including the performance factors, M&E, implementation and execution, gender, indigenous peoples, social and environmental safeguards, and progress to impact. These criteria are further operationalised through nine evaluation questions.

To address these questions, the evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach to address the questions. Over 75 participants were heard in online and face to face semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions during field visits by the national consultant to five (Mvangan and Akom II - South Region; Dzung and Dimako - Eastern Region; and Ndikimeki - Central Region) out of the 17 council forest areas targeted by the project. The primary data was analysed using NVIVO 12, corroborated and triangulated with data gleaned from content analysis of secondary documentation.

Findings

EQ1: Was project design/conception appropriate to reach intended results?

1. The theory of change is generally realistic and coherent and the intervention logic is sound. The proposed risk management and assumptions have held, however, the mitigation measures highlighted in the risk analysis have not achieved expected effects. In terms of the logic of intervention, several key gaps have been identified. For instance, the link between the project outcomes and developmental objectives could be further strengthened by an outcome which specifically focuses on increased creation of local enterprises and income generating activities by local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and women. While the project foresaw support to start-up of community enterprises, this did not materialise.
2. In terms of responsiveness to national needs, the project was fully aligned with the country's main development priorities as defined in the country's 1994 Forest Law, its National Growth and Employment Strategy (2010-2020), its 2035 emergence vision, and biodiversity and climate goals under the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), the national REDD+ strategy and commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement as illustrated by the 2021 Nationally

Determined Contributions (NDCs). Despite being aligned at design, the engagement of the project with these processes during implementation was limited.

3. A participatory process was applied during project design which ensured that the needs of different stakeholder groups were integrated. The project remained relevant over time including with the advent of the Covid 19 pandemic, to address needs of councils and of forest dependent communities in terms of sustainable management of target council forests, the development of alternative income-generating activities, biodiversity conservation and carbon management. However, gender equality, promotion of gender empowerment and addressing underlying barriers of inequality were not the primary objectives of this project. There was scant mention of gender in the project document, the results framework was generally gender blind. Beyond the national and community needs, the project was consistent with GEF and FAO strategic frameworks for SFM, biodiversity conservation and climate change.

EQ2: To what extent has the intervention met or is expected to meet its objectives and outcomes?

4. After six years of implementation, characterized by four no cost extensions, the project is now on track to achieve its objectives. The following section presents the state of progress of the project; more details are available in the report itself.

Outcome 1:

5. To develop a database of biodiversity in council forests, technical guidelines for sustainable management of council forests including biodiversity conservation were developed and adapted for council forests. Biodiversity inventories were delivered in 13 out of the 17 target council forests and a database expert recruited to develop the database. Regarding the revision of forest management plans, the gazetting of forests in 15 out of the target 17 were completed. The necessary documentation for validation of the management plans was available for 9 out of the target 17, but these were yet to be finalised. Both the development of the biodiversity database and the revision of management plans were negatively impacted by insufficient allocation of funds and disagreements between the FAO and MINFOF on roles which led to significant delays. Without achieving the validation of forest management plans, the designation of 56,200ha of forest for conservation has not been achieved.

Outcome 2:

6. Despite initial disagreements in legal terminologies between the FAO and government, the planned restructuring and training of the peasant forest committees and council forest cells has been implemented. Various technical guidelines for biodiversity monitoring and reporting were developed and disseminated in 21 councils involved in the 17 target councils. Seventy-two (72) forest protection committees with 6 representatives per were effectively restructured and trained in forest management and monitoring above the 45 planned. Additionally, 17 council forest cells were also restructured and trained in forest management and monitoring. 88 council forest staff from 11 councils were further trained in the development and implementation of forest management plans. 1050 (556F/444M) were trained on FAO's Market Analysis and Development approach (ADM) with the objective that those trained would produce enterprise development plan for alternative forest income generating activities (NTFP, hunting, ecotourism). The main weaknesses were in the failure of the project to provide further logistic and material support required for trainees to apply their learning. At the level of the council units and staff, significant needs for materials and forest monitoring equipment remain unfulfilled.

Outcome 3:

7. The methodology and approach for carbon monitoring, reporting and verification has been effectively developed and tested for council forests. Various studies were commissioned to assess the state of carbon in the target council forests to support designation of carbon management areas in the forests. Unfortunately, this was marred by insufficient budgets and costly missteps in the coordination and procurement of data analysis services by the FAO team resulting in delays of over a year before laboratory results were finally released to the project. Given the delays and staff turnover issues, most of the trainings on carbon management for council officials, CFCs and PFCs took place in May and June 2022 meaning that beneficiaries have had little time to practice the learning. Considering all the delays and uncoordinated management of these activities, the carbon management database which was to be established at the level of MINEPDED and councils remains at design phase, with stakeholders reporting not being fully away of the plans related to the setting up and management of the database. The equipment required for the database is yet to be provided to the MINEPDED.

Outcome 4:

8. The activities under this outcome were to be implemented by the government as part of its co-financing for the project. As of 2021, a total of 3,821 ha of trees were effectively planted against the 56,200ha planned, representing a 7% rate of achievement. There were no further reports from MINFOF regarding reforestation and restoration activities. Government officials reported that this low achievement was due to limited funding in the ministry.

Outcome 5

9. The project did not apply a results-based management approach. Action plans and budgets were developed, but recommendations rarely implemented in full. The structures expected to support project delivery were either not created or ineffective. Interpersonal conflicts, poor communication, ineffective stakeholder engagement, and internal governance issues impacted project delivery. The midterm evaluation and terminal evaluations were effectively commissioned. Midterm evaluation recommendations were not implemented in full. No evidence exists that best practices have been documented or disseminated to external stakeholders.

EQ3: To what extent was the project's management and operational delivery efficient and have quality results been delivered on time?

10. The project was not sufficiently staffed in terms of numbers and quality and suffered a high turnover of project technical coordinators. This was subsequently mitigated with the recruitment of national consultants to complement the PMU team, but pervasive collaborative challenges limited the team's productivity.
11. Additionally, the project budget was unrealistic with high dependence on co-financing from national partners which did not materialize. This impacted the implementation of the project negatively whereby planned activities could not be realized by national partners including MINFOF. Considering the physical project output delivery rate and the expenditure rates as of June 30th, 2022, the efficiency use rate of GEF resources is 0.79 demonstrating a low efficient project which achieved over half of its outputs. Faced with the multiple challenges, four project extensions were approved. Part of the redress strategy also included budget revisions and a pivot away from institutional partners to working with mainly national consultants. The approach helped to drive project implementation between June 2021- June 2022.

EQ4: To what extent are project achievements likely to continue beyond the project and what risks could constrain extension, replicability, and up scaling of this project?

12. Capacity strengthening was a key part of this project. Following over a year of disagreements on terminologies, the project reorganised Peasant Forest Committees and Council Forest Cells. Training materials and guidelines were developed and the PFCs, CFCs, council authorities and local communities trained on a wide range of subjects linked to the sustainable management of forests, biodiversity, and carbon. Anecdotal evidence shows that community members trained were testing their learning through processing of non timber forest products and their marketing and improved forest surveillance activities. One of the project's executing partners, GIZ will continue working in 4 council forests beyond the project implementation period, building on the gains achieved in this action. The management plans, if validated will provide the legal and institutional tools required for future sustainable management of council forest resources.
13. Financial, institutional, and social risks threaten the sustainability of these achievements. Pertaining to financial risks, there is no exit strategy for the project and a follow-on phase is not secured to consolidate the achievements of the project beyond ongoing efforts by GIZ. If councils do not have income to recruit qualified staff to lead on these aspects, it is unlikely that the implementation of biodiversity conservation and carbon monitoring will be effective. Councils need revenues to acquire bikes and necessary forest monitoring equipment and to cover the costs of operating biodiversity and carbon databases. The financial model for the revised forest management plans remains unclear to mayors. Financial support to community groups was not provided and none of the business plans developed following the ADM trainings has been implemented.
14. The turnover/instability of elected council officials has been identified as a key institutional risk for the sustainability of this project. Officials elected in the 2020 elections have not been sensitised or involved significantly in the project: bringing them to understand and strengthen buy-in can only benefit the project. The project team failed to bring partners and government officials along in the delivery of the project post September 2020 which has impacted ownership and appropriation negatively. Government agencies MINFOF and MINDEPDED, that were expected to ensure management of various biodiversity and carbon databases, report not being fully aware of plans, nor being involved in the selection of service providers and their design.
15. In terms of social risks, there is general feeling of being let down by the FAO amongst local council officials and community members due to unmet promises. At the level of government officials, there was a perception of FAO staff not being accountable to the government through arbitrariness and unilateral decision making at different levels. Irrespective of the basis for such perception, the result of this situation is seen in partners expressing strong reserves about working with the FAO on a future phase of the project.
16. This project was designed in part to tackle some of the underlying causes of unsustainable management of council forest resources. However, the risks posed by climate change, forest fires, illegal deforestation and degradation are likely to continue as the pressures on forests increase due to national deforestation drivers.

EQ5: To what extent did the M&E design and implementation, and management and supervision mechanisms affect project performance?

17. The project M&E system at endorsement required revision. This revision was effectively implemented through an operational plan in October 2018. The project indicators were overall specific, measurable and timebound, but only 67% were relevant. The revised plan appeared

cumbersome and impracticable in the absence of an assigned monitoring and evaluation officer. The budget appeared sufficient for the scale of the project. However, given the weaknesses in the design and set up of the M&E system, it was not implemented as planned. Field monitoring and supervision missions, steering meetings, MTR and terminal evaluations have been implemented with recommendations not implemented in full.

18. In terms of management and supervision, it is important to restate that the project idea originated from ACFCAM/CTFC and because of fiduciary weaknesses the FAO was designated to serve as implementing agency. Subsequent non validation of project document by CTFC and national stakeholders led significant delays at start up and grievances carried over throughout implementation. In its role as implementing agency, the FAO ensured oversight and supervision through a project task force, implementation of midterm and final project evaluations complemented by field supervision missions. The effectiveness of this role was strained by internal governance and accountability challenges within the organisation.
19. The FAO effectively played a dual role as GEF implementing agency and executing agency. For partners, the separation of both roles and documented procedures remained unclear straining the relationships between FAO and partners and leading to execution challenges. Within FAO, lines of responsibility and command remained tense and conflictual. Attempts to address the matter, due in part to no clear process to address the issue, did not prove successful. At the level of financial management, the relationship between the technical and financial teams was not always coherent, leading to delays in procurement of services and consequent loss of efficiencies. The implementation of LOAs was characterised by quality issues, delays in validation and settlement of contracts. Unsatisfactory mobilisation of co-financing and little involvement of MINFOF and MINEPDED impeded the discharge of their obligations under this project.
20. Regarding stakeholder engagement, the relationship between partners was fractious while the frameworks for stakeholder engagement were either not created (stakeholder committee and PTCM) or not effective (steering committee, PFCs and CFCs) with negative consequences on ownership and project appropriation. Stakeholder engagement was partly hampered by poor operationalisation of the project's communication strategy.

EQ6: To what extent were environmental safeguard concerns effectively identified and addressed during project implementation?

21. The project was correctly classified as category C on FAO's environmental and social safeguards guidelines. The project contributes to address community needs and contribute to environmental protection. The principle 9 on IPs could have been triggered but this was not undertaken considering the project impacts on IPs. Revised forest management plans should, per design, integrate social and environmental safeguards.

EQ7: To what extent were gender, indigenous peoples, vulnerable or marginalised groups involved in project implementation?

22. Gender was not a priority objective for this project. Project design and implementation was generally weak on gender. There was no gender analysis undertaken and the proposed gender strategy and recruitment of dedicated staff was not implemented. Targeting of women was mainly through training on the FAO's ADM approach. They were consequently the most let down and disappointed with the failure of the project to provide financial and business start-up support. 30% of participants in project steering committees were women. On the OECD gender marker score, this project is considered as 0 (not targeted).

23. Regarding indigenous peoples, the project effectively reached IP communities in the project's areas of intervention. However, free prior informed consent was not demonstrated as no specific plans or guidelines for targeting these communities was developed. From respondents, no specific actions were taken to enhance the participation of IPs and ensure no harm was committed. FAO's environmental and social safeguards principle 9 on indigenous peoples could have been triggered.

EQ8: What evidence exists that activities are contributing to project and GEF strategic goals and targets?

24. There is evidence that the project improved the knowledge, skills and attitudes of council officials, CFCs, PFCs and communities on sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, alternative forest-based income opportunities and carbon management. This was demonstrated through reports of increased forest monitoring and reported increase in denunciation of forest illegalities. Communities also reported reduced incursions into council forest areas for agriculture as well as better awareness of the negative impacts of illegal artisanal logging. Subject to risk mitigation measures presented about, these could contribute to the project's environmental objectives, GEF and FAO strategic goals. This could be further strengthened once revised management plans are validated by MINFOF and councils effectively use them for decision making on the management of their forests.

EQ9: To what extent have the lessons learned been documented and available to inform future project design on SFM projects

25. No evidence was obtained regarding the project's documentation of best practices and lessons. However, at the time of evaluation, a lesson learning and capitalisation expert had been commissioned to document project lessons.

Conclusions

26. The project was highly relevant to the needs of national governments and of Cameroonian councils, the FAO, and GEF despite gender and indigenous peoples' issues not being prioritised. Significant capacity building of local council officials, Peasant Forest Committees (PFCs) and Council Forest Cells (CFCs) were achieved on sustainable forest management issues and carbon management. However, due to significant delays, internal governance conflicts and personal issues within the FAO and between national government partners and executing agencies, the landmark paradigmatic change in forest management approach, whereby council forest management plans would integrate sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation and carbon management components have not been achieved. Revised documents for nine out of the 17 target council forests were being readied for assessment at validation by a national committee designated by MINFOF. Only 3,800ha of restoration and reforestation actions out of 56,200 ha planned were realised for lack of government co-financing. None of the planned databases for biodiversity conservation and carbon management have been established. The project is considered inefficient and the failure to apply a results management approach meant that action plans, budgets and recommendations emerging from monitoring and evaluation processes were not fully implemented. Project gains are likely to continue beyond the project but this is contingent on actions taken to address financial, institutional, social and environmental risks.

Recommendations

To the FAO

Recommendation 1: FAO needs to urgently engage in an inclusive, participatory process to develop the project's exit strategy.

27. FAO in collaboration with MINFOF needs to convene the project steering committee meeting and provide the opportunity for stakeholders to understand the state of progress of the project, particularly as most consider they have been left out since the last meeting in September 2020. Weak stakeholder engagement, poor communication and collaboration amongst partners have been hallmarks of this project which has impacted the level of ownership and commitment to the future of the project. FAO needs to reinstate a collaborative environment and organise meetings with all partners involved to assess progress achieved and explore how project gains can be secured and sustained; it must also clarify the roles different actors need to play in this exit strategy and ensure their ability and desire to play it. With the six months left, this inclusive process could significantly enhance the commitment of partners and ensure ownership and continuity of project results. This is particularly relevant for MINFOF, MINDEPDED and CTFC which remains the technical arm of ACFCAM¹.
28. Partners have long suggested for the need for joint visits to the field to collectively assess progress on the ground. As part of developing the project exit strategy, FAO could organize these requested joint missions by groups of actors to different council forests to learn from progress and challenges on the ground and to formulate recommendations. The newly recruited capitalisation expert could also use these field missions to document the project experiences and best practices if at all. There are several SFM, Biodiversity conservation and carbon/climate related initiatives and processes on-going in Cameroon. These include the FLEGT VPA, REDD+; NDCs, promotion of domestic timber market and public procurement. With the latest six months extension, the project management team needs to be assertive in its outreach towards these initiatives and to explore opportunities for the project gains to be embedded or inform these other processes. The evaluation team also recommends that in line with Article 3 of the Cooperation Agreement with the government, the exit strategy could include discussions with the government regarding transfer of project assets acquired as part of this project.

Recommendation 2: FAO should consolidate the capacity building gains acquired to strengthen the pathway to the environmental and development impacts of the project

29. There is need for a rapid assessment of the communities trained on ADM approaches working with local councils to assess the short terms needs required to reinvigorate their business plans development. This assessment could be implemented by a consultant and hence quantify the support required for starting up business enterprises. FAO should provide necessary support to selected enterprises. This is not only important to kickstart the dormant business plans, it will also address the tarnished image of the project and of FAO within these communities.
30. Local councils, PFCs, CFCs have been strengthened but all still demonstrate weak capacities to be effective. In line with Recommendation 1, revisit a role for CTFC to ensure continuous monitoring of capacities. Also assess the needs in terms of equipment and logistics support and coaching. This will inform the continuous coaching and mentoring mechanism for the project target groups

¹ Important to mention that part of the disengagement of ACFCAM from the project was that they had won a new EU project and were no longer interested in an LOA. However, due to their strategic positioning, they could still play a role in the future of the project. Failing this, explore other technical consultants or national support agencies to provide bespoke support.

such as council executive secretaries and leaders of councils over the long term. The biodiversity and carbon databases need to be finalised and tested in all target council forests. Stronger engagement with MINEPDED and ACFCAM/CTFC is crucial for sustainability and management and use of the databases. With sufficient buy-in, these organisations could mobilise the resources required to update and maintain these databases.

Recommendation 3: FAO needs to come to an agreement with government partners (MINFOF and MINEPDED). No effort should be spared in ensuring joint FAO/MINFOF field supervision visits are organized to assess progress and ultimately validate the nine revised plans. For those uncompleted, reallocate further resources to ensure all 17 council forest management plans undergo revision.

31. The draft LOA proposed to MINFOF by FAO suggests that the project estimates that nine (09) out of 17 management plans could be ready for validation by the panel in charge of approving forest management plans. Goodwill is needed from both sides to secure a viable agreement on the field missions. Considering this is a critical risk for the project, no effort should be spared to get the revised plans validated; otherwise, the project impacts cannot be achieved and the image and credibility of the FAO will be in jeopardy. While MINEPDED has historically not benefited from an LOA, their role in monitoring carbon and biodiversity cannot be bypassed. Financial resources are required for the MINEPDED teams to monitor the implementation of the databases and revised plans on the ground. Whether these funds are mobilized through the project, MINFOF or MINEPDED are a function of the goodwill and agreement FAO can establish with these partners.

Recommendation 4: In future projects, the FAO should develop clear internal project guidelines which clarify the roles, scope and limits of different actors intervening in the project. These guidelines need to be agreed from inception and will clarify information flows between actors and the mechanisms for addressing disagreements and conflicts.

32. It is important that future projects clearly articulate roles and responsibilities of actors and lines of communication within the FAO PTF and with partners. It is important that all actors understand their roles and responsibilities and the scope of their actions and reporting lines. These include lines for transmission and validation of project deliverables (as well as quality standards of such) between project management units and PTF as well as with the national partner agencies/project coordination units which integrate timelines and mechanisms for redress. These project specific guidelines must be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain fit for purpose. In time, and with practice, such specific guidelines could be made mandatory for all FAO projects, fully mitigating several of the situations witnessed here.

Recommendation 5: FAO should review its matrix of responsibilities and clarify the modalities for addressing disagreements and conflicts within PTF.

33. The FAO Project Taskforce is governed by three principles namely: decentralisation and subsidiarity, segregation of duties and effective skills mix but no governing principle clearly addresses a situation in which there are role overlaps or internal conflicts and disagreements within the PTF. Linked to recommendation 4 above, specific operational guidelines could be developed which lay out how the team will work within the framework of the particular project. It will be the responsibility of the budget holder to develop these guidelines, highlighting potential bottlenecks and mitigation measures. The working relationship between members of the PTF will be reviewed within agreed timelines to address any challenges. Where cases of lack of accountability, or other, are identified, the BH has the responsibility and power to remove, replace or reorganise the PTF to ensure effective delivery of the project. This project highlights the need

for decisive action from the BH who has ultimate responsibility for the success of the action, otherwise, performance challenges may fester and affect project performance.

34. In proposing members to the PTF, particularly the LTO and CTA, the formulator/BH will ensure that the person has the requisite skills and experience in all key areas of intervention of the project and have the ability to provide comprehensive technical oversight in the project areas of intervention. In complex projects or when working on niche topics (where expertise might be limited or dispersed), the formulator/BH may request additional complementary technical experts within the organisation and beyond to join the PTF. The guidelines would therefore clarify the scope and limits of actions and lines of accountability within the PTF. The BH thus ensures that the skills mix is sufficient to support delivery, but also minimises the risk of centralisation of power in any one pair of hands. The mechanism for operationalisation of the roles and responsibilities, would reside in well designed action plans and budgets and in regular team meetings.

Recommendation 6: FAO should establish a mechanism for monitoring the technical delivery of projects by the PTF to address underlying project performance challenges.

35. The FAO could explore developing a system for monitoring technical delivery of projects on the ground drawing on the existing mechanisms for tracking administrative performance². The current administrative system uses an alert and early warning system based on monitoring of key indicators such as spending, reporting, timelines for closure and request for funds. With this alert system, budget holders are regularly updated on the state of project progress, and on administrative bottlenecks that must be resolved swiftly. Once an issue has been addressed, the system no longer considers the project as problematic, even if the administrative challenges reflect technical challenges.
36. To ensure that communication within teams take place and project implementation atmosphere is one of collegiality, a short scorecard/traffic light system could be explored through which the performance of designated PTF members is assessed and reported on by the BH on a monthly to quarterly basis. The scorecard would ask particularly the BH, LTO and CTA to rank on a scale of 1- 5 or 1- 3, overall project delivery. Key questions could focus on team collaboration; communication; implementation of work plans; implementation of steering committee or evaluation/review recommendations. This scorecard could be available to senior management at subregional and regional levels. Overtime, this could enable poor performing individuals to be identified, and problems tackled before they fester; it could also contribute to better allocation of resources within the organization ensuring all talent is utilized for their strengths. For example, budget holders could also use this scorecard as reference in their selection and allocation of individuals to different projects. It will be important for this scorecard to be very short to facilitate its use and application.

Recommendation 7: FAO needs to strengthen the management framework for delivering projects of this magnitude through having dedicated monitoring and evaluation team, procurement plan, specific financial management procedures and guidelines for partners and grievance mechanisms through which individuals who feel aggrieved can register their complaints.

37. The importance of having a dedicated monitoring and evaluation team and an operational M&E system which enables the project team to systematically collect, analyse and provide information for project decision making cannot be overemphasised. If fully implemented, the M&E system

² Project reports, evaluations and reviews play a role, but when issues are not addressed promptly as witnessed in this project, it could become too late to salvage a project. In fact, project progress reports often downplay the underlying factors for poor performance as was the case in this project.

also allows the team to keep track of key performance factors such as communication, stakeholder engagement and levels of satisfaction and ownership of project outputs and outcomes by stakeholders. It will also be critical to develop biennial procurement plans which allows the technical and financial teams to have common understanding of resource needs throughout the life of the project and avoid delays and inefficiencies. The same applies for bespoke financial and administrative procedures which must be clearly understood by all partners to avoid confusions and misunderstandings that might impact the project negatively. With conflicts likely to emerge in complex projects, the FAO should systematise the integration of grievance mechanisms in all projects. These should not only focus on environmental and social safeguard impacts, but also on harm, bullying, harassment and other unproductive workplace practices.

To Government

Recommendation 8: The government needs to explore opportunities for a follow-on phase of this project to capitalise on and develop the gains achieved through this pilot initiative.

38. Based on the results of this evaluation and other documented evidence of project performance and challenges, the government should seek to mobilise additional grant funding to support implementation and scale up of the project gains. This could include exploring additional GEF funding or other climate and biodiversity funding opportunities under Green Climate Fund or other donor financing.
39. Part of capitalising on this project will also involve integration of databases within relevant administrative units and departments and designating sufficient human and material resources to operationalise the biodiversity and climate databases.

To GEF

Recommendation 9: Provide funding for a follow up phase or subsequent project to guarantee impact

40. The key recommendation is for the donor to provide funding for a follow up phase of this project or for another project that would build on this project's results. This will enable the councils to fully embed the learning acquired and demonstrate the full impacts of this initial investment. This would also strengthen the strategic positioning of the GEF regarding the paradigm shift from traditional forest management to one that integrates biodiversity conservation and carbon.
41. GEF should also implement due diligence mechanisms on co-financing promises by executing or implementing partners. The experience of this project demonstrates that co-financing promises are easy to secure, but without mechanisms for ensuring that partners effectively mobilise their planned contributions, this represents significant risks for future projects. For example, partners could be required to provide bank accounts or balance sheets which highlight their level of financial solvency or evidence of contracts (recruitments, property) being negotiated or signed.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

1. This final evaluation is a requirement of Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO). It is used as a tool for accountability, reporting, and learning for the Government (Ministry of Forest and Wildlife - MINFOF, Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development - MINEPDED) of Cameroon, GEF, FAO, Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), the Association of Council Forests of Cameroon (ACFCAM) through its technical unit, the Technical Centre for Communal Forestry (CTFC) and other participating institutions. It aims to assess the achievement of project objectives, performance in terms of results, efficiency, sustainability, and impacts. The terminal evaluation will identify lessons learned that could inform future actions and enhance scaling up. Based on the findings, it will provide recommendations to maximise the project gains and the prospects for sustainability.

1.2 Intender users

2. All stakeholders involved in the project as well as the FAO (Cameroon and broadly), GEF, and other UN agencies and donors, organizations and institutions interested in supporting and/or implementing similar projects could benefit from the evaluation report. The Cameroonian government institutions at different levels (including relevant ministries and departments), councils and other partners, who can use the evaluation findings and conclusions for planning future initiatives to support the project's achievements are also intended users of this report.

1.3 Scope and objectives of the evaluation

3. The final evaluation covers the project implementation period starting from June 2015 to June 2022, all five components and target groups. It also covers the 17 councils³ concerned with the council forests targeted by the project.
4. The evaluation aims to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, factors affecting project performance⁴ and cross-cutting dimensions - considerations such as gender, indigenous and minority issues, and social and environmental safeguards applied to the project. The evaluation builds on the the findings and recommendations provided in the 2019 Mid Term Evaluation as a relevant starting point. The GEF guidelines in terms of ranking the performance of key criteria are applied for: 1) Relevance; 2) Effectiveness; 3) Efficiency; 4) Sustainability; 5) and Factors affecting performance. Other cross cutting issues such as social and environmental safeguards (6), gender (7), progress towards impact (8) and lessons learned (9) are also addressed, but these will not be scored/ranked in line with GEF evaluation guidelines. The results and resulting lessons and recommendations drawn from the project will be useful in informing FAO's future work in Cameroon and beyond.
5. The **objective(s)** of this evaluation are:
 - ✚ To examine the extent and depth of the project results and determine the likelihood of future impacts;

³ Djoum, Messondo, Dimako, Yokadouma, Moloundou, Gari-Gombo, Nanga Eboko, Dzeng, Mindourou/Messamena, Minta, Akom II/Efoulan, Mvangan, Yoko, Lomié, Ndikiniméki, SIKOP (Ndom,, Nyanon, Ngambé), and Oveng.

⁴ M&E, quality of implementation, financial management and mobilisation of expected match funding, partnerships and partnership engagement, knowledge management, communication and sensitisation of the public

- ✚ To provide an assessment of the performance of the project and the implementation of planned activities and outputs against concrete results;
- ✚ Synthesize lessons learned that can assist in the design and implementation of future FAO and FAO-GEF initiatives, indicating future actions needed to (i) expand the existing project in subsequent phases, (ii) integrate and scale up its products and practices, and (iii) disseminate information to management authorities responsible for related issues to ensure replication and continuity of processes initiated by the project.

6. To achieve this, the evaluation is based on the following nine (09) evaluation questions as agreed upon in the terms of reference and further revised during the inception phase. The full list of evaluation subquestions by GEF criteria are presented in the evaluation matrix (see Appendix 5).

- 1. Relevance:** Was project design/conception appropriate to reach intended results?
- 2. Effectiveness:** To what extent has the intervention met or is expected to meet its objectives and outcomes?
- 3. Efficiency:** To what extent was the project's management and operational delivery efficient and have quality results been delivered on time?
- 4. Sustainability:** To what extent are project achievements likely to continue beyond the project and what risks could constrain extension, replicability, and up scaling of this project?
- 5. Factors affecting performance:** To what extent did the M&E design and implementation, and management and supervision mechanisms affect project performance?
- 6. Social and environmental safeguards:** To what extent were environmental safeguard concerns effectively identified and addressed during project implementation?
- 7. Gender:** To what extent were gender, indigenous peoples, vulnerable or marginalised groups involved in project implementation?
- 8. Progress to Impacts:** What evidence exists that activities are contributing to project and GEF strategic goals and targets?
- 9. Lessons to be learned to inform future programming:** To what extent have the lessons learned been documented and available to inform future project design on SFM projects

1.4 Methodology

7. The evaluation used a participatory mixed methods approach. The evaluation team applied a three-phase approach: (i) Inception phase, (ii) Data collection and analysis phase and (iii) Close out phase.
8. The evaluation team was composed of two consultants, one International and one national. The international consultant is a Professor of International Development, seasoned evaluation expert and researcher. The national consultant holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics with well established research and evaluation experience.

Inception phase

9. The objective of this phase was to gain common understanding between the project stakeholders and the evaluation team on the objectives and scope of the assignment. Starting with an initial meeting on the 4th of April 2022, this phase involved a series of remote exchanges with the FAO Evaluation Manager, the country project team members, Lead Technical Officer (LTO) and Funding Liaison Officer (FLO) to exchange ideas, relevant documentation, and reach agreement on timelines and data collection tools. Following initial review of the project documentation provided, the team produced an evaluation matrix. Additionally, the evaluation stakeholders were determined, as were their contact information as were sites and dates for field visits.

Data collection and analysis phase

10. The evaluation team adopted a mixed method/approach comprising secondary data analysis, qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Initial secondary/documentary review commenced at inception and was pursued through out data collection as additional evidence became available or was requested by the Final evaluation team. The key documents reviewed included: the project document, Midterm Evaluation Report (MTR); project implementation reports (PIR), steering committee meeting reports, financial reports amongst others. The full list of documents reviewed and analysed is presented in the bibliography. In addition to content analysis of the secondary data, the team relied on the PIR 2022 report results matrix regarding the rate of physical implementation of activities and outputs.
11. Primary data collection consisted of virtual/in-person interviews with identified project partners and stakeholders. Following initial interviews, other key stakeholders were further identified and interviewed to provide corroborative evidence and enhance triangulation of emerging data. Field visits to a sample number of councils were implemented. Field data collection took place in 5 (Mvangan and Akom II - South Region; Dzeng and Dimako - Eastern Region; and Ndikimeki - Central Region) out of the 17 council forest areas targeted by the project.
12. During these field visits, the national consultant held interviews and focus group discussions with beneficiary groups and local PFCs/CFCs operational on each site. These zones were selected to ensure representativeness in terms of activities and realizations across our project components, diversity of actors, implementing partners/LOAs, and to achieve a balance between the zones that were involved in the midterm evaluation and those that were not. The selection process was implemented with the Project Technical Coordinator to ensure that there was a common agreement and ownership of the choices made. Annex 3 shows the summary of the field sites and the key criteria for selection, while Appendix 1 presents the list of participants to the evaluation.

Data analysis

13. Content analysis techniques were applied in the review of project secondary documentation. The evidence was reviewed in line with the evaluation matrix and key evaluation criteria. Regarding primary data emerging from interviews and discussions, recorded interviews were transcribed, cleaned and readied for data analysis. NVIVO 12 qualitative data analysis software was utilised. The initial process consisted of creating parent codes in line with the evaluation criteria and then child codes were allowed to emerge from the data. Following several rounds of coding and discussion between the evaluation team, the final emerging themes were agreed. The emerging findings were then cross-referenced and triangulated with the secondary analysis to establish the findings, conclusions and recommendations formulated.
14. The findings are presented in accessible forms including tables, figures, graphs and wordclouds. All figures generated used datawrapper which enables high quality and potentially interactive graphics to be presented. Interview notes and quotes are also used to illustrate or support arguments while showcasing the lived experiences and perceptions of respondents. These are all anonymised in line with standard evaluation and research practice.

Close out phase

15. Following submission of the first draft of the evaluation report to the evaluation manager, the results were presented to identified stakeholders on the 28th of July 2022. This provided an opportunity for the terminal Evaluation team to present findings from the field and address any concerns from those involved as well as share and validate findings to date. A draft of this report has been shared with FAO and relevant stakeholders for their comments and suggestions; while

the report reflects the views and opinions of the evaluation team and remains independent, the suggestions have all been considered. A comments matrix is available upon demand in which a justification as to why or why not each suggestion was integrated is provided.

1.5 Limitations

16. The limitations of the methodology are those of assessments based on qualitative and quantitative tools. We combined field visits, interviews and focus group discussions, therefore benefitting from the advantages of mixed methods. An additional strategy for mitigating the challenges identified was on the rigour of systematic triangulation of sources and data. The evaluation was carried out in the context of the Global Covid 19 pandemic. The evaluation team adhered to national preventive and social distancing measures in force to limit the risks of transmission between the national consultant and stakeholders.
17. The geographical spread of the target council forests and the conditions of roads to the region made field visits very challenging as was reported during the midterm evaluation. To visit all target areas would require significantly more time than is available for field data collection. A representative sample of councils was therefore selected in line with the criteria already provided above. Another key challenge was the availability of key informants to participate in the evaluation. While access was finally secured, this delayed the data collection phase for well over two weeks. Of note, in the end, the National Project Coordination – Director of Forests could not take part in the evaluation: following numerous unfruitful requests for interview over a period of two months⁵ the Director would have been willing to allocate only 30minutes of his time which was considered inadequate considering the role of the MINFOF in the project and his role as the National Director of the Project⁶.
18. Additionally, the field visits were organised in the wake of the LTO's unexpected as far the evaluation was concerned supervision mission to target council forest areas. All mayors in the target zones had been mobilized and were no longer available for the evaluation having already allocated time for his mission. After weeks of effort and financial support from the FAO country office, the mayors were invited to Yaounde to take part in the interview. The evaluation team is grateful for the assistance provided, but regrets the additional time required to complete the data collection phase.

1.6 Structure of the report

19. Following this introduction, section 2 presents the background and context of the project/programme. Section 3 presents the main findings for each evaluation question. Conclusions and recommendations are in section 4, followed by lessons learned in section 5. The report is accompanied by the following annexes:

Annex 1. Terms of Reference of the Evaluation

Annex 2. Revised Theory of Change Visual

⁵ Requests were made to accommodate the director's schedule through email, telephone, and face to face appointments at his convenience, (including the opportunities for the interviews to take place over the weekend or evenings to accommodate for his busy schedules) over a two months period,

⁶ The evaluators do not doubt how busy the National project director was during the evaluation, but for a coordinator of a USD 21 million project not to be able to allocate an hour for an interview over a period of two months raises questions about interest and willingness to engage with the evaluation. This is not stated in a vacuum as the team is well aware that government officials were initially not allowed to engage in the evaluation in view of the standoff between the FAO and MINFOF.

Annex 3. Summary of field visit sites, criteria for selection

Annex 4. State of implementation of communication activities

Annex 5. Evaluability Framework

2. Background and context of the project/programme

Brief description of the context and the project/programme

20. The Republic of Cameroon is located in Central Africa. The Republic of Cameroon has a surface area of 475,442 km² and an estimated population of 27.23 million inhabitants in 2021, more than half of whom are under 18 years old⁷ (World Outlook, 2022). The population growth rate stands at 2.5 per cent per year⁸ with this rate reaching 4.3% in urban areas. As stated in the country's Nationally Determined Contributions⁹, the rate of urbanisation increased from 52% in 2010 to 57% in 2019. Cameroon's GDP in 2020 was USD 40.8 billion, or USD 3.666 per capita. In 2021, GDP growth is estimated at 3.4% and is forecasted at 4.0% in 2022 (Loi de finances 2021)¹⁰.
21. In 2020, Cameroon's economy was severely affected by the combined effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the persistent security and political (the Anglophone and post electoral) crises and the decline in world oil prices. Among Central African countries, Cameroon was the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, both from a health and economic perspective (AEO, 2021)¹¹.
22. The forest sector plays a key role in the country's economic development. Cameroon's rainforests cover approximately 46% of the national territory and account for 11% of the Congo Basin Forest area¹². The contribution of the forestry and wildlife sector to non-oil GDP is estimated at 4 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP); this is in addition to providing significant socio-cultural, environment and climate benefits to the country and particularly to forest dependent and indigenous peoples who rely on forests for their livelihoods. (Bassalang¹³, 2018). This sector creates nearly 22,722 direct permanent jobs and contributes a total of CFA 64.2 billion to public revenue (CIFOR, 2013)¹⁴. Industrial timber production grew steadily from the 1960s until the second half of the 1990s, when it exceeded 3.5 million cubic metres. Between 2006 and 2015, the average timber production was about 2.3 million cubic metres (FAO/CIFOR, 2016), while in 2019, the marketing of promotional species involved 1.6 million m³ of raw timber and including 484,018 m³ of legally logged timber (Finance Act, 2021).
23. As a result of the growing timber production, a new taxation system was also put in place as part of the legal requirement for exploiting state concessions: 10% of the new annual forestry fees are allocated to local communities, 40% to city councils, and 50% to the state. The 40% to councils is also meant to serve the development of communities. In reality these taxes are often misappropriated by local bureaucracies and rarely reach local rural populations (Djeukam, 2009).
24. Cameroon is grappling with the adverse effects of climate change and with increasing pressure on forests. These pressures are driven mainly by unsustainable large scale and local small scale slash and burn agricultural practices, ever increasing demand for timber and wood fuel, illegal forest exploitation and other land use demands for large scale infrastructural developments, mining and urbanisation. The rate of forest cover loss has been on the rise, increasing from 0.9%

⁷ According to World Bank data and also based on the demographic trends thus identified from 1976 to 2005, including the annual growth rate of 2.8% according to the last general population census.

⁸ UNFPA, 2022 World Population Dashboard Cameroon, <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/CM>

⁹ Government of Cameroon, 2021 Revised Nationally Determined Contributions submitted to UNFCCC, <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/CDN%20r%C3%A9vis%C3%A9%20CMR%20finale%20sept%202021.pdf>

¹⁰ Loi de finances (2021) Rapport sur la Situation et les Perspectives Economiques, Sociales, et Financières de la Nation

¹¹ African Economic Outlook (AEO) 2021.

¹² Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, 2022 – Cameroon, <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/country/cameroon>

¹³ Bassalang, (2018) Analyse de la Transparence dans le Secteur Forestier au Cameroun

¹⁴ Final report "Study of the economic and social importance of the forestry and wildlife sector in Cameroon

between 1990-2000 to 1.1% between 2010-2020¹⁵. This rate is expected to increase extremely due to demographic growth associated with increasing demand for timber, fuelwood and NTFP, which mount pressure on forest resources. Illegal logging, enabled by poor forest governance and driven by trade, is a major contributor to deforestation¹⁷. This has damaging effects on the country's biodiversity as forests become exploited for these various uses.

25. Forest management in Cameroon is governed by Forestry Law n°94/01 of 20 January 1994 (articles 20-39) and its implementing decrees which provide for the division of forests into permanent and non-permanent domains. The legislation defines council forests as those belonging to councils with established boundaries and a management objective that takes into account the right of indigenous communities to enjoy the forest and its resources and requires the development of a management plan to guide activities in them. Despite this legislation, as noted in the project document, most of these forests do not have management plans and those that do do not have the trained staff to implement them. Reliable data on forest resources, biodiversity status and carbon stocks are also lacking.
26. The project was designed to support the Cameroonian government to address some of the above mentioned challenges through empowering the decentralised administrative units (councils) to better manage their forests. The target areas of the intervention cover the selected intervention areas in the 17 councils concerned with the forest councils targeted by the project, as well as the 9 councils for reforestation areas and 26 councils covering the 33 forest reserves.

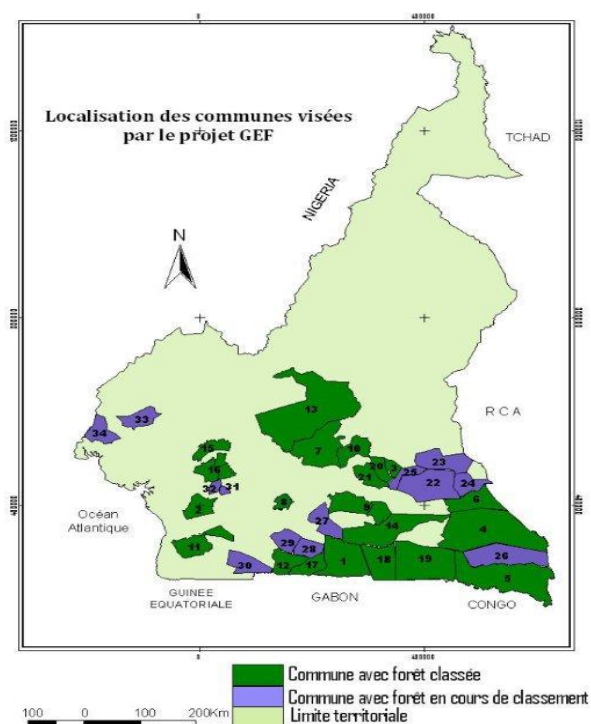


Figure 1: Map of target areas for intervention in Cameroon (Source: Project document).

¹⁵ [Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015 \(fao.org\)](https://www.fao.org/global-forest-resources-assessment-2015/)

¹⁶ FLEGT Independent Market Monitor (2002) Cameroon, <https://flegtimm.eu/country-profiles/cameroon/>

¹⁷ European Forest Institute, 2022 - VPA Africa-LatinEU FLEGT Facility, Cameroon's forest sector, <https://flegtvpafacility.org/countries/cameroon/background/>

27. The project "Sustainable forest management under the authority of Cameroonian councils" is financed by the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) managed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The cost of the project is US\$ 21,423,333, of which a GEF allocation of US\$ 3,573,333 and a co-financing of US\$ 17,850,000 from partners. The project was approved on the 13th of April 2015 for a period of four years with an actual start date of 1st of June 2015. With significant delays, the project effectively started on the 5th of April 2016. The initial end date was 1st of March 2019 but considering the delayed start of the project an initial extension was granted up to the 29th of February 2020. Following the mid-term evaluation in 2019, two other no cost extensions (NCE) were granted for an end date of the 31st of December 2022. The latest NCE was approved in June 2022 whilst the Final evaluation was fully underway. The project budget was revised following the mid term review to address weaknesses identified in the budgeting of key project activities.

28. The Global Environmental Objective of the project is to reduce deforestation and forest degradation in council forests to improve biodiversity conservation, reduce emissions and enhance carbon stocks. The Development Objective is to improve livelihoods of local communities by promoting sustainable income generating activities. The project is structured into five components with corresponding outcomes as follows:

Component 1: Establishment of council forests for sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation.

- **Outcome 1:** Increased area of forest managed for sustainable use, conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in non-protected ecological areas.

Component 2: Capacity building to strengthen biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of council forests.

- **Outcome 2:** Strengthened capacity of selected councils to manage council forests and conservation sites.

Component 3: Capacity building for forest carbon management.

- **Outcome 3:** Council forestry staff and the functional technical unit have the tools and skills to monitor and manage carbon stocks in council forests.

Component 4: Ecosystem restoration and enhancement of carbon stocks in council forests.

- **Outcome 4:** Forest degradation reduced through restoration and reforestation of 56,200 ha of degraded forests.

Component 5: Monitoring and evaluation and dissemination of information.

- **Outcome 5:** Project effectively and efficiently managed and monitored and best practices and lessons learned disseminated.

29. The project targets 561,825 ha of forests including 17 Council Forests (CFs) totalling 416,901 ha and covering 21 communes, 33 forest reserves (FRs) transferred to communes totalling 137,738 ha, and 9 reforestation areas in CFs totalling 7,186 ha. The project is implemented by FAO working with the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF) with the collaboration of the Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED), and the Association of Forest Communes of Cameroon (ACFCAM) and other national partners as executing agencies. The project is implemented through **a direct execution modality**, and FAO therefore assumes technical and fiduciary responsibility for the achievement of the project's expected results. FAO is responsible for the supervision and technical guidance of the project during its implementation. It is responsible for the management of GEF resources and provides procurement and contracting services for the project in accordance with the rules and procedures of the organisation.

30. Regarding human resources, the project is implemented by a project management unit hosted within the FAO made up of a technical project coordinator, two technical experts with support of national and international consultants. At the level of MINFOF is the national coordination headed by the Director of Forests and two assistants. At MINEPDED three staff were involved including the GEF focal point and two assistants. The level of achievement of co-financing was weak with only 32 % mobilised compared to plans (see annex co-financing table in Appendix 4).

2.1 Theory of change

31. The theory of change is generally realistic and coherent and the intervention logic is sound. The proposed risk management and assumptions have held, however, the mitigation measures highlighted in the risk analysis have not achieved expected effects. In terms of the logic of intervention, several key gaps have been identified and suggestions proposed. Firstly, the link between the project outcomes and developmental objectives could be further strengthened by an outcome which specifically focuses on increased creation of local enterprises and income generating activities by local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and women. The assumption that trained local communities will improve local livelihoods depends on the availability of sufficient funding and business incubation support and market access which would lead to job creation or local enterprise creation. While the project foresaw support to start up of community enterprises, this did not materialise. The assumption that incomes from council forest revenues will translate to better services is based on the hypothesis of improved transparency and lack of corruption which is reported to be endemic in forest exploitation royalties in Cameroon¹⁸. No actions were introduced to mitigate this matter and the project failed to respond to the decree No 004/MINFI/DGI/LRI/L of 28 January 2015 modifying the allocation of forest exploitation royalties to councils and communities. This meant that councils would henceforth be allocated lesser amounts of these revenues than previously. In summary the TOC is therefore as follows:

Box 1: Theory of Change

IF the area of unprotected forest zones under the control of councils is effectively increased for biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management with specific designation of conservation (10% of the total targeted area), enrichment and restoration (10% of the total targeted area), and SFM (80% of the targeted area), institutionalization of this distribution in forest management plans and a functional biodiversity and carbon monitoring and management systems are in place; and **IF** local council agencies, technical units and community groups are capacited in the sustainable management of forests, biodiversity and carbon; and **IF** local communities are strengthened to lead sustainable livelihoods through adoption of low impact economic activities and enterprises and their awareness of their impacts on forests; and **IF** government agencies deliver forest restoration and carbon enhancement in the council forests; and **IF** the activities and resources are efficiently managed and delivered; **THEN** this will contribute to reduce deforestation and forest degradation in council forests, improve biodiversity conservation, reduce emissions and enhance carbon stocks as well as better livelihoods of local communities through engagement in sustainable income generating activities; **BECAUSE** of the ownership and appropriation by local communities, council officials and agencies and government departments, adoption of management plans and legal utilization of forest resources, improved transparency and less corruption in council forest management, political stability and maintenance of SFM, climate and biodiversity conservation and national priorities sustained coordination between agencies, sufficient funding and incubation support for forest enterprise development and market access, which allows communities to reduce their pressures on forests while enhancing their incomes and sustainable livelihood options. The visual is presented in Annex 2.

¹⁸ National Anticorruption Commission (CONAC 2020) <https://conac.cm/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/09/CONAC-2020-REPORT.pdf>

3. Findings

3.1 Relevance: Was project design/conception appropriate to reach intended results?

32. In assessing the relevance of the project, the evaluation focused on: the extent to which the project responded to the country's main development priorities as defined in the country's development plan, FAO-GEF mandates, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), sectoral policies and international conventions, the needs of beneficiaries and the consideration of gender development concerns. Based on the findings presented in the following sections, the evaluation team concludes that the relevance is **Highly Satisfactory (HS)**.

Sub question: To what extent have the project objectives and design met the needs of the country/recipient and continue to do so in changing context/circumstances?

Finding 1. The project was fully aligned with the country's main development priorities as defined in the country's 1994 Forest Law, its National Growth and Employment Strategy (2010-2020), its 2035 emergence vision, and biodiversity and climate goals under the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), the national REDD+ strategy and commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement as illustrated by the 2021 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

3.1.1 Alignment with national priorities and evolving context

33. This project is entirely consistent with the Cameroonian 1994 Forest Law. The objectives of the 1994 Forestry Law included rationalising the use of forest land, providing local communities certain rights to use forest resources, improving transparency and efficiency in attribution of logging rights, ensuring sustainable forest management practices and reforming the forest taxation system, strengthening participation of local communities and local councils in the management of forest and forest-based resources either through community forestry or through council forest management. The overall delivery of the country's forest policy is under the responsibility of the Ministry of forests and Wildlife (MINFOF). By strengthening the engagement of decentralised authorities and local communities in the fight against illegal exploitation of timber in council forests, this project was also aligned to other government initiatives aimed at promoting good forest governance such as the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership agreements (FLEGT VPAS)¹⁹. The FLEGT VPAs promote transparency, support the fight against illegal logging and related trade, and advocate stronger forest law enforcement and the respect of the rights of forest-dependent and indigenous peoples.
34. The project was also fully aligned with the mandate of MINEPDED which is in charge of: defining conditions and guidelines for the rational and sustainable management of natural resources; defining environmental management measures in collaboration with the ministries and specialized organs concerned; monitoring environmental compliance in the implementation of major projects; providing information to the public to encourage public participation in the management, protection and restoration of the environment and nature; negotiating international conventions and agreements regarding environmental and nature protection and their implementation. The ministry also oversees the National Observatory on Climate Change (ONACC).
35. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) of Cameroon was validated and adopted in 2012. This project was aligned with the NBSAP's strategic goals: Strategic goal 1:

¹⁹ European Union 2011 Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Cameroon on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and derived products to the European Union (FLEGT), Official Journal L 092 , 06/04/2011 P. 004 - 125

reduction of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation in the short and medium term and reversal of this trend in the long term and Strategic goal 3: development and strengthening of capacity for planning, implementation and monitoring of biodiversity programmes and projects.

36. By strengthening the technical capacity of councils to implement SFM and by conducting field activities to restore degraded forests and enhance carbon stocks in the council forests, the GEF project sought to contribute to efforts made by the Cameroon government towards the reduction of carbon emissions from forests and from land use changes. Therefore, the project is consistent with climate change objectives set out in the national Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) strategy as well as the 2021 revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)²⁰ (project 9 and 10) as part of COP 26 Glasgow submissions to the UNFCCC. Therefore, demonstrating that it has remained relevant over time.
37. In fact, Cameroon intends to implement the following mitigation actions, based on the guidelines and reduction options in line with the pillars of its National Development Strategy 2020-2030 (NDS30) and the Sustainable Development Goals. In terms of climate adaptation, the project is aligned with the strategic axes of the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (NCCAP) and more specifically seeks to contribute to the implementation of the strategic recommendations of the NCCAP's Forestry, Forestry and Wildlife sector, notably: Measure 4.2 (Implementation of a forest fire monitoring, prevention, warning and management system); Measure 4.3 (Monitoring of forest cover dynamics including climate risks); Measure 4.4. (Implement the REDD+ strategy including adaptation measures).
38. It is also aligned with Cameroon's Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP 2010 - 2020)²¹, with its priority objective of modernising the production apparatus, which provides for the sustainable management of natural resources through the implementation of actions in favour of the environmental management of rural activities, biodiversity management, resource enhancement, reforestation as well as the development of forestry plantations. In 2016, Cameroon elaborated a new Rural Sector Development Strategy to ensure alignment with the GESP and its Vision 2035²². The strategy aims to ensure a successful transition of the rural sector towards green and inclusive growth based on the principles of sustainable development and provide the necessary platform for Cameroon to attain emergence by 2035²³.
39. The emergence of the Covid 19 pandemic had a significant impact on the forest sector and the lives of forest dependent communities in Cameroon. Emerging research reported increased forest and wildlife illegality, loss of incomes and livelihoods by forest dependent communities²⁴.

²⁰ [CDN révisée CMR finale sept 2021.pdf \(unfccc.int\)](#)

²¹ Government of Cameroon, Growth and Employment Strategy – 2010-2020, [Cameroon DSCE English Version Growth and Employment Strategy Paper MONITORING.pdf \(cameroonembassyusa.org\)](#)

²² Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon, 2021 Economic Emergence Action <https://www.prc.cm/en/the-poles/economic-emergence-action> . The emergence plan has four priority poles with the Agricultural and environmental pole strongly focused on - environmental protection; ecosystems preservation; and agricultural revolution to usher in the second generation agriculture.

²³ Naah Ndobe, S. 2019 Overview and Analyses of Key National Policies, Strategies and Action Plans Relevant to Deforestation, Child and Forced Labour, and Smallholder Inclusion in Cameroon, https://www.proforest.net/fileadmin/uploads/proforest/Documents/Publications/Overview_and_Analyses_-_Cameroon_June_2021.pdf

²⁴ FAO-EU FLEGT Programme, 2020 Webinar series on COVID-19 and the Forest Sector - Experience from Forest Communities of COVID-19 Impacts, <https://www.fao.org/in-action/eu-fao-flegt-programme/news-events/events-details/en/c/1364781/>

Considering the linkages between forest degradation and the emergence of such zoonotic diseases, the need for better forest management and biodiversity protection has never been more relevant. It is concluded that in effect, the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic further amplified the need for the project's interventions despite its disruptive impact on the delivery of project activities because of government-imposed lockdowns. The project's alignment with government priorities is **is highly satisfactory**.

3.1.2 Alignment with community needs

Finding 2. A participatory process was applied during project design which ensured that the needs of different stakeholder groups were integrated. The project remained relevant over time including with the advent of the Covid 19 pandemic, to address needs of councils and of forest dependent communities in terms of sustainable management of target council forests, the development of alternative income-generating activities, biodiversity conservation and carbon management.

40. Workshops during project preparation as well as meetings with administrative authorities, councils and local communities during field visits helped to identify and consult key stakeholders and beneficiaries of this project. This participatory process ensured that design was responsive to their needs. So when asked about the relevance of this project to them, mayors, members of the different Peasant Forest Committees, council forest cells and beneficiary groups were unanimous in stating this project responded to real needs.
41. For council officials, the project responded to capacity building needs required to sustainably manage council forests for the benefit of local communities. Mayors also thought that this project will support them to increase resource mobilization from SFM, biodiversity conservation and carbon credits. As one of the project consultants stated, *the idea was to support councils to diversify their sources of income including through accessing international carbon markets while preserving their biodiversity and carbon stocks*. It was expected that increased incomes at the level of councils would translate to better investment in sustainable resource management but also to provision of basic services such as health, education, water and livelihoods options for communities.
42. For communities, the opportunity to diversify their livelihoods and incomes through support to business and income generating activities was identified. As participants in the focus group discussion in Dimako stated: *the project sought to address in a comprehensive way the poor engagement of communities in the management of their forest resources*. The group also stated that the aim was to *stop the abusive exploitation of their forests while addressing specific needs such as poverty alleviation in their community*. In Akom II, participants in FGDs stated that the project was needed to increase community awareness of their impacts on forests and to collectively find ways to address the consequences. The needs from council officials and communities were fully captured under outcome 2 of the project, which intended to strengthen capacities and enhance community-based enterprises. The relevance of the project to community needs is **highly satisfactory**.

3.1.3 Alignment with GEF focal area strategies

Has the program responded to the country's main development priorities as defined in the country's development plan, FAO-GEF mandates, SDGs, sectoral policies and international conventions?

Finding 3. The project is generally consistent with the GEF and FAO strategic frameworks for sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation and climate change.

43. This project's goals and outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4 are fully aligned with and support delivery of the following GEF outcomes:
- *BD Outcome 2.1 (SFM and biodiversity conservation)*. The project will assist councils to develop and implement forest management plans taking into account the need for biodiversity conservation in production areas and complying with Cameroon's Forest Law requirements on SFM.
 - *BD Outcome 1.1 (Management effectiveness of protected areas)*. The forest management plans developed will include areas set-aside for biodiversity conservation (conservation sites) in each council forest and the project will develop operational tools to facilitate the implementation and the management of the conservation sites²⁵.
 - *CCM Outcomes 5.2 (Management for restoration and enhancement of carbon stocks in the forests and non-forest lands)*. The project will adapt, test and implement a system for accounting and monitoring carbon in the council forests.
 - *SFM/REDD Outcome 1.2 (Good management practices in existing forests)*. The project will contribute to this objective through implementation of SFM on 449,425 ha of forests.

The alignment of the project to GEF focal area strategies is **highly satisfactory**.

3.1.4 Alignment with FAO Strategic Framework and Objectives

44. The new FAO Strategic Framework is comprised of five Strategic Objectives (SOs) that represent the main areas of work of FAO. This project is linked to Strategic Objective 2 (SO-2), "Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner". The project's environmental and development objectives are fully aligned with SO-2. Its outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4 will contribute to the achievement of the following outcome and output:
- *SO2 Organizational Outcome 1*: Producers and natural resource managers adopt practices that increase and improve the provision of goods and services in the agricultural sector production systems in a sustainable manner (outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4).
 - *Output 1.1*: Practices and approaches assessed, widely shared and their scaling-up facilitated for the sustainable increase of production and the provision of environmental, social and economic goods and services (outcomes 5).

The project's alignment with FAO strategic framework and objectives is highly satisfactory.

3.1.5 Relevance to gender consideration: Is the programme sensitive to gender development concerns?

Finding 4: Gender equality, promotion of gender empowerment and addressing underlying barriers were not the primary objectives of this project. There was scant mention of gender in the project document, the results framework was generally gender blind.

45. The project document was generally gender blind, with the word gender mentioned twice. The key focus was to ensure equitable participation of men and women in training events and various

²⁵ The term **conservation site** used in this project document refers to the IUCN category IV of protected areas. As defined in IUCN classification such protected areas aim to protect particular species or habitats and management reflects this priority. Also, as stated in IUCN's classification, the primary objective of such protect areas is to maintain, conserve and restore species and habitats.

forest management committees to be implemented by the project. The initial project results framework did not provide any gender disaggregated data, no gender analysis nor gender strategy was developed. Inclusion of gender consideration is **moderately unsatisfactory**.

46. Overall, with the exception of gender considerations to which the project was unattuned, the project, both at design and through implementation, remained aligned with national priorities and a changing context, with community needs, and with GEF and FAO strategies. Overall relevance of the project is deemed **highly satisfactory**.

3.2 Effectiveness: To what extent has the intervention met or is expected to meet its objectives and outcomes, including differential outcomes between groups?

47. In evaluating project effectiveness, the team assessed achievement of project outcomes and outputs, the factors affecting achievement of results and the value added of the project to ongoing national efforts.

Finding 5: After six years of implementation, characterized by four no cost extensions, the project is now on track to achieve its objectives. A myriad of internal and external challenges impacted the project negatively and hence, stakeholders and communities have not had sufficient opportunity to exercise and apply learning. The project team has requested another extension which could enable the team to finalise activities and provide opportunities for communities to practice their learning but this is subject to having a clear exit strategy that is appropriated by all stakeholders. Effectiveness is overall deemed Moderately Satisfactory.

3.2.1 Outcome 1: Did the project increase the area under sustainable forest management in targeted council forests?

Finding 6: The landmark revision and validation of forest management plans which integrate sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation and carbon management has not been successfully delivered due to insufficient budget allocated under the particular budget component of Forest management plan review which led to delays in implementation. Based on proposed LOA between MINFOF and FAO in July 2022, 9 draft management plans will be submitted to MINFOF for validation out of the 17 planned. Achievement of outcome 1 is, at the time of this evaluation (June 2022) Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU).

Output 1.1.1 Database of biodiversity in the council forests

48. Technical guidelines for sustainable management of council forests including biodiversity conservation have been developed and adapted for council forests. This includes criteria and indicators for designation of conservation sites and for monitoring of biodiversity in councils. Part of setting up the database involves carrying out the inventory of biodiversity and identifying the necessary conservation sites. It must be stated that as of June 30, 2020, key actions remained to be established in the 17 council forests towards creation of the database²⁶. The implementation of these activities were delayed because of insufficient budgets allocated to the revision of forest management plans and institutional differences between MINFOF and FAO on the approach for implementation of the activities. As per the recommendations of the project steering committee (meeting held in September 2020), three Letters of Agreement (LoA) were signed in March 2021 (Monitortrust, Organization for Conservation and Development (OCD) and in May 2021 (International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Monitor trust worked on revision of

²⁶ PIR 2020

the management plans of the Akom2-Efoulan, Mvangan and Oveng communal forests, while OCD targeted Minta, Nanga Eboko and Ndikiniméki communal forests while IUCN focused in Dimako, Yokadouma and Gari-Gombo. A sustainable forest management expert was recruited to monitor the implementation of activities relating to the revision of management plans.

49. It appears that these LOAs, as of June 2022, have led to progress regarding the mapping and biodiversity inventories to be completed in 13 council forests (Ndikinimeki, Nanga-Eboko, Minta, Dimako, Gari-Gombo, Yokadouma, Lomie, Djoum, Messondo, Ngambe/Ndom/Nyanon, Mvangan, Oveng, Akom II/Efoulan) out of 17 council forests targeted by the project. In the 4 council forest remaining, the biodiversity inventories of biodiversity have been implemented in Messamena/Mindourou, Dzenge, Yoko. The consultant responsible for the design of the database was recruited in May 2022 and equipment procured. This includes 23 computers, inverters and hard disks to house the databases at the level of 21 councils and the 2 ministries targeted by the project. At the time of the evaluation, 08 councils had effectively received the equipment²⁷, whilst the government departments were yet to receive them. This output is assessed as moderately satisfactory.

Output 1.1.2: Forest management plans, integrating biodiversity conservation, developed and implemented

50. It can be argued that this output was the most significant of all outputs of this project in that all other activities were built on its successful delivery. The documents needed for the revision of the management plans include: Socio-economic studies (SEA), forest maps, biodiversity inventories and management inventory reports. To date the SEAs have been finalised for all 17 CFs. Key activities under this output include: gazetting of 561825 ha of council forest into three blocks (10% for conservation site, 10% for enrichment and restoration and 80% for SFM) and revising all 17 management plans integrating biodiversity and their implementation.
51. The Gazetting of forest into three blocks (10% for conservation site, 10% for enrichment and restoration and 80% for SFM) is conducted in 15 council forests (Ndikinimeki, Nanga Eboko, Minta, Dimako, Gari Gombo, Yokadouma, Lomie, Djoum, Messondo, Ngambe/Ndom/Nyanon, Mvangan, Oveng, Akom II/Efoulan, Moloundou, Mindourou/Messamena). The development of forest management plans, integrating biodiversity conservation and carbon has been implemented in 9 council forests (Ndikinimeki, Nanga Eboko, Minta, Dimako, Gari Gombo, Yokadouma, Mvangan, Oveng, Akom II/Efoulan) out of 17 council forests targeted by the project. Like output 1.1.1, the implementation of these activities was hampered by insufficient budget allocated for the review of management plans and institutional issues. As suggested by the MTR, a budget of approximately USD 1,324,234.27 (including EIAs) or USD 1,036,720 (without EIAs) was required for the revision of the 17 Management Plans compared to USD 389,048 budgeted²⁸. Following the MTR, no formal budget reallocation took place. Rather, 158,528 USD in cost savings on the contracts budget line was allocated to hire consultants to carry out planned activities. This represents 12% of the total amount required to revise 17 management plans.
52. With the breakdown in the relationship between the FAO team and CTFC, a decision to subcontract different agencies to support revision of the forest management plans was made. The main reasons for the fallout are CTFC pulling out because the budget required to complete the activities was well below the budget allocated for the revision of the plans but also disengagement from the project to focus on a new European Union grant. For these reasons, OCD, IUCN and

²⁷ Computer screen, desktop, external drive, GPS, and stabiliser/circuit breaker

²⁸ FAO 2020 Rapport financier- Démarrage - Septembre 2020

Monitortrust were issued LOAs in 2021 to lead the revision of the management plans. The selection for these organisations took place in May 2018 following a call for applications published in the national daily "Cameroon Tribune" on the 9th of January 2018. While no improprieties were detected by the evaluation²⁹, a general perception on the part of stakeholders of concern over the credibility and transparency of this selection process and the subsequent issuance of LOAs three years later³⁰ is to be reported. More than three participants knowledgeable of the subject, raised questions over transparency and whether there had been a promise of contract following the 2018 process; furthermore, despite efforts to the contrary, the evaluation has found no MINFOF or MINEPDED staff was involved in any phase of this recruitment process.

53. As the 2021 PIR report highlighted, government officials and other stakeholders cautioned the FAO to the need for selected partners to respect the legal and regulatory provisions regarding management inventories. Amongst these, the fact that organisations engaged in the revision of these plans must be accredited, formally, by MINFOF. The minutes of the selection committee of FAO team shows that only Monitortrust/Ecare had the relevant accreditation. When asked why the other two were selected, the team argued that it is normal practice for partners to sign LOAs and then subcontract the work to third parties as highlighted in article 6 (c) of the LOAs. The emphasis for the project team appears to have been on identifying organisations with sufficient financial resources to pre-finance activities on the field and to avoid the problems faced earlier on in the project where activities were delayed because of lack of co-financing ability.
54. Ultimately, the revised management plans must be received and validated by a commission headed by MINFOF. Having not been involved in the monitoring of the activities of these organisations on the ground, MINFOF staff are concerned with the quality of the deliverables from these organisations³¹. Some raised concerns that by not holding the accreditation themselves, there might be issues with the validation of the outputs by these three organizations. There has also been disagreement between MINFOF and the FAO on the funding of the monitoring missions linked to the validation of the revised management plans. Initially, the FAO argued that GEF rules would not be respected if GEF funds were used to fund MINFOF statutory activities. Yet, MINFOF stated that it did not have funding to implement the missions while questioning the underlying explanation from the FAO, particularly as FAO is the lead executing agency of the project. The evaluation finds disagreement also within the FAO team on this matter – while some in charge of technical aspects of the project remained staunchly on the side of following procedures, others were more concerned that prolonged tensions and perceived conflict with MINFOF was likely to damage goodwill and future collaboration with the government. Others still argued that this was formenting an atmosphere of mistrust while tarnishing the image of the FAO to partners. Irrespective, clear, initial and on-going communication on what was feasible and what is expected, what the procedures are, and how to move forward would have precluded these difficulties.

²⁹ The selection process was carried out following FAO MS507 handbook section including the advertisement of an open request for applications in national media; it sought to select the most competent and competitive NGOs. The selection methodology was in line with FAO practices and FAO did not receive any complaint from either the Yaoundé office or from the Inspector General Office. Nevertheless, explaining this process to all involved could have mitigated the current negative perception.

³⁰ The evaluation team is not casting aspersions, merely reporting on widespread concerns raised in both the project team itself and with different project partners that this perception negatively affects FAO and the project

³¹ This is not to revisit the discussion of whether MINFOF should or should not carry out carry out activities as well as monitoring of such: its role is to monitor these activities. MINFOF staff are raising concerns about the deliverables emerging from the assignment having not participated in the selection and vetting of the NGOs, and having not seen any of the outputs by the time of the evaluation

55. Through intervention from the FAOR, it appears dialogue has been reestablished, a new LOA is being negotiated targeting the reception and validation of 9 CF management plans³². The ultimate goal of this output was to have forest management plans revised and implemented including their gazzement into the three allocated blocks (biodiversity, carbone storage and SFM). To date, these are neither finalized nor formally approved. Concern remains amongst mayors over potential short-term income shortfall, but planned meetings with the administration and mayors following successive municipal elections (2018 and 2020) have not been organized to strengthen their understanding and buy in. The evaluation considers the latest extension an opportunity to ensure mayoral buy-in by organizing these meetings that had originally been planned. This output is considered moderately unsatisfactory.

Output 1.1.3: 56,200ha of conservation sites formally designated and established within the council forests

This output and its related activities are linked to 1.1.2 above. This output is contingent upon the reception and validation of the revised council forest management plans. It is thus considered unsatisfactory.

Review of progress towards outcome 1.

As of June 30.06.2022, the level of contribution of outputs to this outcome is moderately unsatisfactory. The key weaknesses reside in the slow progress achieved in the revision and validation of forest management plans integrating SFM, biodiversity conservation and carbon. The key weaknesses were due to insufficient budgets allocated for the activities and institutional differences between MINFOF and the FAO. The reallocation of funding to these activities following the midterm review of 2019 and the steering committee of September 2020, enabled the project to recruit three agencies to drive the implementation of the activities. This has led to biodiversity inventories being completed in 15 out of 17 CFs and gazzement actions conducted in 15. The six months project extension provides an opportunity for the project to validate the 9 completed plans and to make further progress with the 8 others.

Outcome 2: Has the project increased capacities of local councils to manage forests and conservation sites?

Finding 7: The project has successfully delivered the restructuring and strengthening of the peasant forest committees and the council forest cells in several areas of sustainable forest management and biodiversity management. Anecdotal evidence shows changes in behaviour and increased awareness of the multifunctional benefits of forests. 1050 community members have been trained on the ADM approach, seven time above the number planned. No promised start up financial and incubation support has been provided and consequently, no enterprise development plan developed by communities have been implemented. Achievement of outcome 2 is, at the time of this evaluation (June 2022) moderately satisfactory.

Output 2.1.1: Technical guidance and standards for SFM and biodiversity conservation in conservation sites developed and disseminated in the council forests.

56. Technical guidelines and standards for SFM and biodiversity conservation in conservation sites including criteria and indicator for the selection of conservation sites and biodiversity monitoring, technical guidelines for monitoring and reporting on biodiversity have been effectively delivered.

³² Draft LOA seen in July 2022

These guidelines are expected to support council officials and various PFCs and CFCs to play their roles effectively in terms of planning, monitoring and implementation of revised forest management plans. A communications expert was recruited to support communication and dissemination of the project guidelines and support awareness raising. A communication strategy was developed as well as an action plan with 13 activities. So far, 6 communication activities have been completed, 6 are ongoing and 4 have yet to be initiated. The project team reports that the technical guides were disseminated to 21 councils involved in the 17 council forests targeted by the project. This also includes dissemination to the MINEPDED and MINFOF and to the project key partners and stakeholders. All, as well as mayors, members of PFCs and CFCs reported that these guidelines were effectively being used in addition to the leaflets and banners produced to sensitise and raise awareness in their communities. Output is satisfactory.

Output 2.1.2: 85 local forest protection committees (FPCs) established and trained, and 170 local community leaders/change agents from the villages in/around the council forests trained in alternative livelihoods; and Output 2.1.3: 17 functional technical units (FTU) established and 85 council staff trained in the development and implementation of forest management plans

57. The implementation of these outputs was initialled delayed due to disagreements between the FAO and Government regarding the terminologies used in the project document to describe the local council forest institutions to be established and strengthened. According to the project document and the FAO, the project was expected to establish forest protection committees and functional technical units as opposed to peasant forest committees and council forest cells as stipulated by the national forestry legislation. During this time, FAO authorised Cam-Eco to start the process of creation and training of the committees stated in the project document. It is only in February 2018 that both parties reached an agreement to use Peasant Forest Committees (PFC) and the Council Forest Cells. Unfortunately, this meant that resources spent by Cam-Eco were not utilised optimally as the work had to be revised to realign with the dispositions of the law.
58. In summary, seventy-two (72) forest protection committees representing 6 per council were effectively restructured and trained in forest management and monitoring above the 45 planned. Additionally, 17 council forest cells were also restructured and trained in forest management and monitoring. 88 council forest staff from 11 councils were further trained in the development and implementation of forest management plans. Focus group discussions and interviews with mayors and various CFC representatives, reveal that the skills acquired through these trainings are effectively being utilized in different councils. For instance, respondents stated that increased awareness of the benefits of sustainable forest management, had led many to change their practices. Participants from the PFCs reported increasing their forest monitoring roles and helping to dissuade and fight illegality in their council forests. Reportedly, improved signage and posters at different points in the council forests have also helped communities understand the limits of their forests and have helped to reduce incursions into the forest areas with agricultural activities. Trainings have also allowed CFC and PFCs to practice the use of forest monitoring equipment such as GPSs. However, they reported that basic equipments and resources required to play their roles effectively, such as motobikes and other protective equipment were lacking.
59. A key component of output 2.1.3 related to strengthening the livelihood options for communities. As per the results framework, it was expected that 90 local stakeholders would be trained in SFM and forest income generating alternative activities (NTFP, hunting, ecotourism). In the end, the 100 stakeholders (10 participants per council) coming from 10 councils involved in the 17 council forests targeted by the project were trained in these income generating activities. Significant effort was spent on the promotion of the FAO's Market Analysis and Development approach (ADM) with the objective that those trained would produce enterprise development plan for alternative forest

income generating activities (NTFP, hunting, ecotourism). The ADM approach consist of supporting local communities, from the identification and planning of forest enterprises through to the sustainable management of their local environments and increase of revenues. It spans two cycles and four phases. Phases 1 and 2 (Cycle 1) serve as a diagnostic process, to identify opportunities and motivate participants. Phase 3 supports the preparation of the business plan, and Phase 4 supports the start-up of the business (Cycle 2). Overall, 1050 (556F/444M) were trained in phase 1 (21 councils)³³ and 700 during phase 2 covering 14 councils.

60. Those who took part in the first training were not always the same who took part in the second cycle of training. Despite the long delay between the first cycle of the ADM training and the second, participants remained enthusiastic and interested, with the expectation that the enterprise development projects emanating from the training would receive support to kickstart activities. With so much time-delay between the first and the second cycle, the trainers and trainees stated that some notions were no longer fresh in their minds. The trainings did not provide training kits or training manuals for participants. There was widespread disappointment from all project stakeholders interviewed in this evaluation that the project did not follow up with the proposed support for enterprise creation. In fact, a budget was foreseen in the 2020 action plan to provide support, but it did not materialise. No incubation support was provided by the project to enable the start up of enterprises. Given these factors, both the evaluation and the LTO field missions in June 2022 realised that none of the business development plans had been implemented.
61. While the ADM approach seems to have benefits, there happens to have been a divergence of view between the LTO, trainers and participants and authorities regarding the ADM approach. The LTO argued that according to the ADM approach, support should only be provided to scale up enterprises as opposed to providing start up support. This assertion assumes that impoverished target communities such as those targeted by the project have start up capital and business incubation support which unfortunately was not the case in this project. On the contrary, consultants, mayors, beneficiaries, and other FAO team members were of the view that start up support should have been provided. The overall situation has greatly tarnished the image of the FAO as stakeholders consider the organisation has failed them. Irrespective of wrong or right, stakeholder expectations were not met due to a failure in communicating clearly what the approach is and its limits.
62. To mitigate the situation, the project could have leveraged expertise of partner organisations such as ICRAF and Cam-Eco that have both delivered community forestry development projects in the country³⁴, however, this presupposes having been aware of the issue. Agroforestry activities and other income generating activities proposed in the PTAB 2020 included identifying priority species and their propagation options for 17 CFs targeted by the project and technical sheets for propagating priority species available; 500 people trained and 21 central agroforestry (AF) nurseries; 3000 seedlings of improved AF species produced per commune, a minimum 0.5 ha seed orchard/demonstration plot installed in the 21 CF targeted by the project, and at least 21 material/equipment kits distributed to the communes targeted by the project amongst others. Sadly, none of these were implemented furthering beneficiaries' feelings of disappointment and abandonment by the FAO. The project extension is a further opportunity for the FAO to provide

³³ It is unclear why so many people were trained, and resources spent on this activity way beyond the target set in the prodoc. For these many people to have been trained and then no business development support provided was probably not the optimal use of project resources. This is the more so considering none of the business plans was effectively implemented by June 2022.

³⁴ [DRYAD: Financing Sustainable community forest enterprises in Cameroon | ASB Partnership for the Tropical Forest Margins \(cgair.org\)](https://www.cgair.org/)

the needed financial and incubation support to kickstart the community business ideas. In case the ADM approach does not foresee these types of support to forest dependent communities, then the evaluation team recommends a review of the model and its relevance and to adapt it to contexts where start up capital and incubation support is non-existent. In both output 2.1.2 and 2.1.3, there was no mechanism implemented by the project to ensure further coaching and support to trainees. This is a key weakness considering that those trained had low levels of education and many of the concepts taught were new. Output 2.1.2 and output 2.1.3 are deemed moderately satisfactory.

Overview towards achievement of outcome 2:

The achievement of outcome is moderately satisfactory. Despite initial disagreements in terminologies, the planned restructuring and training of the peasant forest committees and council forest cells has been implemented. The main weaknesses were in the failure of the project to provide further logistic and material support required for trainees to apply their learning. At the level of the council units and staff, significant needs for materials and forest monitoring equipment remain unfulfilled as only 1 GPS was provided per council. Communities trained on alternative forest income generating activities require start up capital and enterprise incubation support to kickstart initiatives. The project's development result is unlikely to be achieved if the project does not prioritise this incubation support during the NTE period.

3.2.2 Outcome 3: Has the project strengthened the tools and skills of staff to monitor and manage carbon stocks?

Finding 8: The methodology and approach for carbon monitoring, reporting and verification has been effectively developed and tested. The shambolic management of the soil sample analysis process means that the process of setting up and piloting the carbon monitoring system has not been implemented. Outcome 3 is considered moderately unsatisfactory.

Output 3.1.1: Existing accounting and carbon monitoring systems adapted to council forests and tested

63. The implementation of activities linked to this output were initially conferred to ICRAF and IITA under LOAs signed in 2016. Based on their experience of the REALU project and carbon monitoring expertise, both organisations worked together to adapt the methodology to council forests. This methodology included the technical guidelines and protocols for the measurement, monitoring and sustainable management of carbon stocks in council forests. This methodology was effectively tested in the field. The initial phase of these activities was marred by insufficient budget, disagreements between these organisations in terms of methodology and significant delays in the validation of the deliverables by the FAO project team and subsequently the LTO³⁵
64. The second phase of this activity required the project to carry out studies that would inform the designation and official recognition of the carbon sites in the target council. It emerged from interviews, that despite the challenges faced during phase 1, ICRAF and IITA remained interested to continue working on the project. However, when a call for expression of interest was advertised by the FAO, these two organisations did not manifest interest. Key experts within both organisations had left, taking with them the limited national expertise in carbon monitoring. As a result of the call, three consultants were recruited to deliver on this next phase. This included carrying out training on carbon monitoring for FPCs and PFCs, mapping the carbon sites and collecting soil samples to estimate the volume of carbon in the different forest. It was expected

³⁵ MTR 2020

that the results would inform the final gazetting of the council forest to include the planned 10% allocation to carbon.

65. The management of this second phase appears to have been the project's most disorganised. This relates to the management of the procurement for services process to implement soil sample analyses. It emerged that due process was not followed by the project's technical team in the selection of a national laboratory to analyse soil samples from the field. In fact, soil samples were taken to the IITA soil analysis laboratory without prior approval from the FAO finance team. The finance team then started a selection process which ultimately culminated in the same laboratory being selected. It is important to note there is a highly limited number of laboratories in Cameroon capable of delivering on this assignment. The result was unnecessary delay, on a process that was already late.
66. Considering how central these results were to the successful achievement of this project, the way in which project leadership managed the situation proved unsatisfactory. In fact, without these results, the carbon consultants could not write the inventory reports nor propose the carbon management sites for the forest management plans. There was a lack of ownership and proactiveness from leadership³⁶. Consultants raised the issue as early as 27.01.2022, voicing concerns about the samples remaining stuck at IITA; they also questioned the validity of their contracts and the financial consequences on the project given that without the sample, they could not complete their assignments nor be paid. No communication from the project team was forthcoming, despite several attempts on their part to get clarification. While a response was provided on the 01.02.2022 to consultants suggested a meeting with the carbon expert of the project, it did not in fact take place. The meeting to address the issue was finally held on the 10.02.2022, but without the consultants, who were not provided with any update. The consultants are unanimously dismayed at FAO's inability to manage the procurement process and to communicate effectively.
67. The soil sampling process underwent an 8 month delay and the evaluation team found no evidence of efforts by FAO to directly reach out to the leadership of IITA and address the situation. The hierarchy of IITA first became aware that the samples remained at IITA, with the laboratory management team during the evaluation. There was dismay as to the lack of communication³⁷ at the highest level even though both leaders had met on different occasions over the period in question. From the IITA side, the samples would have been released had the situation been brought to their attention on time. In the end, FAO issued the request for service (bon de commande) on the 06.05.2022. The invoice from IITA was submitted on the 10.06.2022 and the soil analysis results released to FAO on the 13.06.2022 for onward transmission to consultants – it took all of a week to resolve, after over 8 months of standstill. As of the 30.06.2022, the reports from consultants were still pending. No communication or agreement on timeline for deliverables with the consultants for delivery of the reports have been found by the evaluation³⁸, nor any indication regarding their contracts that have long expired.
68. Given the protracted delays, two additional activities under this output could not be initiated. They relate to the integration of carbon sites into the carbon database, application of the carbon

³⁶ When asked about the situation of delayed soil samples at IITA, the FAOR was unaware of the situation in mid-June 2022 (13th of June 2022) but reacted promptly and the standstill was resolved within the week. Two emails obtained by the evaluation team suggest that he had in fact been informed on the 16.03.2022 and on the 18.04.2022 about the need to address the matter, preferably before the final evaluation.

³⁷ Such communication includes a common understanding of the procedure followed by FAO (MS502 section of the FAO handbook selected to procure the soil analysis), as well as updates on the analysis itself.

³⁸ This includes an informal time frame or even gentleman's agreement by both parties to finalize the work.

accounting and monitoring system in the council forests, and to the measurement, monitoring and reporting of carbon in the council forests. The lack of engagement of MINEPDED in the implementation of trainings and/or in the development and test of the carbon monitoring system raises concerns about the ownership and sustainability of the initiative. This is exacerbated by the fact the database was expected to be set up at MINEPDED. At the time of writing, no equipment had been provided to the ministries. Two meetings in February/March and June 2022 took place between the Director of Forest at MINFOF and the MINEPDED Director of Conservation and Natural Resources and the LTO. However, Project focal points at MINEPDED were unaware of any plans to have a data base set up and of the type of data being collected. Operating the council forest carbon MRV system also requires resources and equipment which the PFCs and CFCs do not currently possess. **Considering these factors, the achievement of this output is Moderately unsatisfactory.**

Output 3.1.2: 85 forest protection committees (FPC) and 34 Functional technical units (FTU) staff trained in forest carbon management

69. Several trainings were effectively implemented targeting peasant forest committees and the council forest cells. 85 participants representing PFCs from 10 out of 17 councils were trained on methods for carbon accounting and monitoring, approaches to conserve and enhance forest carbon in the council forest and in forest surveillance and protection (combatting illegal logging, illegal grazing and forest). Additionally, 18 participants representing 9 CFCs were also trained on the same topic.
70. Initial trainings were organised between the 07th and the 18th of June 2021 in Dimako, Oveng and Ndikinimeki targeting PFCs, CFCs, forest operation managers and heads of forest and wildlife posts from Dimako, Mindourou, Messamena and Lomié (7-10/06/2021); Djoum, Oveng and Mvangan (16-18/06/2021); and Ndikiniméki, Minta and Nanga-Eboko (8-10/06/2022) respectively. The next round of trainings took place in May and June 2022. As with the first set of trainings, trainings were organised in Yokadouma, Messondo and Ebolowa on the 27th to the 29th of May 2022 for participants from Yokadouma and Moloundou; 23rd to the 25th of May for participants from Ngambe, Nyanon, Ndom and Messondo, and 23rd to the 25th of June 2022 targeting participants from Ebolowa respectively. Further training of communal forestry cell staff was provided by the consultant BITOM Eddy on understanding carbon site monitoring sheets and the use and completion of forest carbon databases. As can be seen from the dates, these trainings were organised during the final evaluation period and one year after the initial trainings were delivered.
71. With the long delays between the training and the actual implementation of the carbon monitoring system, concerns were raised by consultants and council authorities about the ability of those trained to effectively play their role. Refresher-courses to enable those trained to play their roles effectively appear necessary. Considering that output 3.1.2 was mainly about providing training to PFCs and CFCs, the achievement of the output is moderately satisfactory.

Brief assessment of progress towards outcome 3

Progress towards achievement of outcome 3 is moderately unsatisfactory³⁹. The project successfully developed and tested the technical guidelines and protocols for measuring, monitoring and sustainable management of carbon stocks in council forests. The main weakness in the delivery of these outputs was linked to delays in the realisation of soil sample analysis by IITA laboratory

³⁹ The evaluators consider the contribution of output 3.1.1 to the achievement of outcome 3 to be more significant and hence the overall rating of moderately unsatisfactory.

in Yaounde due to internal procurement failures at the FAO. While PFCs and CFCs have been trained on various aspects of carbon monitoring, the databases for carbon monitoring and management linking council forests to MINEPDED have not been established. The necessary equipment required for the management of an effective monitoring, reporting and verification system are yet to be provided to councils and the government ministry. The evaluators consider the contribution of output 3.1.1 to the achievement of outcome 3 to be more significant and hence the overall rating of moderately unsatisfactory.

3.2.3 Outcome 4: Has the project increased forest restoration and reforestation in targeted degraded forest areas?

Finding 9: Government plans to restore and strengthen carbon stocks have not been achieved. Only 3800 ha of restoration and reforestation have been successfully implemented out of the 56,200 ha planned because of lack of funding from MINFOF. Outcome 4 is deemed unsatisfactory.

Output 4.1.1: Reforestation and restoration of 56,200 ha in the council forests (10% of total council forest and forest reserves targeted by the project)

72. The activities under this output were to be implemented by the government as part of its co-financing for the project. Evidence from the 2021 project implementation report shows that a total of 3,821 ha of trees were effectively planted against the 56,200ha planned representing a 7% rate of achievement. There were no further reports from MINFOF regarding reforestation and restoration activities. Government officials reported that this low achievement was due to limited funding in the ministry. The output is considered highly unsatisfactory.

3.2.4 Outcome 5: What evidence exists that the project applied results based management and best practices, and documented best practices?

Finding 10: The project did not apply a results based management approach. Action plans and budgets were developed, but recommendations rarely implemented in full. The structures expected to support project delivery were either not created or ineffective. Interpersonal conflicts, poor communication, ineffective stakeholder engagement, and internal governance issues impacted project delivery. The mid term evaluation and terminal evaluations were effectively commissioned. Mid term evaluation recommendations were not implemented in full. No evidence exists that best practices have been documented or disseminated to external stakeholders. Outcome 5 is moderately satisfactory.

Output 5.1.1: M&E plan implemented and mid-term and final evaluations completed

73. The project had a broad M&E plan laid out in the project document. This was effectively revised and operationalised in September/October 2018 but proved to be too complex and ultimately unusable. Four project steering committees were organised to review the action plans and budgets even though their recommendations were rarely implemented in full. The last steering committee took place in September 2020 instead of February 2020 because of the advent of Covid 19. A combination of Covid 19 and the delays in holding the project steering committee meeting meant that no new LOAs nor consultants were recruited. It also shows that for close to two years, the project teams have implemented the project without the required strategic oversight. This may explain in part the disbelief of certain stakeholders upon being informed of the final evaluation of the project, particularly as they had not been informed of any project progress nor had they been in any way involved with the project since the September 2020 steering committee meeting.

74. The project also implemented the mid term review in 2019 with a one-year delay considering the slow start of the project. The mid term review made five recommendations which have only been partially implemented. A communications expert was recruited to work on the project in March 2020. A budgeted project communications strategy and action plan was developed but unfortunately, at the time of the final evaluation had yet to be fully delivered.
75. The 2019 mid term review also recommended the project to recruit an expert to document, capitalise and support dissemination of any emerging results from the project. As stated previously, recruitment was only effective in May 2022, when the project was about to end (it was subsequently extended). The project's final evaluation was effectively commissioned as per donor requirements and this is its result. This output is considered moderately satisfactory.

3.2.5 Factors which affected the achievement of project outputs

76. The Final evaluation analysis finds that this project was affected by several factors including significant bottlenecks; capacity of partners; project internal governance, project design; stakeholder engagement; external coherence; the degree of materialisation of cofinancing; and the emergence of the Covid 19 pandemic.
77. The project was impacted by several key bottlenecks. According to respondents, poor communication – real or perceived – with partners, personal issues and conflicts within the FAO team, mistrust and disagreements with government and partners were the most important implementation barriers. The project also suffered from a lack of foresight and proactivity, non-respect of contractual obligations under LOAs with partners/consultants⁴⁰ and insufficient budgets for key activities. Respondents were deeply disappointed with the level of communication between the project team, government party, partners and external stakeholders. On different aspects of the project, respondents said: *they never listened to us on the budget; since the midterm review we have had no contact with the FAO; it's not fair to be in the same country and not to be improving partner relations – and not to be informed – it is not good practice from the FAO side; after this proposal of a one year extension, we never heard back officially from the FAO, only that the project had been extended by six months; we have not been paid, we are not told what is happening and we cannot submit the report.*
78. The issue of poor communication was in part a reflection of the internal turmoil within the project team as amply described in the midterm review. From the beginning of the project, one of the respondents mentioned that *there were too many conflicts, tensions between project team members*. The overwhelming perception from external stakeholders is that they are not being given a voice: *you cannot direct a project as if you are working with children* and that this comes from the LTO who: *who doesn't like to be told when he is wrong. If two coordinators leave because of someone, then there is a problem or it's a personality issue, if he says no, it's no. He has no explanation to give anyone*. Terms such as bullying, lack of good will, and lack of respect were also brought forward. These strong perceptions had very real negative impacts on the project, and became self fulfilling prophecies as the high staff turnover experienced by the project illustrates.
79. The impact of the reported conflictual relationship between the project technical coordinator and the LTO on the project implementation was amply discussed in the 2019 Mid-term evaluation. Responses from the terminal evaluation reaffirmed the historical view as shown in figure 2 below.

⁴⁰ Delays in payments, often due to non-respect of contractual obligations (deliverables) in LOAs, communication

between 4-12 months (e.g >6 months for ICRAF reports; 12 months for IITA)⁴³ for some partners because in some cases partners were required to revisit their methodologies or go back to the field and collect complementary data. What emerges is a situation where the CTP was expecting the LTO to play the CTP's role because he could not; which the LTO ultimately refused to do. This contributed to the reported tensions and ultimately disserved the project which would have benefitted from complementary expertise and more flexibility.

84. The FAOR reportedly organised several meetings to address the relationship issue but without much success until 2021, when two additional experts were recruited to join the PMU. In October 2021, the PMU team was reorganised to strengthen effectiveness of delivery but also to deescalate the continuous tense relationships between the CTP and the LTO. It appears that the LTO started to play a more direct role in steering the project to address the perceived failings and competency gaps of the CTP. This could help explain the external perception that the LTO seems to be doing everything when faced with, often invisible to the eyes of external stakeholders, alleged poor performance from the CTP, structural weaknesses, insufficient technical capability within the PMU and delays in project implementation by partners. All stakeholders involved after the MTR agree that project performance significantly improved and no reports of delays in the validation of partner outputs was brought to the attention of the evaluation team. Had the decision to reinforce and reorganise the team been taken decisively and earlier; the project could potentially have achieved more and within a reasonable time.
85. The only person with the power to take the ultimate decisions based on the performance of the CTP and the reported role of the the LTO in the overall performance of the project is the FAOR. The FAO's matrix of responsibilities articulates the roles and responsibilities of key project roles such as the FAOR, FLO, LTO. The perception within the project team and country office was that as the LTO combined the role of LTO and of Regional Forestry Lead, he was not answerable to anyone but himself as highlighted by some of the quotes above. The LTO technical expertise is by design separate from oversight by the FAOR; thus, the FAOR is unable to take corrective action in case of technical issues. The FAOR's purview is strictly administrative, the LTO's strictly technical. Project implementation thus relied on their active collaboration. When this collaboration is no longer active the project leadership breakdown. Reasons advanced included fear of political ramifications, a sense that certain parties did not buy into the need for a a technical coordinator which in turned muddied the roles and responsibilities within the team, and the role of LTO as designed in which no technical oversight or check or balance exists. There is no clear redress mechanism within the system in the case of internal disagreements within team combined with unwillingness to cull the team, as was the case in this project where the FAOR, LTO and project management teams disagreed. It also appears that the gravity of these conflicts and their impact on the project were largely downplayed in the annual reports to donors. Without close monitoring of the underlying reasons for underachievement at FAO regional office level, beyond the administrative performance indicators which are closely monitored, there is limited visibility of the issues at stake, and consequently decision making is delayed and the situation is allowed to fester⁴⁴.
86. This situation created a general feeling of mistrust and disagreement with stakeholders on different matters. This was seen in the validation of outputs from national partners and consultants where there was a perception the FAO teams did not trust their capacities and consequently acted unilaterally and arbitrarily. Feedback on project deliverables in some cases

⁴³ MTR page 39

⁴⁴ The system in place, for all Monitoring at the regional level, whether administrative, personal or other, relies on reporting by the FAOR, in this case, a party to the conflict, rendering it ineffective. Please see recommendation 6

was extremely late (ranging from between 4 months to a year in the earlier part of the project). Government actors were often presented with already validated outputs without giving officials the opportunity to comment or to provide feedback creating the feeling that they were merely perfunctory figure in the project. Others stated that this gave the impression that *this was an FAO project*, leading hence to disengagement and lack of interest from government officials and partners. Disagreements between MINFOF and FAO on the funding of field monitoring activities has been an ongoing issue of this project which has ultimately delayed the validation of forest management plans. Earlier disagreements on project terminologies and the unwillingness of FAO to adjust led to over a years delay in the implementation of the project setting the stage for the current, only tentatively collaborative environment.

87. The issue of budget also highlights the deficiencies in foresight and proactivity on the part of the project management team. Project implementation reports revealed that successive action plans underestimated the real costs of crucial activities such as the revision of the forest management plans and the work on carbon, while others were overestimated. According to the estimate made by the project partners, the budget required for an optimal revision, in line with legal requirements, is USD 1.3 million, more than three times the USD 404,208 foreseen by the project. A minimal review, i.e. without an EIA for the 17 CFs, would cost USD 1 million, which is still more than twice the planned budget. According to the 1994 law and its implementing decree, changing the objectives of an MP requires a revision of the MP⁴⁵. It questions the ability of the technical and financial teams to manage the project through their inability to allocate sufficient funds towards planned activities and to abide by the Cameroun national regulations. It took until the midterm review to suggest a budget revision and even thereafter, the revisions tended to be cosmetic. Potential project partners were often presented with unrealistic budgets and requested to work towards budgets as opposed to the other way round. This was the case in the recruitment of carbon experts, as well as in the negotiations with OCD, Monitortrust and IUCN⁴⁶.
88. The management of contracts have proved problematic. For instance, the carbon expert and communication experts were not utilised to their full potential following delays to the implementation of some project activities. For the carbon expert for instance, the delays in the analysis of soil samples at IITA meant that the expertise was not fully utilised. By the time the soil results were released, the expert's contract had expired; he left the project and other consultants were brought in. For the communications expert, delays in delivery led to the personnel being reallocated to other assignments within the FAO. Similarly, the forest management expert was asked to leave after nine months on the project, on the 20th of June 2022, just when a further extension was approved. The biodiversity expert – former technical coordinator also left the project in June 2022. The question therefore remains of who within the team will review the revised forest management plans and the reports from carbon consultants (once written) before passing them on to MINFOF for validation as explained in section 3.2.1.
89. There was a disparity in the ability of project partners to deliver on their LOAs throughout the project. CTFC which originated the project idea did not possess the necessary financial management systems to deliver on the project, which subsequently led to FAO being designated as implementation agency for the project. This marked the beginning of disagreements in this project because CTFC had expected to play a more prominent role. Other partners such as Cam-Eco struggled to deliver on their mandates because of insufficient direction on their actions and perceived weaknesses in the quality of reports submitted for validation. Additionally, it emerged that some stakeholders that had promised co-financing were unable to mobilise the funds to

⁴⁵ MTR 2019

⁴⁶ Minutes of selection meetings

implement their activities (42% mobilised as per annex 4). There was no process to vet or to monitor the ability of partners to deliver on their co-financing commitments. The same applies to MINFOF which subsequently failed to deliver on its reforestation and restoration goals. It is also important to highlight that the Covid 19 pandemic had a minor effect on field activities considering that at the time lockdowns came in, few activities were being implemented.

90. The above-mentioned failures also impacted the level of stakeholder engagement and participation in the project. The project did not have a monitoring and evaluation officer which meant that data could not be collected and analysed for decision making. An implication of this for instance is the fact that no evidence exists from the project about capacity baselines for communities trained and whether the capacity building provided achieved meaningful change apart from the anecdotal evidence collected by this evaluation. Significant gaps between ADM training cycles and the subsequent lack of support have already been reported which created a feeling of disappointment. The involvement of CFCs and PFCs played a very positive role at local level to disseminate the trainings received to communities. Local council officials especially the new elected mayors stated that they were interested by the project but had not been engaged by the project while the forestry administration remained mostly sidelined post MTR in 2019. There was a general perception of dissatisfaction in the level of participation in the project amongst the initial project partners, while those who held current LOAs were obviously appreciative of their engagement. There was no evidence of external coherence of this project or synergistic efforts with other on-going initiatives and processes in the country related to sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation and climate change. Interestingly even actions led by the FAO such as the FAO-EU FLEGT programme cited in the project document were not capitalized particularly in independent forest monitoring. IITA's Congo Basin Institute, ICRAF's agroforestry expertise, Cam-Eco's expertise on gender, MINEPDED's work on the country's National Determined Contributions and REDD+ initiatives, curriculum development with local and national universities amongst many others were not capitalized. This is an unfortunate missed opportunity for sustainability.

Overall progress towards delivery of project outputs and objectives

91. The project had five outcomes, 10 outputs and 36 activities. The achievement of the project outcomes and objectives is overall mixed. Outcomes 1 and 3 are moderately unsatisfactory, while outcomes 2 and 5 are moderately satisfactory. Outcome four is rated highly unsatisfactory. Based on activities implemented with GEF funding (outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 5), the project is moderately satisfactory and is on track to achieve a satisfactory rating if the recommendations proposed are addressed during the NTE. However, when the assessment includes outcome 4, the overall project is rated as moderately unsatisfactory. The achievement of project objectives was affected by insufficient allocation of budgets to critical activities (outcomes 1 and 3); delays, internal relationship challenges within the FAO PTF and PMU, inadequate internal redress mechanisms, partner capacities, non-materialisation of co-financing and failure to ensure external project coherence with national processes on SFM, biodiversity conservation and carbon monitoring and reporting. Subject to implementation of terminal evaluation recommendations, the achievement of the environmental and development objectives is moderately satisfactory.

3.3 Efficiency: To what extent has the project's management and operational delivery been efficient and have quality results been delivered on time?

Sub question: Were the human and material resources sufficient in quality and quantity and how did this inform delivery?

Finding 11: The project was not sufficiently staffed in terms of numbers and quality. This was subsequently mitigated with the recruitment of national consultants to complement the PMU team. However, management of the consultants has been suboptimal.

92. The efficiency of this project is moderately unsatisfactory for many of the reasons already described in section 3.2.6 above. The staff turn-over observed at the beginning of the project led to significant delays in the operationalisation of the project compounded by inadequate human resources. The project did not have a monitoring and evaluation officer and the planned socio economist and gender specialists were never recruited. Staff shortages and power dynamics already discussed meant that it took longer to review and validate partner outputs, sometimes up to a year. This was subsequently addressed following the midterm evaluation with the addition of two experts to the PMU, but pervasive collaborative challenges limited the team's productivity. External consultants commissioned to work on the project were hardly utilised to their full potential.
93. The project has been extended severally due to poor performance and delivery. The emergence of the Covid 19 pandemic did not overly affect the project as there were few field activities on-going. Meetings of the project steering committee were effectively held, albeit with delays. The last meeting took place in September 2020 and as of June 2022, no further meeting had been held. Action plans, budgets and recommendations emerging from these meetings have not been fully implemented.

Sub question: To what extent was the project budget realistic and match funding mechanisms realistic and how did this impact project delivered?

Finding 12: The project budget was unrealistic with high dependence on co-financing from national partners which did not materialize. This impacted the implementation of the project negatively whereby planned activities could not be realized by national partners including MINFOF. The FAO operates a robust financial management system but the lack of a long-term project specific procurement plan and internal guidelines led to misunderstandings between partners and high transaction costs in the management of contracts.

94. The global project budget and co-financing arrangements were not realistic. For instance, budgets for key activities such as the revision of forest management plans and the work on carbon were initially underestimated leading to significant delays. Most project activities have been implemented with GEF funding as the proposed match funding has not materialised. Consequently, project implementation has been negatively affected. The implementation of outcome 4 under the responsibility of MINFOF is highly unsatisfactory. Responsibilities for field monitoring and supervision by MINFOF and MINEPDED have not been realised due to lack of match funding. In terms of budget management, partners found the procedures applied on this project unclear and complicated. Upon request, the project team could not produce project specific guidelines and procedures and financial management as shared with partners, many of whom did not have prior experience with GEF/FAO funding procedures. Partners were referred to

FAO's online handbooks⁴⁷ while intentional initial open communication could have prevented the frustrations, mistakes and at least some of the delays incurred.

95. The FAO has a robust financial management system. The procurement of services generally followed a competitive selection process. The lack of a long-term procurement plan for the project meant that the timing of procurements did not always align with resource needs on the ground. The case in point is the fact that while another non cost extension of the project was being requested in June 2022, at the same time the sustainable forest management and carbon expert contracts were terminated. Small and dispersed contracts were awarded throughout which increased the transaction costs of monitoring the different LOAs and contracts. Some of the contracts with external consultants were poorly managed due to internal failings within the FAO – the case of soil samples has already been discussed. The budget line for consultants has been overspent while the contracts budget line remains largely underutilised. This is due to the fact that most of the management plan revision activities were carried out by the consultants and not by the partners through LoAs as was initially envisaged. After carrying out a call for proposals and analyzing the offers received, it was considered not cost effective to go through institutions and LOAs with limited added value as opposed to directly contracting with qualified experts.

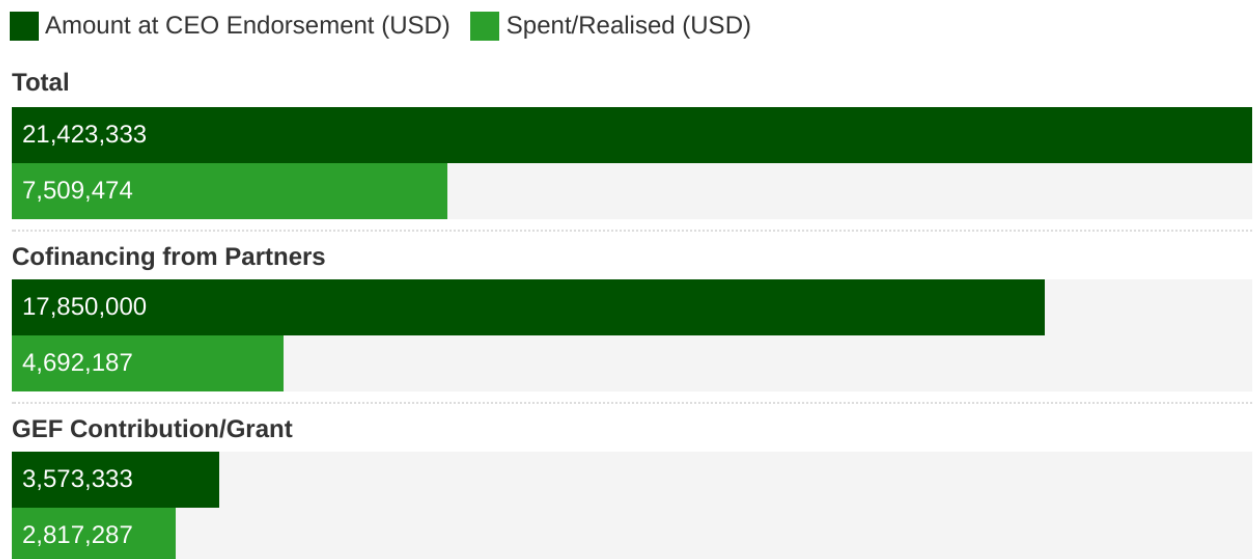
Sub question: How did the project adapt to an evolving external context and how did this affect implementation?

Finding 13: The project responded to delivery challenges from national partners through changing the project strategy from institutional partners to mainly working with national consultants. This helped to drive project implementation between June 2021- June 2022. The final push to complete project activities was done with scant engagement with external project stakeholders, including partners MINFOF and MINEPDED which in turn puts the ownership and appropriation of gains at risk. Thus, the adaptation of the project to the evolving external context is moderately unsatisfactory.

96. The strategy of the project team to divert from institutional partners prior to the midterm review to work with individual consultants has been questioned. There was an argument following the slow start of the project to engage many more external partners and individuals who could demonstrate their ability to prefinance activities. New partners were brought in but the issue of delays in the submission of deliverables was not eradicated. In any case, based on the progress report provided by the FAO, significant progress was achieved between June 2021 and June 2022 because of the new partnerships developed. The evaluation team did not access the outputs delivered by partners during this period and hence cannot confirm their quality and effectiveness. While there was a push for achievement of outputs, external communication and engagement with other project partners suffered, affecting the ownership and future scalability of the project.
97. Figure 3 presents findings from the 2022 PIR, which shows that 2,817,287 USD out of 3,573,333 USD mobilised from GEF was spent by June 30th, 2022. This represents an expenditure rate of 79% compared to 30% in September 2020. It also shows a 30% rate of mobilisation of co-financing from national partners. Overall expenditure rate (GEF and co-fundingspent) of the project is 40%.

⁴⁷ Note that this issue was already raised in the MTR page 61, paragraph 82

[Level of budget realisation]



Source: Draft PIR 2022, FAO 2022 • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 3: Level of budget realisation

98. The efficiency of resource use for GEF funding was determined by comparing the rate of implementation from the results framework and the expenditure levels as of June 30, 2022. The completion rate is obtained by assessing the median⁴⁸ rate of achievement of indicators (100) and the expenditure rate of 79. This provides an efficiency of resource use rate of 0.79 which corresponds to a situation where the project achieved at least half of its expected outputs according to the available budget (a low efficiency and effective project). When the overall project outcomes are compared with the overall spend of 40%, the project achieves a score of 0.4 representing a highly inefficient and ineffective project⁴⁹.

Overall assessment of project efficiency

99. The rating of project efficiency is moderately unsatisfactory. Project started off with a high turn over of project technical coordinators. The PMU was insufficiently staffed in terms of numbers and quality. This contributed to the delays experienced by the project. This was subsequently addressed through recruitment of two additional experts and reallocation of roles within the project management unit. The project also changed the strategy from working with institutional partners to individual consultants which helped to drive implementation on the ground but increased the transaction costs due to the management of small individual contracts. Only 30% of planned co-financing was effectively mobilised leading to unsatisfactory delivery of outcomes particularly outcome 4. The efficiency resource use rate is estimated at 0.79 when outcomes implemented with GEF funding are considered and falls to 0.4 when additional co-financing is included.

⁴⁸ Median rate is used because of the wide gaps in the results achievement rates (ranging from 0-200). Using an average would skew the findings.

⁴⁹ This finding supports the overall rating of moderately unsatisfactory attributed by the evaluation team given the multiple challenges and extensions realised. The rate of physical achievement is a global indicator which does not address underlying implementation issues.

3.4 Sustainability: Are project achievements likely to live beyond the project initial period?

Sub question: Are project achievements likely to live beyond the project initial period?

Finding 14: The project was successful in training individual local council authorities, council forest management units and communities on a wide range of SFM, biodiversity conservation and carbon management techniques. Evidence that may yet emerge from the analysis of soil samples and existing methodological guidelines represent the framework for project sustainability. Though not validated or approved yet by MINFOF, the draft management plans if approved, will provide the necessary institutional framework required by local councils for SFM, biodiversity conservation and carbon management.

100. Capacity strengthening was a central part of this project. Significant resources were expended on the training of council authorities, PFCs, CFCs and local communities on a wide range of subjects linked to the sustainable management of forests, biodiversity, and carbon. Anecdotal evidence shows that community members trained were testing their learning through processing of non timber forest products and their marketing. Evaluation participants reported how their awareness of alternative income generating activities had led to them explore other livelihoods away from illegal timber exploitation. Communities were more aware of the multiple benefits possibly derived from their forests beyond timber.
101. The restructuring and training of the PFCs and CFCs also strengthened the institutional framework for sustainable management of resources in the target councils. Evaluation respondents revealed that through the skills obtained, they had increased the level of surveillance and monitoring of illegal forest activities: reports and denunciation of forest illegalities to authorities now sometimes occurred.
102. The project also produced training materials, technical guidelines, research evidence on the management of carbon in council forests; all remain viable beyond the project's implementation period. The management plans, if validated provide the legal and institutional tools required for future sustainable management of council forest resources. GIZ will continue working in 4 council forests beyond the project implementation period, building on the gains achieved in this action. The project faces several key risks which are likely to impact on the viability and continuity of project achievements.

Sustainability Risks

Sub question: What factors are likely to impact the sustainability of project achievements?

Finding 15: In the implementation of this project, ownership and appropriation as well as continuity is hampered by financial, institutional and social risks which if not mitigated, would derail project sustainability. The sustainability of the project is moderately likely.

Financial risks

103. One of the key objectives of this project was to diversify the sources of income for local councils through access to carbon and biodiversity related funding. The revision and validation of the forest management plans was expected to lay the groundwork for increased incomes. Unfortunately, after six years of implementation, these management plans are yet to be completed and validated, jeopardising the adoption of the paradigmatic shift expected from mayors in the management of the forest resources. In fact, interviews with mayors revealed that

while they were happy to try the new forest management approach, they were concerned that in the short term this could reduce the amount of income available from the exploitation of forests. It must be noted that for most of the CFs, there are already established partnerships between companies and councils for exploitation of certain parts of the forests. These partners have not been involved in the revision of the management plans and hence even if these management plans are validated, might not align with existing existing exploitation contracts putting the application of the dispositions set out the management plans at risk.

104. A key hypothesis of this project related to councils increasing access to revenues through the annual forest revenues from the ministry of finance. As part of the 2015 budget of the Republic of Cameroon, the Ministry of Finance issued the circular 004/MINFI/DGI/LRI/L of 28 January 2015 redefining access to the forest royalties. This circular stipulates that the 10% that local communities used to receive as part of the redistribution of forest royalties are now destined for MINFI officials and local councils, i.e. 5% for each. This loss of incomes to councils does not promote or support the financial sustainability of the project already considering that these revenues are hardly used for local economic development projects. The project provided training on alternative income generating activities for forest dependent communities. As amply illustrated, none of the business development plans have been implemented due to lack of promised financial and material support from the project. Without a mechanism to revitalise and provide start up and incubation support to these groups, the development objective of the project is unlikely to be achieved.
105. While council officials, CFCs and PFCs have been trained, there remains significant need in terms of qualified staff, particularly around carbon management and biodiversity conservation within councils. There were budgets initially set aside to support these groups, but none in the end materialized. This means that despite the trainings received, they would not be able to play their role. If councils do not have income to recruit qualified staff to lead on these aspects, it is unlikely that the implementation of biodiversity conservation and carbon monitoring will be effective. Councils need revenues to acquire bikes and necessary forest monitoring equipment and to cover the costs of operating biodiversity and carbon databases. The financial model for the revised forest management plans remains unclear to mayors. One of the mayors asked what the compensation for loss of income in the short term might be. Another stated that *I fully agree that there should be an increase in the percentages for biodiversity conservation and for carbon sequestration if there will be a quid pro quo of other mechanisms to offset the loss of income*. This sentiment was observed in interviews with all mayors and could suggest that even if councils continue to obtain income from timber exploitation, there is no commitment to use part of this for biodiversity conservation and carbon management. It all sounds theoretical to authorities at this stage.
106. There is no follow-on project at this stage, but there are already disagreements within FAO and between partners on what such a future project (if at all) might look like and how it might be structured. No synergies were created with the REDD+ process in the country. Such engagement could have opened pathways for councils to access REDD+ funding. There was no exit strategy nor efforts to strengthen the ability of councils to mobilise biodiversity and climate related international finance. Fortunately, in four of the councils, GIZ has secured further funding for its activities in the area, including work on council forests. Without this commitment from GIZ for these 20% of council forests, financial sustainability would be unlikely. **The evaluation team considers that financial sustainability is moderately likely.**

Institutional risks

107. The turnover/instability of elected council officials has been identified as a key risk for the sustainability of this project. For instance there were municipal elections held in 2018 and 2020 which led to changes at the helm of many target council forests. Those who were elected in the 2020 elections have not been sensitised or involved significantly in the project: bringing them to understand and strengthen buy in can only benefit the project. It must be said that each mayor comes in with their own agenda and might not always follow or respect commitments taken by the leaders before them. Furthermore, and outside the strict purview of this evaluation, the issue of corruption and fraud in the allocation of forest management permits and the lack of capacities within councils to tackle the issue were also raised⁵⁰. The evaluation would like to highlight that further communication with incumbent mayors in an effort to secure continuous buy-in of the project and its intended impacts is a prerequisite to ensure the project's success.
108. The evaluation team identified that the project team failed to bring partners and government officials along in the delivery of the project post September 2020. As already discussed, partners felt uniformed and disengaged in the project. Disagreements and distrust between the FAO, national partners and government agencies did not help to build ownership of the project - it all led to the perception that this was an FAO project as opposed to a government led project funded with GEF funds. The central risk here is lack of ownership and appropriation by government partners. A key example is the design of databases for carbon and biodiversity monitoring which were supposed to be hosted at MINFOF and MINEPDED. The evaluation revealed that, as of June 30th, 2022, neither ministry had been involved in the selection of the consultants nor in the design of the databases; despite of two meetings (February/March and June 2022) reported by FAO staff, focal points and staff in both ministries reported they were unaware of plans to set up such a database. The same applies in the recruitment of national partners to support revision of forest management plans – MINFOF and MINEPDED were not involved in the monitoring of the activities on the field⁵¹. At the time of the evaluation, no plans had yet been agreed or validated. The project participated in the following activities to **revise Cameroon's NDC for COP 26** by presenting FAO initiatives related to the NDC, including the council forest project with its carbon and biodiversity inventory activities; the Readiness project funded by the GCF with its activity to strengthen the national inventory system of Cameroon (SNI-GES). Project teams took part in the following meetings:
- Workshop to launch the review process of Cameroon's NDC, Yaounde, 27-28 May 2021.
 - Partner coordination meeting for the update of Cameroon's NDC, Thursday May 06, 2021.
 - Restitution and validation workshop of the studies carried out as part of the revision of Cameroon NDC, Douala 24-27 August 2021

⁵⁰ This is further corroborated by the national anti-corruption report of 2020 in which corruption in the council forest area is the fourth most important factor cited, nation-wide in Cameroun. <https://conac.cm/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/09/CONAC-2020-REPORT.pdf>

⁵¹ After the September 2020 steering committee, MINFOF had proposed a plan of the activities it was to carry out as part of their LoA. Several exchanges took place on this draft LoA between MINFOF and FAO on the one hand, internally between the technical coordination of the project and the LTO on the other. The LTO's stand on the content of the LoA activities was to remove all activities with potential conflicts of interest. This led to the LTO's proposal to retain only field monitoring activities for an amount of \$8,000 instead of the \$92,104 requested by MINFOF. The failure to reach a consensus on the amount of the LoA did not facilitate the monitoring of the activities on the field.

- Restitution and validation workshop of the results of the study on the modeling of GHG emissions projections within the revision of Cameroon's NDC, 06-07 September 2022 in Mbalmayo
109. Despite the FAO leading the FAO FLEGT Programme, the project was not anchored to Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade – Voluntary Partnership Agreements (FLEGT VPAs) processes. It also failed to leverage the comparative advantage of many partners. For instance, the leadership of Cam-Eco has some of the best gender specialists in the country yet, plans to develop a gender strategy were never implemented and gender issues were treated on an adhoc basis. At design, the involvement of MINFOF staff and CTFC at local level was expected to ensure the flow of technical support to the councils beyond the project. Regrettably, the relation with the FAO and CTFC has collapsed: CTFC leaders say they remain open to discuss the sustainability of the project but there is no such evidence from the FAO side. An institution as ACFCAM/CTFC, at the origin of the project and with strong institutional anchoring in council forests, is not consulted or involved in the planning of the exit strategy is a missed opportunity. In fact, there has not been any steering meeting nor workshop bringing together all stakeholders to discuss the future of the project. There are different trends emerging at FAO – one group is already discussing the possibility of a follow on project with MINEPDED instead of MINFOF, while others are categorical there will not be a second phase structured in the same way, involving FAO or elements of the current project team. While unclear details are to be expected at this stage, the evaluation wishes to highlight that while the details remain unclear, the need to continue supporting council forests remains apparent to all actors as evidenced by the relevance section previously detailed.
110. The replicability and scalability of this project is in doubt. There has not been sufficient time for various trainings to be fully embedded or internalised. At design, it was clarified that the partnership built between government agencies and the association of council forests in Cameroon, national and international NGOs would facilitate exchange and scaling up of successful management approaches for biodiversity conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks. The breakdown of this relationship did not allow this to happen. Proposed review of the fiduciary capabilities planned midway through the project was never implemented, and no capacity strengthening support provided for the organisation to play its role more effectively. The project has failed in documenting, communicating and ensuring the visibility of its actions to national, regional and global platforms. The project's communications strategy has not yet been fully implemented. The newly recruited capitalisation expert may yet support project results for a wider public. **Institutional risks are deemed moderately likely.**

Social risks

111. The way this project has been implemented has contributed to tarnish the image of the FAO and led to a loss of goodwill from partners, council leadership and communities. The internal conflicts and the inability of the FAO to address the issues raised concerns about the effectiveness of the organisation and its internal systems. Unmet promises made to councils and communities resulted in disappointment and a feeling of being let down by the project. From government officials, there was a perception of FAO staff not being accountable to the government through arbitrariness and unilateral decision making at different levels. The result of this situation is seen in partners expressing strong reserves about working with the FAO on a future phase of the project.
112. The management of forests is characterised by practices of poor governance and corruption in Cameroon, suggesting that revenues from forest exploitation or other uses are highly unlikely to

ultimately benefits communities on the ground⁵². In fact, according to the 2020 national anticorruption commission (CONAC) report, denunciations of corruption in the area of forestry royalties are ranked 4th, with 110 denunciations received by the commission representing a share of 3.24% of all complaints received for the year 2020⁵³. This does not support project sustainability. **Social risks are deemed moderately likely.**

Environmental risks

113. This project was designed in part to tackle some of the underlying causes of unsustainable management of council forest resources. However, the risks posed by climate change, forest fires, illegal deforestation and degradation are likely to continue as the pressures on forests increase due to national deforestation drivers. As of June 2022, 9 out of the 17 target councils have received tools such as laptops and GPSs that could support forest monitoring but much needed mobility resources are lacking (see Appendix 8 for detail; as of October 2022, 16 councils had received the promised equipment). Council forests are likely to continue to experience these environmental risks. **The environmental sustainability risks are deemed moderately likely.**

Overall assessment of project sustainability

114. Project sustainability is rated as moderately likely. The evaluators assess that the skills acquired by various stakeholders are likely to be application beyond the project initial period. Various technical guides, methodologies and training materials could be applied in SFM, biodiversity conservation and carbon management subject to the approval of revised forest management plans and operationalisation of biodiversity and carbon databases. The continuation of the project gains is affected by financial, socioipolitical, institutional and environmental risks.

3.5 Factors affecting performance: To what extent did the M&E design and implementation, and management and supervision mechanisms affect project performance?

3.5.1 Monitoring and evaluation system

3.5.1.1 M&E design.

Sub question: To what extent did the M&E design affect project performance?

Finding 16: The project M&E system at endorsement required revision. This revision was effectively implemented through an operational plan in October 2018. The project indicators were overall specific, measurable and timebound, but only 67% were relevant. The revised plan appeared cumbersome and impracticable in the absence of an assigned monitoring and evaluation officer. The budget appeared sufficient for the scale of the project. The M&E design is assessed as moderately satisfactory.

115. The product document provided a detailed presentation of the project M&E framework at endorsement. The hierarchy of objectives in terms of vertical and horizontal logic were generally sound as presented in the project's results framework. The M&E activities were detailed, roles and responsibilities defined as well as the M&E routines in terms of data collection, reporting and

⁵² [L'IMPACT DE LA CORRUPTION DANS LA GOUVERNANCE DE LA REDEVANCE FORESTIERE SUR LES POPULATIONS RIVERAINES AU CAMEROUN | Le RURAL.INFO \(rural-info.net\) ; Chatham House: Cameroon | Forest Governance and Legality | Chatham House](#)

[EU: Cameroon - VPA ALA Facility \(flegtvpafacility.org\)](#)

[FAO: The Voluntary Partnership Agreement \(VPA\) process in Central and West Africa - from theory to practice | Capacity4dev \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁵³ <https://conac.cm/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/09/CONAC-2020-REPORT.pdf>

usage of M&E information for decision making. M&E activities were to follow FAO and GEF monitoring and evaluation policies and guidelines. The M&E plan was budgeted at USD 133,850 – GEF funding. It was made clear at endorsement, that the operational plan would be revised in a participatory manner at inception. The project's M&E operational system was expected to be established within the first 6 months of project implementation. While this was not done within this timeframe, the operational plan⁵⁴ was finally developed with the support of a national M&E consultant in October 2018.

116. An analysis of the evaluability of the results framework is presented in annex 5. It shows that overall 83% of all stated indicators and targets were specific and measurable while only 67% were relevant, though all of them were measurable and time bound. The key issue with relevance is that indicators were not suitable for the level of targeted objective. For instance, for the development objective (To improve the livelihoods of local communities by promoting sustainable forest-based income generating activities), the target was "number of people trained". For outcome 2, instead of focusing on the improved behaviours because of strengthened capacities, the indicators focused on % improvements in capacity scores (though not measured).
117. The operational plan however, was detailed in terms of methodological approach, roles and responsibilities and the various M&E routines. The day-to-day monitoring of the project implementation was the responsibility of the Project Management Unit charged with the preparation and implementation of annual work plans and budgets, six-monthly project progress reports (PPRs). The role of the project steering committee, national coordination of the project and FAO technical staff and budget holder were clearly articulated regarding oversight, organisation of field monitoring and supervision missions, validation of annual plans and budgets, preparation of annual PIRs for donors etc. Council officials also had a role to play in terms of monitoring and reporting on the progress of activities on the ground, regular collection of information on biodiversity, forest management and carbon and reporting via established data bases. The M&E plan also included the implementation of a mid term review as well as of a final evaluation, documentation of best practices and their dissemination. Overall, the operational plan proved highly academic (tick box exercise), complex, and cumbersome⁵⁵. One of the respondents stated that the plan *was technically sound but not applicable*.

3.5.1.2 M&E implementation

Sub question: To what extent did the M&E implementation, and management and supervision mechanisms affect project performance?

Finding17: The M&E plan was not revised in time, nor implemented as planned. Field monitoring and supervision missions, steering meetings, MTR and terminal evaluations have been implemented with recommendations not implemented in full. M&E implementation is considered moderately satisfactory.

118. As already identified above, the project M&E system looked good on paper but was not practical. As stated in the 2020 PIR report, *the M&E system was cumbersome and not easy to use, rendering the monitoring of slow progress difficult and providing project managers with little information to act upon*. For a project of this scale, it did not have a dedicated monitoring and evaluation officer. The role of the technical project coordinator included aspects of project monitoring, but with the technical challenges and complexities of this project, the project coordinator could not have played this role. The 17 target councils are highly geographically dispersed, the data collection

⁵⁴ David Ngoh Essoh octobre 2018 PROJET GCP/CMR/033/GFF « GESTION DURABLE DES FORÊTS SOUS L'AUTORITE DES COMMUNES CAMEROUNAISES » - OPERATIONNALISATION DU SYSTEME DE SUIVI EVALUATION DU PROJET

⁵⁵ PIR 2020

needs complex, and project partners and consultants expected to play different roles required someone to coordinate the data collection and analysis. The amount allocated to M&E from GEF funding was available but, the expected M&E co-financing from government did not materialise. This limited the effectiveness of government monitoring and supervision role on the field.

119. The project team and the LTO implemented field missions to assess progress on the ground with the latest organised between the 16th of May and the 3rd of June 2022. The objective of this mission was to evaluate the technical effectiveness and technical quality of activities implemented and to attest to the technical conformity of activities implemented in line with LOAs signed with partners, in view of project closure on the 30th of June 2022. In hindsight, it would have been a unique opportunity for the lesson learning or communications expert to also document progress on the ground and capitalise results; it could yet take place due to the project's latest extension.
120. The project organised its statutory steering committee meetings, during which project action plans, budgets and strategic direction and guidance was provided to project teams. It emerged that these meetings were often rife with tension as different parties tried to maintain and/or defend their positions and interests. Most respondents felt that while these meetings were helpful in terms of information about project progress and challenges, recommendations emerging from them were rarely implemented in full. As highlighted in the MTR, there was a perception that the FAO decided on which recommendations to apply and which not to, leading to a sense of frustration from partners. Interviews with participants confirmed this perception including that these meetings were characterised by walkouts, power games and adoption of blame avoidance practices. This situation impacted the project negatively.
121. Progress implementation reports were prepared and submitted to donors as required. The project midterm review was effectively implemented but not all recommendations have been fully addressed nor have they been effective as seen in the table below. The project final evaluation was effectively commissioned.

Sub question: Were the recommendations provided by the MTE implemented and what was the impact of this implementation (or lack of it) in the implementation of the project?

The following table presents action taken in response to the MTE evaluation. The table shows that out of the 5 recommendations, 2 recommendations on budgets (2,3) have been implemented, two others initiated (1,5) and one not implemented (4).

MTR recommendations	Actions undertaken
<p>Recommendation 1 - FAO, through the Country Representative and in collaboration with the Government must re-establish a climate of trust and collaboration between the various partners of the project, notably between the PMU, the CNP, the ACFCAM, the implementing and co-financing partners.</p>	<p>A session was effectively organised to brief partners on FAO-GEF procedures in October 2017 however, the project itself did not develop or disseminate specific guidelines for the project.</p> <p>A collaboration framework was to be put in place including GIZ PFSE, C2D2, FEICOM, PNDP, CTFC etc, to hold quarterly meetings and/or when needed to contribute and capitalise on the project. Stakeholder meetings and PTCM frameworks were not implemented. The evaluation team only found evidence of synergistic efforts with GIZ and FEICOM.</p>

	On the matter of clarity in ToRs, the newly awarded LOAs provide more detail in terms of deliverables, payment schedules and obligations.
<p>Recommendation 2 - The FAO, in consultation with the GEF, should carry out a budgetary revision to enable the planned forest management plans to be implemented.</p> <p>If this revision cannot be decided and effective one year before the end of the project, proceed with an extension of the project to achieve the results.</p>	<p>No formal budget revision was undertaken. However, concerns remained that the revision did not extend available funds to cover all management plans in 17 CF to be revised. However, based on cost savings from the contracts budget line to the tune of 158.528 USD have enabled FAO to hire consultants for them to carry out activities that had been initially planned to be carried out through contracts with implementing partners. This however, represents only 12% of the amount required to carry out a comprehensive review as recommended by the MTR.</p> <p>Other key budget lines linked to contracts and consultants did not experience the same level of attention as was expected.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3 - The Steering Committee, in consultation with the FAO, should take certain decisions, notably concerning the proposed budget revision (recommendation n°2) in order to ensure the results of the project.</p>	<p>Still in line with budget revision, the action plan required to complete the activities of the project was developed in line with revised budget. This was effectively approved by the project steering committee of September 2020 that requested a one year no cost extension. The action plan has not been followed and hence the budget revision has not been implemented. A change of strategy led to overspending on consultants while the contracts budget line remains underspent. The government requested a one-year extension in December 2021 and the FAO decided on a six month extension only. At the time of this evaluation, an official response to government as to why only six months were approved was yet to be shared with government. Of note, days before this evaluation's end to its field data collection phase, a new 6-months no-cost extension was requested by the FAO country office, and approved.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4 - FAO should improve its internal project management system and processes for managing this project, with particular emphasis on creating a healthy, collaborative and non-confrontational working environment.</p>	<p>The recommendation to bring in a consultant at P3-P4 level to work on the review and validation of project outputs was not approved by the steering committee. Two new experts were added to the team focused on carbon and forest management. To address the conflictual working environment and role overlaps, an internal reorganisation was implemented in October 2021 which has so far had mixed results. Crucially, the role of project technical coordinator was eliminated and its functions redistributed. A new role on administration and operational management of the project was introduced. The lines of accountability within the project remain unclear leading to silo working, demotivation and dissatisfaction in some areas.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5 - The FAO must, through the PMU, capitalise on all the achievements of the</p>	<p>At the time of this evaluation, the capitalisation expert had just been recruited (May 2022) and work on documenting project experiences had not started. However, some project outputs such</p>

<p>project, put them in synergy with the interventions of other partners on CF and disseminate them to sensitise and support political decision-makers, communal leaders, forest operators, development actors and beneficiaries in a perspective of sustainability of the achievements.</p>	<p>as training reports have been edited by the project communication consultant and distributed by project teams during field visits. The project has not (possibly yet) been successful in its documentation of best practices, knowledge management and engagement with external stakeholders, as set out in the project's communication strategy.</p>
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Source: Project MTE report and final evaluation team analysis based on PIRs and stakeholder interviews

Overall assessment of project M&E design and implementation

122. Overall M&E design and implementation is considered moderately satisfactory. The M&E at design was globally satisfactory and needed revision during the project inception period. This was done two years later, but the operational plan was complex and impracticable. While there was a sufficient budget allocated, no M&E staff was recruited and at the time of the evaluation, planned actions to document best practices or lessons learned had not taken place. The MTR was effectively implemented, but recommendations have not been fully applied. The final evaluation was also commissioned and this report provides the evidence of progress made towards achieving the project's objectives, its challenges and lessons learned.

3.5.2 Quality of Implementation: To what extent did FAO provide project identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation, approval and start-up, monitoring and supervision (technical, administrative and operational)?

Finding 18: The project idea originated from ACFCAM/CTFC and because of fiduciary weaknesses the FAO was designated to serve as implementing agency. Subsequent non validation of project document by CTFC and national stakeholders led to flaws being pertuated by FAO which caused significant delays at start up and grievances carried over throughout implementation.

Project identification, preparation, approval and start up

123. Within the GEF partnership, GEF agencies are involved in activities related to a project/programme's identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation of detailed proposal, approval and start-up, oversight, supervision, completion and evaluation. To assess performance of the GEF agencies, the evaluators will assess the quality of implementation as the supervision and backstopping provided by FAO (budget holder, Lead Technical Officer, Funding Liaison Officer and other Project Task Force members). The evaluator will assess how well risks were identified and managed by the GEF agency.
124. The idea of the project originated from Association des Communes Forestières du Cameroun (ACFCAM) through its technical unit - Centre Technique de la Forêt des Communes Forestières (CTFC). ACFCAM is a non-governmental institution created in 2005 to assist local council members with administrative and technical issues related to the creation and management of council forests. The CTFC was created in 2008 to provide technical assistance to councils regarding the development and implementation of forest management plans, training of council staff on sustainable forest management and governance, valuation and marketing of timber and non-timber forest products and other areas. At design, the organisation was implementing the Support

Programme to Cameroon's Council Forests of Cameroon (PAF2C) – 2008-2014. This project was therefore intended to build on this experience - to reshape the institutional frameworks surrounding council forests, support the contribution of council forests to climate and biodiversity goals while strengthening local capacities for sustainable management. This project idea was endorsed by the Ministry of Environment (MINEPDED) to be presented for GEF Funding.

125. The CTFC approached the FAO to explore options for collaboration. ACFCAM/FAO worked collaboratively in the preparation of the grant proposal. Workshops and consultations with stakeholders were organised. The consultations also included missions led by international consultations to potential council forests to identify the needs and help shape the full proposal. The following section in Box 2 gleaned from the MTR presents the process for design, approval and start up.

Box 2: Process for design, approval and start up

The project partners were consulted in June 2014 to consider their comments and suggestions in the final version of the project document. However, the validation of the final project document by the FAO was not preceded by a national workshop which would have identified some of the weaknesses and non-conformities that existed in the document. For example, the project planned to develop management plans in the CF whereas in effect and by law, these were to be revised. The costs related to this activity were grossly underestimated, failing to include all the mandatory activities foreseen by the legal procedure and requirements for such revision of Management plans.

The terminologies "Unité Technique Opérationnelle (UTO)" and "Comité de Protection des Forêts" were wrongly used in the project document, as was the creation of these bodies, which was unnecessary as they already existed under a different name within the CF. These problems led to the suspension of some activities, a revision of the ToR and delays in the production and validation of reports.

The preparatory analysis for the institutional set-up of the project established the leading role to be played by the CTFC drawing from its established experience in the development and strengthening of council forests. Two options were considered: the CTFC or the FAO as the implementing agency for the project. FAO as the project's implementing agency was discussed during the project preparation workshop in June 2013, but no final choice was made. In the second option, the FAO would implement the project by subcontracting, certain activities to national technical organisations as need be. A variant of this second option was to have FAO as the national implementing agency, but with increased responsibilities for the CTFC.

The institutional and fiduciary analysis of the CTFC commissioned by FAO in 2013 established weaknesses in the organisation and functioning of the CTFC, disqualifying it from a potential role as implementing agency in favour of the FAO. The CTFC was nevertheless positioned in the project document as a key implementing partner, when in effect it became a project partner like any other. This institutional set up of the project generated discussions that contributed to the delay at the start of the project and negatively affected the collaboration and trust between FAO, CTFC and ACFCAM

Source: Project MTR

126. In fact, as CTFC states; because of the 2 years of stalemate, the FAO representative from Rome and Libreville came here to discuss the matter – we let them know our concerns including the fact that we designed the project with the mayors. CTFC, remains aggrieved to date as they consider that the FAO effectively took over “their” project and failed to deliver on its promises.
127. According to the project document, two years after the start of project implementation, another independent fiduciary assessment of the technical unit of ACFCAM (CTFC) was supposed to have been conducted. The implementation arrangements had to be reviewed based on the results of the second fiduciary assessment. No capacity building plan was put in place to support ACFCAM/CTFC to address the gaps identified and to nurture it to play its role effectively in the long term. In the view of the evaluation team, FAO had a duty to ensure the institutional sustainability of this project.
128. In addition to CTFC, the project identified MINFOF and MINEPDED as executing agencies, with the project management unit hosted within MINFOF. The project steering committee (PSC), stakeholder committees (SCs) and the project technical consultative mechanism (PTCM) were to be established to ensure strategic direction in terms of administration, technical delivery and strengthen stakeholder engagement and local ownership at the level of local councils. The failure of the steering committee to play its role effectively and the non creation of the PTCM and related stakeholder committees (SC) led to shortcomings already discussed in section 3.2.5.

Oversight, supervision, completion and evaluation

Finding 19: FAO ensured oversight and supervision through a project task force, implementation of mid term and final project evaluations complemented by field supervision missions. The effectiveness of this role was tainted by internal governance and accountability challenges within the organisation. Overall implementation is moderately satisfactory.

129. The role of the FAO as GEF Agency was to maintain project oversight to ensure that GEF policies and criteria are adhered to and that the project meets its objectives and achieves expected outcomes in an efficient and effective manner. The FAO Representative in Cameroon was the Budget Holder (BH) responsible for the timely operational, administrative and financial management of the project. The Budget Holder, working closely with the PMU, the FAO Lead Technical Officer and Lead Technical Unit, was responsible for:
- management of GEF resources in accordance with the Project Document, and approved Annual Work Plans and Budgets;
 - procurement of goods and contracting of services for the project and financial reporting in accordance with FAO rules and procedures;
 - preparation of annual/six-monthly budget revisions, as required, for submission to the LTO/LTU and the GEF Coordination Unit;
 - preparation of six-monthly financial reports to be submitted to the GEF Unit and shared with the executing partners and the PSC;
 - representing FAO in the PSC.
130. In this project, the FAO served as the GEF agency and at the same time as one of the executing agency. Given that the project was implemented through a direct implementation modality, the FAO internal guidelines and procedures were applied. The separation of roles between FAO and partners was not always known and accepted, leading to misunderstandings which festered into frustrations and disagreements. The procurement of goods and services for the project in many cases was implemented without consultation with project partners. For instance, the recruitment of organisations involved in the revision of forest management plans and consultants was done

without MINFOF. The FAO/Government Cooperation Programme (Art.6) states that the FAO may in consultation with government, execute part or all the project by subcontract. The selection of subcontracts shall be made after consultation with government. The absence of detailed procedures specific to the project in terms of functioning bodies (COFIL, CNP, Task Force, etc.) with the levels of responsibility of each actor was a key challenge despite several calls by the steering committee to develop these to mitigate the risk of conflicts and poor coordination.

131. In terms of project management, the Project Task Force informed the implementing partners on the expected quality standards, developed a monitoring framework, informed the national authorities on GEF objectives, requirements, and procedures, and facilitated discussion on the content of the project components, project implementation mechanisms, institutional arrangements and co-financing. The Task Force (through the LTO) and the GEF Unit conducted project supervision missions and participated in the various project steering committees. The FLO for instance took part in project steering committee meetings including those for 2017 and 2019. The role ensured formal communication between the project and GEF, providing support in case of requests for project extensions while providing advice on the procedures and FAO procedures. The LTO supervised the preparation of the project PRR and PIR reports. He also implemented supervision visits to the field to assess progress with the latest being in June 2022. Like the field missions organized in 2016 and reported in the minutes of the 7/7/2016 PSC minutes, the need to organize joint field missions with all partners (PSC 2017), project partners also reported not being aware or involved in what was then the final project field mission (May/June 2022).
132. The project midterm and final evaluations were effectively commissioned. A management response was provided following the MTR but as already mentioned under section 3.5.1.2, recommendations have not been fully implemented. In terms of completion, the LTO implemented a country visit between May and June 2022 to monitor project progress and quality of deliverables on the ground. There was no exit strategy developed nor engagement with project partners and no steering committee had been organized for two years. Part of the project exit strategy could have involved -- and still may involve -- discussions with the government regarding transfer of project assets as highlighted in the Cooperation Programme (Art 3). In view of the above-mentioned analysis, project implementation role of FAO was **moderately satisfactory**.

3.5.3 Quality of execution

Sub questions: How effectively did FAO carry out its role and responsibilities in the management and administration of the project?

Finding 20: FAO played a dual role as GEF Implementing Agency and executing agency. Without clarity of separation of both roles and documented procedures for partners, relationships within FAO and between partners led to execution challenges. The implementation of LOAs was characterised by quality issues, delays in validation and settlement of contracts. Unsatisfactory mobilisation of co-financing and poor involvement of MINFOF and MINEPDED impeded the discharge of their obligations under this project. The quality of execution is moderately unsatisfactory.

133. Within the GEF Partnership, executing agencies are involved in the management and administration of the project's day-to-day activities under the overall oversight and supervision of the GEF Agencies. The executing agencies are responsible for the appropriate use of funds, and procurement and contracting of goods and services to the GEF Agency.
134. The project experienced several problems already articulated in sections 3.5.1.2 related to the management of relationships within FAO team and between the FAO and national partners and

the forestry administration. Within FAO, lines of responsibility and command remained tense and conflictual. Attempts to address the matter, due in part to no clear process to address the issue, did not prove successful. Project oversight at regional level is ensured by the Regional Programmes Officer. With hundreds of projects at sub regional level, detailed action on an individual project would only be taken if brought to the Project portfolio reviews by the target FAOR. Requests for information as to why actions were not taken at regional level to remedy the situation were unsuccessful. At regional level though, more effort is on the administrative tracking of projects in terms of finance and compliance with donor requirements. In this project, the only issue flagged by the system was "urgent call for funds" over a period of close to 100 days from November/December 2021. Once the issue was addressed, the project was deemed fully compliant with the oversight mechanism in place. Part of the challenge is that technical oversight and administrative oversight of the project are under the responsibility of the FAOR and of the LTO respectively. Disagreements between the administrative and technical needs hindered the effective implementation of the project and while switching LTOs could have, as suggested in the mid-term review, been a potential solution, the organization struggles to fill the position (perception that there are not enough LTOs to go round). It may in part explain why the MTR's recommendation was not implemented as the FAOR would have had to espouse the recommendation, raise the issue, been heard, and in the process risk a period in which the project remained without an LTO. Of note, the LTO's nationality of origin⁵⁶ was raised, unprompted, by more than 4 key informant interviews as a reason for the difficult relationship with the local team but there is no reliable evidence to that effect.

135. The relationship between the national project coordination (MINFOF) and technical coordination remained fractious from the beginning to the end of the project. There was a general perception of lack of accountability to the national coordination and project focal point by the project's technical team. Similarly, the lack of consultation and response on major decisions such as the project closure and extensions revealed a perceived lack of transparency, sense of unilateral decision making and arbitrariness of FAO by the national project coordination. For instance, communications seen by the evaluation team, include threats from government writing directly to FAO headquarters to seek responses to concerns that were not being addressed or communicated. In other reported cases, recommendations from steering committees⁵⁷ and action plans/budgets were never fully implemented.
136. MINFOF and MINEPDED were the government counterparts in this project. The proposed match funding of USD 9,500,000 was supposed to cover: (i) the salary of a part-time national project focal point and the salary of the national project coordinator; (ii) the cost of staff time for government officers and technicians working with project-funded consultants and other staff directly engaged in implementing project activities; and (iii) the provision of appropriate office space to host the project management unit at MINFOF, related office operational costs and local transportation costs. Under (ii) above, collaboration would focus on support to documentation, norms, procedures on biodiversity conservation, carbon management, support to collection of data and monitoring activities related to biodiversity monitoring and conservation, carbon accounting and management. With the challenges faced in mobilising the match funding, project staff were effectively allocated to the project and expected administrative roles were played. However, technical activities were not optimal due to poor coordination with the technical project unit, lack of funding and disengagement. Only MINFOF signed an LOA with FAO which seemed to prioritise the ministry's role in the revision of forest management plans. Without an LOA,

⁵⁶ The LTO is a Cameroonian national

⁵⁷ PSC report of 22.02.2019 – out of 6 recommendations, only one completed, 4 ongoing and 1 not initiated; 2017 PSC report out of 7 recommendations, 3 out of 7 implemented.

MINEPDED largely played a figure head role despite being responsible for all aspects linked to biodiversity conservation, carbon and national climate engagements towards the UNFCCC in the country. All respondents from MINEPDED and MINFOF were largely dissatisfied with their level of participation and engagement in this project. At the time of the evaluation, a new LOA was being negotiated with MINFOF; no such development of an LOA was underway with MINEPDED.

137. FAO subcontracted the delivery of project activities to contractors and consultants in line with its mandate using the Letters of Agreement (LOA) modality. The management of LOAs has been overall mixed. All LOAs signed from the start of the project to December 2020, had varying problems ranging from poor delivery of outputs by implementing partners, insufficient technical staff within the project management unit in terms of numbers and quality⁵⁸, to lengthy delays in the validation and settling of payments. LOAs⁵⁹ signed in 2016 were fully paid three years later – case of Cam-Eco. Following the MTR, this situation continued with all three (03) the carbon consultants in part due to overly lengthy procurement processes at the FAO. The management of project consultants have also been suboptimal in terms of value for money and timeliness in their recruitment and termination. In terms of timeliness, some of the consultants did not have much to do with project delays and in some cases, their contracts terminated when they were expected to be the most useful for revision of project outputs⁶⁰. The inability to address the internal issues and project risks led to the significant delays (from four years to 6.5 years) in execution and consequently to the low consumption of budget as of 30.06.2022. While there has been a significant push to deliver on project outputs as shown in the results matrix in the past 12 months, the evaluation considers project **execution to be moderately unsatisfactory**.

3.5.4 Financial management and mobilization of expected co-financing

Subquestions: To what extent did the expected co-financing materialise and did this affect the project results and

Finding 21: FAO applied its internal financial management procedures to ensure wise use and value for money. The relationship between the technical teams and finance teams was not always coherent resulting in procurement delays and consequent loss of efficiencies in the delivery of the project. Expected co-financing was not fully mobilised nor regularly monitored leading to the whole project being almost entirely delivered with GEF funding.

See section 3.3 paragraph 93-97

⁵⁸ This was subsequently mitigated through recruitment of 2 national consultants on forest and carbon management in 2021

⁵⁹ LOAs are only one year long

⁶⁰ Sustainable forest management and biodiversity expert (former technical coordinator) terminated in June 2022 when the fourth extension was approved, at the time when service providers were submitting outputs from the revision of forest management plans.

3.5.5 Partnerships and stakeholder engagement

Sub questions: Which stakeholders were involved in the design and/or implementation of the project? What was the effect of this involvement on the project results and to what extent do the project results belong to the stakeholders involved?

Finding 22: Collaboration amongst partners in this project has been fractious while the frameworks for stakeholder engagement were either not created (stakeholder committee and PTCM) nor effective (steering committee, PFCs and CFCs) with negative consequences on ownership and project appropriation.

138. The Government of the Republic of Cameroon through the Ministry of Forest and Wildlife (MINFOF) and Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED) were expected to participate in the project at three levels – political, technical and financial levels. At political level, MINFOF was designated as the lead ministry and hence served as chair of the project steering committee, while MINEPDED was vice chair. MINFOF as lead ministry also appointed the national coordination of the project led by the Director of Forests and two assistants while MINEPDED appointed a focal point (PFP) for the project. At technical levels, both ministries were expected to raise awareness amongst political decision makers on the importance of sustainable management of council forests with regards to their contribution to biodiversity conservation and carbon enhancement in Cameroon while improving the livelihoods of the local communities. Its key responsibility was also to monitor that project activities follow rules and procedures in Cameroon for sustainable management of ecosystems and biodiversity conservation. MINEPDED, as the National GEF Focal Point, would also facilitate the coordination of the GEF project with other relevant GEF-funded activities in Cameroon. At local level, the decentralized services of MINFOF and MINEPDED had to be involved in the project implementation as the representatives of these ministries at regional and council levels providing first hand technical support to the councils on issues related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management. In terms of finance, government committed USD 9,500,000 for the project. This was expected to cover the necessary human resource costs of its staff in the project as well as the provision of office space for the PMU.
139. According to interviews with all government officials, they consider that their participation has not been effective. Local officials of MINFOF were involved in the different trainings offered by the project but did not play an effective role in areas such as: support to documentation, norms, procedures on biodiversity conservation, carbon management, support to collection of data and monitoring activities related to biodiversity monitoring and conservation, carbon accounting and management. There was no specific guidance or additional resources provided to these decentralised agents to provide the first-hand support expected by the project. In any case, MINFOF appeared to have been more involved in the project than MINEPDED and many regretted that the latter did not secure an LOA to intervene in the project despite its potential role in the delivery of outcome 3. The degree of ownership and appropriation of the project achievements is very low.
140. The project successfully provided various trainings to local council authorities, to peasant forest committees and to the council forest cells with the objective of strengthening their technical capacities to allow for the sustainable management of forests under their responsibility. The restructuring and training provided was reported to have enhanced institutional capacity and the ability of responding officials to play their roles despite other challenges in terms of equipment and logistics. In some cases, the timelapse between trainings and practice had impacted the

mastery of various skills⁶¹. The two day training events on forest carbon and forest monitoring in Yokadouma (27-29 May 2022), Messondo (23-25 May 2022) and Ebolowa (23-25 May 2022) were only implemented at what was then the end of the project, failing to provide any time for practice; the latest extension may thus be seen as a silver lining. The turnover of mayors at the level of the councils means that their participation in the project was mixed. A recommendation has been made to work more closely with council secretaries who are appointed and have more stable mandates than the local mayors. Mayors and local council units remain motivated about this project despite the various challenges faced. Council executives have long expected the FAO to provide direct support to enable them to support implementation and monitoring of activities on the ground. This was not achieved as the FAO stated that internal procedures did not allow the organisation to sign LOAs with councils. Despite promises to explore alternatives, none materialized. Ownership of this initiative therefore remains fragile with significantly more support required to ensure sustainability.

141. The project planned to strengthen the participation of local communities through the creation of stakeholder committees. It was expected that at least four project stakeholder committees would be established with each committee having four members representing 4 council forests, but this was not achieved. Nevertheless, communities surrounding the target council forests benefited from this action in different ways. Firstly, through participation in awareness raising and training events. Secondly, from wages secured through individual services provided to executing partner organisations and consultants. The challenges faced included the wide timelapses between trainings, no consistency in the provision of training kits to participants and the non-materialisation of promised support in terms of funding and equipment. With insufficient human resources at the level of the project, there was no mechanism in place for monitoring and backstopping trainees following the withdrawal of trainers and facilitators. During the evaluation, community representatives were generally satisfied with the support provided by the project but regretted the lack of closer backstopping and support of their committees and business development plans.
142. National and international non-governmental organisations were also implicated in the project. The key project partners Association des Communes Forestières du Cameroun (ACFCAM)/CTFC; CAM-ECO (Cameroon Ecology); ICRAF and IITA all signed LOAs with the FAO and were involved up until the mid term review of 2019. Participation was through the implementation of their LOAs, provision of co-financing (Cam-Eco) but also participation in the project steering committees. The partnerships faced several challenges including poor quality of some deliverables, delays from validation of outputs, non respect of timelines and agreements, demotivation and subsequent disengagement from the project. Despite stating continued interest in engaging with the project, some did not respond to new calls for applications by the FAO, questioning why reapplication would be needed when they were already named partners in the project document or at endorsement. For the various reasons highlighted above and to overcome these challenges, a decision was made at the level of the FAO to prioritise working with individual consultants. The project strengthened its collaboration with GIZ through its ongoing GIZ-ProPSFE project. New LOAs were signed in 2021 with OCD, Monitortrust and IUCN to support the revision of the forest management plans. These new partnerships did help drive progress towards achievement of outcome 1. While heavily committed to provide co-financing for the project, the Programme National de développement Participatif (PNDP) and FEICOM's engagement was limited to

⁶¹ Initial trainings on ADM started in Mbalmayo (October 2016) leading to 21 facilitators selected. The second cycle took place in Douala (April 2017) with the 21 facilitators. 1050 people trained in cycle 1 in 2019 and two years after 750 people trained on cycle 2.

participation in project steering committees⁶². Apart from GIZ which is likely to continue activities through its programmes, there is no commitment amongst any of the other partners beyond the project's implementation period.

Finding 23: The project has not succeeded in working with external partners and projects nor in anchoring the project in national and regional processes on sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation and carbon, putting in doubt the replicability and scalability of the project. Partnership and stakeholder engagement is deemed moderately unsatisfactory.

143. The planned engagement of national and international specialist institutions did not fully materialise nor did engagement with national training institutions which could have helped booster the sustainability of the project. On behalf of the MINEPDED, the Project Focal Point was expected to follow the GEF project issues related to biodiversity conservation and carbon management (biodiversity monitoring, environmental impact assessment, ecosystem restoration...). Specifically; i) ensure regular communication between MINEPDED, MINFOF, ACFCAM, the PSC and all project partners, ii) prepare, compile and monitor the contributions of all co-financing agencies on these issues, iii) review Annual Work Plans and Budget prepared by the technical project coordinator and provide any additional inputs before submission to FAO and the PSC for approval, iv) provide general guidance and supervision in the implementation of project activities and v) promote close collaboration between the project and relevant ongoing and planned Government (and non-Government) initiatives related to biodiversity, and REDD+. This proved ineffective due to weak coordination between the PMU and MINEPDED and the lack of project resources (materialisation of cofinancing) allocated. From the FAO and MINFOF side, there was no evidence provided of how the project engaged with the EU FLEGT VPA programme of the Forest and Farm facility.
144. The evaluation team finds that the project design was realistic in that it foresaw the creation of different multistakeholder committees to enhance partnership and stakeholder engagement. These instances include the project steering committee (PSC), the project technical consultative mechanism (PTCM) and stakeholder committees (SC), the functional technical units (FTU)s and Forest Protection committees (FPCs). The role of the PMU, the national coordination and the MINEPDED focal points were critical to ensure the effective operation of these consultative committees. Unfortunately, the project started with disagreements between MINFOF and FAO on the legal groundings of the FTUs and FPCs delaying effective start of activities by a year. The PSC operated as planned, but recommendations developed during meetings were hardly applied. The PTCM and SCs were not operationalised even following the recommendations of the MTR, while communication links between the PMU, NPC and PFP were not effective. For these reasons participation and stakeholder engagement in this project is **considered moderately unsatisfactory**.

3.5.6 Communication, knowledge management, and knowledge products

Sub questions: How does the project evaluate, document and share its results, lessons learned and experiences and to what extent are communication products and activities likely to support the sustainability and scaling up of project results?

Finding 24: The project developed a communication strategy and a budgeted operational plan. With delays in project implementation, there was scant information about successes to

⁶² FEICOM and FAO signed an agreement in October 2021. The promotion of productive and sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries is one of the main axes of this agreement. This axis involves the management of communal forests. As far as other respondents are concerned, the internal turmoil in the project led to disinterest and non commitment

communicate and consequently, the operational plan was not fully implemented. The communication and knowledge management of the project is considered moderately unsatisfactory.

145. Communication and visibility plays an important role in a project to enhance stakeholder engagement, interest, ownership and scalability. This project developed a communications strategy in November 2019 to contribute towards these objectives. The project developed an operational communications plan with 13 activities and a budget of about 10 million XAF. A communication expert was recruited in 2019 and a knowledge capitalisation consultant commissioned in May 2022 to support the project. Out of 13 activities identified in the operational communications plan, 6 have been completed, 3 are ongoing and 4 not initiated. All external engagement activities, production of video and press conferences were not implemented. The human resource was not exploited to full potential and not given the opportunity to carry out field activities to document project achievements. The role of the communications expert and hence their efficiency and effectiveness were impacted by the delays and lack of realisations to showcase. In effect, there was not much to communicate about and hence communication's expert's time was partially re-allocated to provide communications support to the country office instead.
146. At the level of communities, council authorities, PFCc and CFCs used project posters and leaflets to sensitise their communities. These included the use of community radio and dissemination of messages through community associations and religious groups. Concerning communication assets on the web, the project team used FAO Cameroun web site and twitter account @FAOCameroun to communicate online. 500 leaflets, 2 roll ups, 21 A0 posters, two news items and 12 tweets were produced over the 6 years implementation of the project. The list can be found in annex 4.

Overall assessment of factors affecting project performance

In evaluating the performance factors, the team focused on the M&E design and implementation, the quality of implementation and execution, financial management, stakeholder engagement and project communication. All the other factors are rated moderately satisfactory compared to communication which is moderately unsatisfactory. The key weaknesses were related to non effective M&E system, lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities between the national coordination and technical project team, internal governance issues, no project specific procedures and financial management guidelines, inadequate stakeholder engagement and failures to fully operationalise the project communication strategy and operational plan. For these reasons, the overall assessment of performance factors is moderately satisfactory.

3.6 Cross-cutting concerns

3.6.1 Gender: To what extent were gender, indigenous peoples, vulnerable or marginalised groups involved in project implementation?

Sub question: To what extent have gender equality and women's empowerment considerations been taken into account in the design and implementation of the project, and has the project been implemented in a way that ensures equitable participation and benefits for both sexes?

Finding 25: Gender was not a priority objective for this project. Project design and implementation was generally weak on gender. Majority of persons trained on the ADM approach were women and felt the most aggrieved by non-respect of promised commitments for support. The project reached

IP communities, but no targeted actions were implemented to address their needs. Gender is moderately unsatisfactory.

147. Gender was not a priority objective for this project. The project document acknowledged the need to target women and youth in the project through their participation in communal forest units, peasant forest committees and implementation of income generating activities. As the PIR 2018 and 2020 show, there was no gender analysis done, the proposed gender strategy and recruitment of decimated staff was not implemented^{63,64}. Efforts were made during trainings to involve women. The training on Market Analysis and Development (M A & D) approach reached 1,050 people, with 556 being women. They were consequently the most let down and disappointed with the failure of the project to provide financial and business start up support. 30% of participants in project steering committees were women. Apart from this information, no gender disaggregated information was gathered and reported in the results framework provided – see Appendix 5. On the OECD gender marker score, this project is considered as 0 (Not targeted).⁶⁵ Gender is deemed **moderately unsatisfactory**.

3.6.2 Minority groups, including indigenous peoples, disadvantaged, vulnerable and people with disabilities, and youth

Sub question: To what extent were indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups involved in the project?

Finding 26: Indigenous Peoples benefited from the project in terms of trainings and participation in CFCs and PFCs. Free prior informed consent was not demonstrated as no specific plan or guidelines for targeting these communities was developed. Consideration of indigenous peoples is moderately unsatisfactory.

148. Socio economic studies were implemented in all council forests as part of the process for the revision of the forest management plans. These studies identified the concerns and fears of communities regarding the impact of this project on their livelihoods. The provision of training on income generating activities contributed to address some of these concerns but as already identified under gender, there were no specific guidelines or indicators developed to measure specific actions of the project on indigenous peoples. In fact, free prior informed consent activities should have been undertaken as well as adapting project training activities to their needs. From respondents, no specific actions were taken to enhance the participation of IPs and ensure no harm was committed. FAO's environmental and social safeguards principle 9 on indigenous people's should have been triggered.

3.6.3 Environmental and social safeguards

Sub question: To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into account in the design and implementation of the project?

Finding 27: The project was classified as category C on FAO environmental and social safeguards guidelines correctly. The project contributes to address community needs and contribute to environmental protection. The principle 9 on IPs could have been triggered but this was not undertaken considering the project impacts on IPs. It is expected that revised forest management

⁶³ FAO 2018 PIR Gender strategy to be developed and a consultant to be recruited;

⁶⁴ FAO 2020 – PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT - 1st July 2019 – 30 June 2020

⁶⁵ OECD-DAC NETWORK ON GENDER EQUALITY (GENDERNET), 2016, [Minimum-recommended-criteria-for-DAC-gender-marker.pdf \(oecd.org\)](https://www.oecd.org/gender/data/minimum-recommended-criteria-for-dac-gender-marker.pdf)

plans integrate social and environmental safeguards. The environmental and social safeguards in this project is therefore considered to be satisfactory.

149. The prodoc states that the project conformed to FAO pre-approved list of projects excluded from detailed environmental assessment. The project was categorised as a category C under FAO's environmental impact assessment guidelines for field projects. The project's environmental and development aims are geared towards addressing the problems of unsustainable forest management, biodiversity loss and climate change. The revision and implementation of management plans would contribute to these objectives as well as the support to income generating activities. **The environmental and social safeguards in this project is therefore considered to be satisfactory.**

Overview of cross cutting factors

The terminal evaluation assessed the extent to which gender, indigenous peoples and environmental and social safeguards were taken into consideration in the project. The analysis shows weaknesses in the mainstreaming of gender and indigenous people's issues in the project and consequently these are deemed as being moderately unsatisfactory. However, though principle 9 related to FAO's environmental and social safeguards could have been triggered considering the project's activities with indigenous peoples, the evaluation deems that environmental and social safeguards are satisfactory. The overall rating for cross cutting issues is moderately satisfactory.

3.6.4 Progress to impact: What evidence exists that the project is contributing to project and GEF strategic goals and targets?

Finding 28: The project has laid the groundwork for impact as evidenced by increased awareness and capacity gains and changes in behaviour amongst final beneficiaries towards sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation and carbon management, commitment. However, ownership of the project by government agencies and local councils represent critical risks.

150. In assessing progress to impact, respondents perceived that changes in awareness and capacity were the important gains secured, followed closely by contributions to socio economic status of beneficiaries and environmental improvements from behavioural change.
151. There is evidence of the **project/programme's contributions to changes in capacities at different levels**. The very idea of changing the paradigm in terms of the management of council forests represents a strong contribution of the project from respondents. This entails a departure from the traditional model of forest management which prioritises the exploitation of timber, to a more inclusive model with stronger engagement of communities, and commitment to biodiversity conservation and carbon management. While there was overwhelming support from respondents on the model proposed by the project, mayors stated that the "abrupt closure of the project"⁶⁶ and non application/demonstration of the new model of forest management model during the lifespan of the project was concerning to them. This was crucially the case for newly elected mayors from the 2020 municipal elections who had not had the opportunity to be briefed on the project following their election. Others were concerned that in the short term, the new model could entail a loss of income from forest exploitation given that they do not possess knowledge and know-how within councils on how to mobilise biodiversity and carbon related funding nor is their intrinsic value immediately visible.

⁶⁶ The LTO's last field visit, just before the latest extension was granted was conceived as a closing mission

152. The materialisation of forest management plans with targeted areas designated for SFM, biodiversity conservation and carbon and their validation by the MINFOF represented the most significant contribution expected of this project. At the time of evaluation, no management plan had been validated due to delays in the procurement of the implementing partners and divergences with MINFOF regarding funding for field activities required for the reception and validation of the outputs from partners. While progress has been achieved in the delivery of biodiversity inventories and mapping of potential carbon sites, there was no evidence gathered from the project and stakeholders that biodiversity conservation had been impacted by the project. The database for biodiversity monitoring and management is yet to be designed and results of carbon analysis are yet to be completed. Therefore, no progress can be reported regarding contribution towards reduction in carbon emissions or protection of biodiversity by the project.
153. This project also strived to strengthen national and local capacity in terms of development and trial of a carbon measurement model for council forests in Cameroon. The project drew on the "REALU: Reducing Emissions from All Land Uses" project experience led by the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), and the Institut de Recherche Agricole pour le Développement (IRAD), as a basis for adapting the carbon accounting and monitoring system to council forests. This process was regrettably marred by procurement failures at the FAO which culminated in significant delays of over 8 months for the release of soil samples to FAO⁶⁷ to the three carbon consultants on the 13th of June 2022. Consultants were, however, confident that once analysed, this would enable them to provide needed evidence for validation of carbon sites in council forests. The reports would also provide testimony to council officials about the value of carbon in their forests and potential financial benefits from preservation. It is expected that this additional evidence will consolidate the methodology, support the delivery of the monitoring, reporting and verification system for forest carbon and reassure mayors about the benefits of sustainable forest management. As most of the mayors stated, the objective has not been achieved since the implementation phase is not yet taking place. One stated that *we received the trainings less than two months ago on biodiversity conservation and on carbon stock management* suggesting their skills have neither been applied nor tested.
154. There is no evidence that the project's environmental benefits as highlighted in the prodoc were achieved. At the time of the evaluation, none of the information management systems on biodiversity monitoring and carbon monitoring/management had been delivered. This means that local council authorities and national level officials - MINFOF and MINEPDED currently do not have any mechanism to access information for decision making. While the project team has scaled up work in the field to develop the databases, it is unlikely that these databases or systems will have the time to be tested and operationalised by December 2022. The scant engagement of government agencies in the design of these databases and methodologies could impact their ownership, appropriation, and sustainability in the long run. Capacity weaknesses in terms of human resources, followed by funding, access to internet, repairs and softwares at council level are key risks.
155. Communities also reported that new knowledge in the processing and marketing of non timber forest products was contributing to an increased engagement in these activities and a deviation away from artisanal forest exploitation activities. In focus group discussions in all five council forest areas visited, respondents explained how they were exploring other income options as

⁶⁷ A purchase order was only raised by FAO on the 6th of May 2022. The TE team has not received confirmation that samples have been handed over to consultants and on what terms considering their contracts were already overrun.

opposed to timber exploitation. Regretably though, none of the business development plans designed through the project had received any support nor had been implemented. In fact, field missions by the project team in May 2022 revealed that none of the plans had been implemented. This was in part due to the long gap between the initial cycle 1 and subsequent cycle 2 trainings on ADM, absence of business incubation support, demotivation due to lack of promised support, access, and the Covid-19 pandemic. In effect, of the 1050 community members who took part in the 1st round of ADM training, 30% less (700) took part in the 2nd cycle of training. The evaluation team cannot, therefore, conclude that satisfactory progress has been made towards the project's development objective.

156. At another level, anecdotal evidence from communities revealed increased levels of awareness of the benefits of sustainable forest management were being translated into behavioural changes. For instance, FGDs revealed that communities were more aware of their council forest boundaries, and members of the peasant forest committees increased their levels of forest monitoring and denunciation of illegal forest activities. Similarly, council officials revealed that they had increased reports of illegality to MINFOF for action. The restructuring and training of the PFCs, CFCs has therefore, strengthened capacities for good governance and SFM. One of the respondents stated that *"we practice them daily in the monitoring of logging activities by companies present in the areas and also the activities carried out by the population around the council forest. Their continuous performance of forest monitoring and denunciations is likely to create a disincentive for forest illegality which in the long run would improve forest law enforcement if dissuasive sanctions were imposed, contribute to reduce deforestation and forest degradation and consequently biodiversity loss. The project failed to leverage the FAO-EU FLEGT programme's experience in Cameroon which has strengthened civil society led independent forest monitoring as a tool for improving forest governance in the country. These structures lack the basic tools required to play their role effectively. With the economic challenges facing council forests, there was little commitment from mayors to fund these activities in the short term. Were the project to provide equipment and logistics support to these local structures, their effectiveness could be strengthened but there was no such support in view.*

Unintended Effects

Finding 39: The project achieved unintended effects as seen in strengthened relationships between Baka and Bantou communities, but also a loss of trust and credibility from FAO's management of the project and more broadly of the organisation's image amongst partners and stakeholders.

157. The project registered positive effects. Anecdotal evidence from respondents in NdiKinimeki revealed that the deputy mayor of the council was elected because of her leadership actions in the community following the ADM trainings. Respondents reported that after the trainings, she improved her leadership skills, got her community mobilised on project activities and other community actions which subsequently led to her being elected in her community.
158. Other evidence received pointed to improved peace building in the sense that conflicts between the Baka and Bantou communities over forest resources in Mindourou, Messamena and Yoko had improved. The participation of the Baka leaders within PFCs had contributed to strengthen relationships between these groups of actors. In some cases, the PFCs were constituted solely by Baka leaders enhancing their participation in the decision makings on forests that concern them.

159. There is a general sense and perception among respondents that the FAO failed to live up to the standards and image that it holds. The conflicts, unilateral and sometimes arbitrary decision making, non respect of obligations and failed promises for communities have soiled the image and credibility of the organisation. A highly innovative project with excellent scalability potential did not fulfill its potential. The project result framework might look promising, but the underlying issues faced and the fact that after over five years, communities and councils still don't have revised management plans to show nor community development enterprises supported by the project is a blow to the credibility of the organisation. The same holds for the government counterparts that have failed to deliver on their objective to strengthen the carbon stocks in the target councils and regions of the project.
160. Without an exit strategy and demonstrated ownership and commitment from the administration and ACFCAM/CTFC to continue building on the realisations of this project, the likelihood of impact is could be jeopardised. This is in addition to failing to anchor the project on national forestry and climate processes within MINFOF and MINEPDED.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1: The relevance of the "Sustainable Forest management under the authority of Cameroonian councils" project is highly satisfactory.

161. The project objectives and design met the needs of the Cameroon government and local council authorities. This was ensured through a participatory project design process. The project was highly aligned with national processes for sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation and the country's climate agenda particularly the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), the national REDD+ strategy and commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement as illustrated by the 2021 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). It was also in line with and sought to contribute to national growth and development strategies. The project was also highly aligned with GEF and FAO mandates and strategic objectives. Gender and indigenous peoples' issues were not a priority objectives for this project and consequently targetted actions were not implemented. Achieving the development impact would require more focused support to women and IP groups and provision of financial and business incubation and support programme.

Conclusion 2: The project has made significant progress in its last year of implementation (June 2021 – June 2022). Effectiveness is consequently moderately satisfactory. The final no cost extension of 6 months offers an opportunity to make further progress towards delivery of outcomes.

162. The project result framework shows that significant progress has been made following the midterm evaluation of 2019. However, the project has, for years, suffered significant challenges including delays, leadership and personal conflicts, lack of communication and stakeholder engagement, lack of accountability, non application of recommendations from the project steering committee and midterm evaluations. A cocktail of these failures led to the project being extended four times. The failure of the project to complete the revision and validation of revised forest management plans due to insufficient budget allocations on successive budgets means that local council forest authorities have not benefited from the expected objectives of the project. Without the validation of these revised management plans, the institutional framework for SFM, biodiversity conservation and carbon monitoring remains weak. The biodiversity database meant to monitor biodiversity in council forests is yet to be implemented. Further support is required to fully implement the biodiversity database and ensure regular monitoring of biodiversity in the council forests.

163. The project achieved significant capacity building gains for different stakeholders including council authorities, peasant forest committees, council forest cells; local government officials and forest dependent communities. Stakeholders appreciate the support provided through this project and indicative changes in behaviour towards SFM are beginning to emerge. However, the strengthened institutions lack the requisite material and logistics support to play their role effectively. Communities trained on the ADM approach are yet to be funded leading to no business development plans implemented to date (June 2022) (See also recommendation 4). The introduction of carbon monitoring and management in council forests is an innovation. If successful, it could yield long term environmental, social and economic benefits to councils and local forest dependent communities. Unfortunately, procurement shortcomings at FAO and lack of proactivity from leadership means that the systems for carbon monitoring are incomplete. The no cost extension provides an additional opportunity for the carbon database to be developed and trialed. As beneficiaries' training on the management of carbon only ended in June 2022, continued support, beyond the project's NTE in December 2022, appears needed to embed the

experience and contribute lastingly to the paradigm shift away from traditional timber exploitation as a main source of income from council forests. Local capacity consequently remains weak for sustaining the results without further support.

164. The methodology and approach for carbon monitoring, reporting and verification has been effectively developed and tested. The shambolic management of the soil sample analysis process means that the process of setting up and piloting the carbon monitoring system has not been fully implemented. Government was expected to mobilise co-financing and to lead the restoration and the strengthening of carbon stocks in target councils. Due to lack of available government funding, only 3,800 ha of restoration and reforestation was carried out, out of 56,200 ha planned.
165. The project did not apply a results-based management approach. Action plans and budgets were developed, but recommendations rarely implemented in full. The structures expected to support project delivery were either not created or ineffective. The mid term evaluation and terminal evaluations were effectively commissioned. Mid term evaluation recommendations were not implemented in full. No evidence exists that best practices have been documented or disseminated to external stakeholders.

Conclusion 3: The project management and operational delivery of the project was inefficient, characterised by delayed and at times poor quality of deliverables.

166. The FAO applied its internal administrative and financial management procedures. The lack of project specific guidelines affected mastery of the project roles and responsibilities by all partners, and subsequently led to disagreements, which translated to conflicts and delays. Financial reports were not regularly produced for stakeholders. At the time of the evaluation, the only report available was dated September 2020 – which was the report presented to the project steering committee.
167. The project budget was unbalanced with key project activities underbudgeted, resulting in significant delays in delivery. The project experienced procurement deficiencies and expected co-financing from project partners did not materialise. Particularly since project mid-term evaluation, the project team was reinforced with additional staff, but performance remained mixed and suboptimal, which in turn negatively affected the project's value for money.

Conclusion 4: Project achievements are moderately likely to continue beyond the project initial period. However, these gains could be lost if financial, social, institutional, and environmental risks are not mitigated.

168. A significant number of trainings were delivered targeting council forest stakeholders. Various tools, guidelines and research has been produced which could continue to be utilised beyond the project. Draft forest management plans, if approved, provide the institutional framework for achieving the project's environmental objectives. While training on ADM has been provided, lack of incubation and start up support led to no community enterprises being implemented suggesting capacities are weak for ensuring the continuity of results without further support (see also conclusion 2).
169. The delays in project results means that local councils have not mobilised any direct incomes resulting from the project, nor have communities who have not implemented business plans. The decision by the ministry of finance to reallocate a share of revenues away from local councils means there might be more pressure on councils to generate incomes from short term exploitation of timber to the detriment of SFM, biodiversity conservation and climate. Additionally, the management of council forest revenues remains one of the most reported sources of corruption to the national anti-corruption commission (CONAC). Another financial risk

is that councils sign exploitation agreements with private investors: the investors might not operate in line with new management plans, a risk compounded when the council itself is only partially informed and engaged in the project and the details of the plan.

170. Climate change, forest fires and illegal forest and wildlife trafficking as well as other anthropogenic impacts on forest will continue to increase. The capacities of council officials, the PFCs, CFCs and communities remain weak requiring further strengthening for better forest and wildlife monitoring, transparent management of forest and carbon resources. Without further support, SFM is unlikely to be achieved as are the biodiversity conservation and carbon components of the project.

Conclusion 5: The factors affecting performance are rated as moderately satisfactory. The project design was overall satisfactory, while the quality of implementation, execution and M&E design and implementation are only moderately satisfactory.

171. The project idea emanated from ACFCAM/CTFC but fiduciary assessment of the organisation led to the FAO being designated as GEF implementing agency. The project design was robust with planned activities capable of delivering on outputs and outcomes. The failure of the FAO to validate final project proposal documents with the national stakeholders led to mistakes which subsequently impacted project start-up, implementation and relationships between the FAO and ACFCAM negatively. The FAO failed to provide capacity building to CTFC leading to the organisation being aggrieved and the perception of being unfairly treated by the FAO.
172. The revised project M&E was too complex to be implemented and consequently was not applied fully. The budget allocated for M&E appeared sufficient but the plan was under-staffed without an M&E officer for the scale of the project. Project monitoring routines were implemented in terms of reporting to donors but data collection for decision making was weak. The project was characterised by internal conflicts, staff turn over, poor internal dynamics, inadequate understanding/application of roles, poor perceived separation of implementation and execution roles and consequently failures in stakeholder engagement and communication which were considered marginally unsatisfactory. There was a general perception amongst government, mayors and national partners that the project had become "an FAO" show with many considering their participation as passive and perfunctory. This lack of ownership and appropriation has serious implications for sustainability.
173. The project management unit was illequipped to deliver on this project in terms of numbers and quality of personnel. This project suffered, since it began, from staff turnover - two technical coordinators left in quick succession and the biodiversity expert on the team was subsequently promoted to role of technical coordinator. While appreciated by partners, the CTP failed to deliver on their TORs through a combination of insufficient technical expertise in all project areas of intervention and a perceived lack of professionalism in the delivery of their functions. There was insufficient technical support within the PMU and poor understanding of the defining role and function of the LTO, which contributed to strenuous relationships between the technical coordinator and the LTO. This situation was allowed to fester from May 2018 to October 2021, when the PMU was finally boosted with two additional experts and the PMU structure reorganised. Proposed actions from the MTR regarding the LTO were not actioned by the BH.
174. The FAO roles and responsibilities matrix articulates the roles and responsibilities of members of the project task force – budget holder, LTO, FLO and others, but it is silent on conflict management. The implementation of these roles assumes pacific relations and willingness to work together between different members of the task force. In this project, there were disagreements and role conflicts between taskforce members and the project team. The responsibilities are shared through a combination of non action, lack of decisiveness and accountability. Coordination

between the national coordination and the project technical coordination remained weak and impaired project delivery. Stakeholder engagement was weak and affected the ownership and appropriation of the project by government, partners and local community leaders. ACFCAM/CTFC that originated with the perception they had been sidelined. For these reasons, commitment to sustain project gains is lacking amongst national partners.

175. At the time of the evaluation, a knowledge expert had been commissioned but was yet to start work on documenting project experiences. The communications expert used the FAO website for publications as well as the organisation's twitter handle. The communications strategy was largely not implemented with no engagement with external partners. The project therefore, failed to share lessons with other agencies and to be anchored in ongoing national processes required for the ownership and sustainability of the project.

Conclusion 6: Social and environmental safeguards were satisfactorily identified and addressed during project implementation.

176. FAO ESS guidelines were applied in the screening of the project leading to its category C classification. The revision of forest management plans included implementation of socio-economic studies which support decision making on safeguards. These studies have informed the revision of the forest management plans.

Conclusion 7: Gender, indigenous peoples, vulnerable or marginalised groups were not priority objectives. This is considered as moderately unsatisfactory.

177. Project design was light on gender and consideration of specific gender needs and those of IP persons. No specific gender analysis nor action plans/strategies were developed to target women and indigenous peoples. These categories were generally involved and benefited from trainings but expected start up and incubation support was not provided particularly in income generating activities and implementation of business development plans. Capacities remain weak and further support is required.

Conclusion 8: Progress to impacts is moderately satisfactory. Evidence points to emerging contributions to project and GEF strategic goals and targets

178. Capacity building was a central tenet of this project. Significant training events have been delivered reaching council authorities, PFCs, CFCs and local communities on a wide range of SFM, biodiversity conservation and carbon management as well as the ADM approach. Despite weaknesses identified, it is likely that the knowledge gained could be applied beyond the project. Trainings were either organised towards the end of the project, or when organised early in the project lacked continuous follow up and provision of necessary tools and opportunity to practice the learning and ensure its sustained use within the communities.
179. Signs of impacts have been reported by PFCs and CFCs and communities regarding increased awareness of the multiple benefits from forests, attempts to diversify away from artisanal timber to non-timber forest products and increased reporting of cases of illegality to authorities. If these are perpetuated, then this is likely to reduce pressures on forests, SFM, biodiversity conservation and resilience to climate.
180. Anecdotal evidence also showed unintended effects as seen in strengthened relationships between Baka and Bantou communities. GIZ intends to build on this experience as it continues to support council forests. Unfortunately, the challenges faced in this project have led to a loss of trust by stakeholders in FAO's ability to deliver on such projects which rely on working collaboratively with stakeholders.

Conclusion 9: Project lessons have not been documented nor are available to inform future project design on SFM

181. The only activity undertaken regarding lesson learning was the recruitment of an expert in May 2022 to start work on documenting results.

4.2 Recommendations

Recommendations

To the FAO

Recommendation 1: FAO needs to urgently engage in an inclusive, participatory process to develop the project's exit strategy.

182. FAO in collaboration with MINFOF needs to convene the project steering committee meeting and provide the opportunity for stakeholders to understand the state of progress of the project, particularly as most consider they have been left out since the last meeting in September 2020. Weak stakeholder engagement, poor communication and collaboration amongst partners have been hallmarks of this project which has impacted the level of ownership and commitment to the future of the project. FAO needs to reinstate a collaborative environment and organise meetings with all partners involved to assess progress achieved and explore how project gains can be secured and sustained; it must also clarify the roles different actors need to play in this exit strategy and ensure their ability and desire to play it. With the six months left, this inclusive process could significantly enhance the commitment of partners and ensure ownership and continuity of project results. This is particularly relevant for MINFOF, MINDEPDED and CTFC which remains the technical arm of ACFCAM⁶⁸.
183. Partners have long suggested for the need for joint visits to the field to collectively assess progress on the ground. As part of developing the project exit strategy, FAO could organize these requested joint missions by groups of actors to different council forests to learn from progress and challenges on the ground and to formulate recommendations. The newly recruited capitalisation expert could also use these field missions to document the project experiences and best practices if at all. There are several SFM, Biodiversity conservation and carbon/climate related initiatives and processes on-going in Cameroon. These include the FLEGT VPA, REDD+; NDCs, promotion of domestic timber market and public procurement. With the latest six months extension, the project management team needs to be assertive in its outreach towards these initiatives and to explore opportunities for the project gains to be embedded or inform these other processes. The evaluation team also recommends that in line with Article 3 of the Cooperation Agreement with the government, the exit strategy could include discussions with the government regarding transfer of project assets acquired as part of this project.

Recommendation 2: FAO should consolidate the capacity building gains acquired to strengthen the pathway to the environmental and development impacts of the project

184. There is need for a rapid assessment of the communities trained on ADM approaches working with local councils to assess the short terms needs required to reinvigorate their business plans development. This assessment could be implemented by a consultant and hence quantify the support required for starting up business enterprises. FAO should provide necessary support to

⁶⁸ Important to mention that part of the disengagement of ACFCAM from the project was that they had won a new EU project and were no longer interested in an LOA. However, due to their strategic positioning, they could still play a role in the future of the project. Failing this, explore other technical consultants or national support agencies to provide bespoke support.

selected enterprises. This is not only important to kickstart the dormant business plans, it will also address the tarnished image of the project and of FAO within these communities.

185. Local councils, PFCs, CFCs have been strengthened but all still demonstrate weak capacities to be effective. In line with Recommendation 1, revisit a role for CTFC to ensure continuous monitoring of capacities. Also assess the needs in terms of equipment and logistics support and coaching. This will inform the continuous coaching and mentoring mechanism for the project target groups such as council executive secretaries and leaders of councils over the long term. The biodiversity and carbon databases need to be finalised and tested in all target council forests. Stronger engagement with MINEPDED and ACFCAM/CTFC is crucial for sustainability and management and use of the databases. With sufficient buy-in, these organisations could mobilise the resources required to update and maintain these databases.

Recommendation 3: FAO needs to come to an agreement with government partners (MINFOF and MINEPDED). No effort should be spared in ensuring joint FAO/MINFOF field supervision visits are organized to assess progress and ultimately validate the nine revised plans. For those uncompleted, reallocate further resources to ensure all 17 council forest management plans undergo revision.

186. The draft LOA proposed to MINFOF by FAO suggests that the project estimates that nine (09) out of 17 management plans could be ready for validation by the panel in charge of approving forest management plans. Goodwill is needed from both sides to secure a viable agreement on the field missions. Considering this is a critical risk for the project, no effort should be spared to get the revised plans validated; otherwise, the project impacts cannot be achieved and the image and credibility of the FAO will be in jeopardy. While MINEPDED has historically not benefited from an LOA, their role in monitoring carbon and biodiversity cannot be bypassed. Financial resources are required for the MINEPDED teams to monitor the implementation of the databases and revised plans on the ground. Whether these funds are mobilized through the project, MINFOF or MINEPDED are a function of the goodwill and agreement FAO can establish with these partners.

Recommendation 4: In future projects, the FAO should develop clear internal project guidelines which clarify the roles, scope and limits of different actors intervening in the project. These guidelines need to be agreed from inception and will clarify information flows between actors and the mechanisms for addressing disagreements and conflicts.

187. It is important that future projects clearly articulate roles and responsibilities of actors and lines of communication within the FAO PTF and with partners. It is important that all actors understand their roles and responsibilities and the scope of their actions and reporting lines. These include lines for transmission and validation of project deliverables (as well as quality standards of such) between project management units and PTF as well as with the national partner agencies/project coordination units which integrate timelines and mechanisms for redress. These project specific guidelines must be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain fit for purpose. In time, and with practice, such specific guidelines could be made mandatory for all FAO projects, fully mitigating several of the situations witnessed here.

Recommendation 5: FAO should review its matrix of responsibilities and clarify the modalities for addressing disagreements and conflicts within PTF.

188. The FAO Project Taskforce is governed by three principles namely: decentralisation and subsidiarity, segregation of duties and effective skills mix but no governing principle clearly addresses a situation in which there are role overlaps or internal conflicts and disagreements within the PTF. Linked to recommendation 4 above, specific operational guidelines could be developed which lay out how the team will work within the framework of the particular project. It will be the responsibility of the budget holder to develop these guidelines, highlighting potential

bottlenecks and mitigation measures. The working relationship between members of the PTF will be reviewed within agreed timelines to address any challenges. Where cases of lack of accountability, or other, are identified, the BH has the responsibility and power to remove, replace or reorganise the PTF to ensure effective delivery of the project. This project highlights the need for decisive action from the BH who has ultimate responsibility for the success of the action, otherwise, performance challenges may fester and affect project performance.

189. In proposing members to the PTF, particularly the LTO and CTA, the formulator/BH will ensure that the person has the requisite skills and experience in all key areas of intervention of the project and have the ability to provide comprehensive technical oversight in the project areas of intervention. In complex projects or when working on niche topics (where expertise might be limited or dispersed), the formulator/BH may request additional complementary technical experts within the organisation and beyond to join the PTF. The guidelines would therefore clarify the scope and limits of actions and lines of accountability within the PTF. The BH thus ensures that the skills mix is sufficient to support delivery, but also minimises the risk of centralisation of power in any one pair of hands. The mechanism for operationalisation of the roles and responsibilities, would reside in well-designed action plans and budgets and in regular team meetings.

Recommendation 6: FAO should establish a mechanism for monitoring the technical delivery of projects by the PTF to address underlying project performance challenges.

190. The FAO could explore developing a system for monitoring technical delivery of projects on the ground drawing on the existing mechanisms for tracking administrative performance⁶⁹. The current administrative system uses an alert and early warning system based on monitoring of key indicators such as spending, reporting, timelines for closure and request for funds. With this alert system, budget holders are regularly updated on the state of project progress, and on administrative bottlenecks that must be resolved swiftly. Once an issue has been addressed, the system no longer considers the project as problematic, even if the administrative challenges reflect technical challenges.
191. To ensure that communication within teams take place and project implementation atmosphere is one of collegiality, a short scorecard/traffic light system could be explored through which the performance of designated PTF members is assessed and reported on by the BH on a monthly to quarterly basis. The scorecard would ask particularly the BH, LTO and CTA to rank on a scale of 1- 5 or 1- 3, overall project delivery. Key questions could focus on team collaboration; communication; implementation of work plans; implementation of steering committee or evaluation/review recommendations. This scorecard could be available to senior management at subregional and regional levels. Overtime, this could enable poor performing individuals to be identified, and problems tackled before they fester; it could also contribute to better allocation of resources within the organization ensuring all talent is utilized for their strengths. For example, budget holders could also use this scorecard as reference in their selection and allocation of individuals to different projects. It will be important for this scorecard to be very short to facilitate its use and application.

Recommendation 7: FAO needs to strengthen the management framework for delivering projects of this magnitude through having dedicated monitoring and evaluation team, procurement plan, specific financial management procedures and guidelines for partners and grievance mechanisms through which individuals who feel aggrieved can register their complaints.

⁶⁹ Project reports, evaluations and reviews play a role, but when issues are not addressed promptly as witnessed in this project, it could become too late to salvage a project. In fact, project progress reports often downplay the underlying factors for poor performance as was the case in this project.

192. The importance of having a dedicated monitoring and evaluation team and an operational M&E system which enables the project team to systematically collect, analyse and provide information for project decision making cannot be overemphasised. If fully implemented, the M&E system also allows the team to keep track of key performance factors such as communication, stakeholder engagement and levels of satisfaction and ownership of project outputs and outcomes by stakeholders. It will also be critical to develop biennial procurement plans which allows the technical and financial teams to have common understanding of resource needs throughout the life of the project and avoid delays and inefficiencies. The same applies for bespoke financial and administrative procedures which must be clearly understood by all partners to avoid confusions and misunderstandings that might impact the project negatively. With conflicts likely to emerge in complex projects, the FAO should systematize the integration of grievance mechanisms in all projects. These should not only focus on environmental and social safeguard impacts, but also on harm, bullying, harassment and other unproductive workplace practices.

To Government

Recommendation 8: The government needs to explore opportunities for a follow-on phase of this project to capitalise on and develop the gains achieved through this pilot initiative.

193. Based on the results of this evaluation and other documented evidence of project performance and challenges, the government should seek to mobilise additional grant funding to support implementation and scale up of the project gains. This could include exploring additional GEF funding or other climate and biodiversity funding opportunities under Green Climate Fund or other donor financing.
194. Part of capitalising on this project will also involve integration of databases within relevant administrative units and departments and designating sufficient human and material resources to operationalise the biodiversity and climate databases.

To GEF

Recommendation 9: Provide funding for a follow up phase or subsequent project to guarantee impact

195. The key recommendation is for the donor to provide funding for a follow up phase of this project or for another project that would build on this project's results. This will enable the councils to fully embed the learning acquired and demonstrate the full impacts of this initial investment. This would also strengthen the strategic positioning of the GEF regarding the paradigm shift from traditional forest management to one that integrates biodiversity conservation and carbon.
196. GEF should also implement due diligence mechanisms on co-financing promises by executing or implementing partners. The experience of this project demonstrates that co-financing promises are easy to secure, but without mechanisms for ensuring that partners effectively mobilise their planned contributions, this represents significant risks for future projects. For example, partners could be required to provide bank accounts or balance sheets which highlight their level of financial solvency or evidence of contracts (recruitments, property) being negotiated or signed.

5. Lessons learned

Project/programme design, appraisal and planning

197. The design of this project followed a participatory process including all key project stakeholders. This participatory process ensured that the project design was relevant, robust and feasible to achieve its objectives. For the effective implementation of projects and their ownership, this inclusiveness must be demonstrated throughout the project. The lack of validation of this particular project by national stakeholders following a participatory design process led to the various challenges that have already been discussed at length in this report. Ensuring participation also sends a message of fairness and creates a conducive environment for trust and collaboration to thrive.

Project/programme management, including financial and human resources issues

198. Having a balanced and realistic budget and a project team with sufficient complementary skills provide the framework for successful project implementation. Developing realistic budgets also requires the ability to listen to experts and to integrate their contributions to budgeting activities. Without building project budgets on field reality, project activities are unlikely to be delivered. As with budgets, project formulators and managers must act decisively when skills gaps are identified within the team either through providing opportunity for further capacity building or integrating new staff to the project team. FAO's global network provides it with unique access to experts that can be drawn on to support project implementation, but these decisions have to be taken promptly to bridge the gaps between project needs and human resource availability.
199. This project has also shown the importance of clear definition of roles and responsibilities and lines of accountability within projects. It also highlighted the necessity for mechanisms for redress and performance monitoring which go beyond administrative benchmarking to considering the underlying factors which affect project performance. Such systems could alert decision makers and bring them to make timely decisions to address problems before they escalate and impact project delivery.

Integrated approaches

200. Projects which adopt integrated approaches like in the case of this project required spaces for stakeholders to share their experiences and expertise and to ensure that the projects become more than a sum of their individual parts. This requires collaborative working and learning environment which allows for failures and successes to be integrated as part of a collective learning process towards a common goal. The advantage of this approach also lies in understanding the inter-relationships between project components and how they nest together to deliver expected outcomes. The experience of this project whereby, project activities were not synchronised and path dependencies clarified, led to delays and non-achievement of project results. As a capacity building project, no mechanisms for post training support to beneficiaries was put in place. The project teams and the FAO need to strengthen the planning and implementation of field activities and create opportunities beyond project steering meetings for partners to debate and agree on actions, their interdependencies, and responsibilities.

Co-financing

201. National partners are not always able to generate or mobilise stated match funding in GEF and other projects. Mechanisms need to be put in place during the design and formulation phase to assess the ability of organisations to effectively deliver on financial targets. It could be valuable at a minimum to request financial statements, balances or asset registers as part of due diligence process. If partners subsequently do not mobilise these resources, the project suffers as can be

seen in the non-delivery of outcome 4 by the forestry administration. Monitoring of these contributions on a regular basis also allows for the project team to keep track of risks and potential impacts on the project.

Stakeholder engagement and communication

202. Projects need to actively develop and implement stakeholder participation and communication plans. Strong engagement of beneficiaries, partners and government are required to ensure ownership and sustainability of the project. This engagement and communication about the project promote visibility and facilitates anchoring project gains within ongoing national and international processes. By so doing, the project's coherence, sustainability and demonstration effects can be achieved. Stronger engagement and communication are also likely to promote goodwill amongst stakeholders and willingness to collaborate.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. People Interviewed

Last Name	First Name	Position	Organization/Location
Ange	OTTOU	Project Assistant	MINFOF/Yaounde
Yannick	ZAMEDJO	Project Assistant	MINFOF Yaounde
Haman Inusa		Focal Point GEF	MINEPDED Yaounde
Ziekine	WADOU	Vice-Chair of the Project Steering Committee	MINEPDED Yaounde
Collins	Mboufack	Project focal point	MINEPDED Yaounde
Roger	PISMO		MINEPDED Yaounde
Baudelaire	KEMAJOU	Director	CTFC Yaounde
Cécile	NDJEBET	Coordinator	Cameroon Ecology
Joseph	AMBARA	Programme Coordinator	GIZ/ProFE
Roger Banoho		Programme Coordinator	OCD
Pierre	TELEP	Director	Monitortrust
Augustin	BITCHICK BI BITCHICK	Programme Coordinator	UICN
Dr Martin	YEMEFACK	Consultant for capacity building and carbon inventories	(Messamena/Mindourou, Lomié and Dimako FCs)
Prof Louis	Zapack	Consultant in charge of capacity building and carbon inventories	(Minta, Nanga - Eboko and Ndikiniméki FCs)
Prof Evariste	NFONGNZOSSIE	Consultant for capacity building	(Djum, Mvangan, and Oveng CFs)
Henri	MEVA	Consultant in charge of ADM Training, Coordinator	NGO – PAPEL
Richard	ZENGLE NTOUH	Mayor	President of ACFCAM and Mayor of Mindourou
Patrice	BESSOUBEL	Mayor	Ndikinimeki council
Obam	TONYE TONYE	Mayor	Messondo
Richard	EBALE ADJOMO	Mayor	Efoulan
Athman	MRAVILI	FAO Representative in Cameroon	FAOR-CMR Yaounde
Jeremie	MBAIRAMADJI	LTO projet	FAO
Kuena	MOREBOTSANE	GEF Coordination Unit,	FAO
Alphonse	KANANURA	Emergency Operations Officer/Member of the Project Task Force	FAO-Cameroon Yaounde
Etienne	EBA	FAOR Assistant/Administration Officer	FAO – Cameroon Yaounde

Armand	ASSENG ZE	Forestry and Environment Sector Support Officer,	FAO-Cameroon Yaounde
Charlemagne	NGUEMBOU	PTC, GEF/SFM/FAO project	FAO Yaounde
Ann	DEGRANDE	Director	ICRAF
Cargele	MASSO	Director	IITA
Elvis	NSOH NDAM	Responsible for the supervision of the project's forest management activities	FAO Consultant
Prof Bonaventure	SONKE	Responsible for overseeing the project's carbon management activities	FAO Consultant
Freeman	ADESIMI	Regional Programme Leader	FAO
Alex	NYARKO-BADOHU	Senior Field Programme Officer	FAO RAF
Albert	NIKIEMA		FAO RAF
Marius Tresor	TAIWE DANRA	Environmental officer in the forestry unit of the council	Dimako Council
Soulemanou	NCHUTSU	CFC	Mvangan
THIERRY	NDONGO DOUGLAS	CFC	Akom II
François	KISSE BINI	CFC	Ndikiniméki
TOTAL 38			

Field Visits

Zone	Date of field visit	Interviews	Participants in FGDs
Dzeng	May 30, 2022	1	11
Dimako	June 1, 2022	2	6
Mvangan	June 2, 2022	2	9
Akom II	June 4, 2022	2	5
Ndikiniméki	June 5, 2022	2	6
TOTAL			37

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS =75

Appendix 2. GEF evaluation criteria rating table

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating⁷⁰	Summary comments⁷¹
A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	HS	Section 3.1
A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	HS	Section 3.1.3; 3.1.4
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	HS	Section 3.1.1; 3.1.2
A1.3. Relevance to gender	MU	Section 3.1.5
B. EFFECTIVENESS		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	MS	Section 3
B1.1 Delivery of project outputs	MS	Sections 3.2.1; 3.2.2; 3.2.3; 3.2.4; 3.2.5
B1.2 Progress towards outcomes ⁷² and project objectives		
- Outcome 1	MU	Section 3.2.1
- Outcome 2	MS	Section 3.2.2
- Outcome 3	MU	Section 3.2.3
- Outcome 4	U	Section 3.2.4
- Outcome 5	MS	Section 3.2.5
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes	MS	Section 3.2.6
B1.3 Likelihood of impact	MS	Section 3.2.7
C. EFFICIENCY		
C1. Efficiency ⁷³	MU	Section 3.3
D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES		
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	Section 3.4
D1.1. Financial risks	ML	Section 3.4
D1.2. Socio-political risks	ML	Section 3.4
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	ML	Section 3.4
D1.4. Environmental risks	ML	Section 3.4
D2. Catalysis and replication	ML	Section 3.4
E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE		
E1. Project design and readiness ⁷⁴	S	Section 3.5.2, paragraphs 148-153
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	Section 3.5.2

⁷⁰ See rating scheme in Appendix 3.

⁷¹ Include reference to the relevant sections in the report.

⁷² Assessment and ratings by individual outcomes may be undertaken if there is added value.

⁷³ Includes cost efficiency and timeliness.

⁷⁴ This refers to factors affecting the project's ability to start as expected, such as the presence of sufficient capacity among executing partners at project launch.

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating⁷⁰	Summary comments⁷¹
E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO (BH, LTO, PTF, etc.)	MU	Section 3.5.2, paragraphs 152-157
E2.1 Project oversight (PSC, project working group, etc.)	MS	Section 3.5.2, paragraphs 152-157
E3. Quality of project execution For decentralized projects: Project Management Unit/BH	MS	Section 3.5.3
E4. Financial management and co-financing	MU	Section 3.5.4
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	MU	Section 3.5.5
E6. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	MU	Section 3.5.6
E7. Overall quality of M&E	MS	Section 3.5.1
E7.1 M&E design	MS	Section 3.5.1.1
E7.2 M&E implementation plan (including financial and human resources)	MS	Section 3.5.1.2
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	MS	Section 3.5
F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	MU	3.6.1
F2. Human rights issues/Indigenous peoples	MU	3.6.2
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	S	3.6.3
Overall project rating	MS	

Appendix 3. Rating scheme

See instructions provided in Annex 2: Rating Scales in the "Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations for Full-sized Project", April 2017.

PROJECT RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

Project outcomes are rated based on the extent to which project objectives were achieved. A six-point rating scale is used to assess overall outcomes:

Rating	Description
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no shortcomings.
Satisfactory (S)	Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor shortcomings.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major shortcomings.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe shortcomings.
Unable to Assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievements.

During project implementation, the results framework of some projects may have been modified. In cases where modifications in the project impact, outcomes and outputs have not scaled down their overall scope, the evaluator should assess outcome achievements based on the revised results framework. In instances where the scope of the project objectives and outcomes has been scaled down, the magnitude of and necessity for downscaling is taken into account and despite achievement of results as per the revised results framework, where appropriate, a lower outcome effectiveness rating may be given.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION

Quality of implementation and of execution will be rated separately. Quality of implementation pertains to the role and responsibilities discharged by the GEF agencies that have direct access to GEF resources. Quality of execution pertains to the roles and responsibilities discharged by the country or regional counterparts that received GEF funds from the GEF agencies and executed the funded activities on ground. The performance will be rated on a six-point scale:

Rating	Description
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	There were no shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution exceeded expectations.
Satisfactory (S)	There were no or minor shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution meets expectations.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	There were some shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution more or less meets expectations.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution somewhat lower than expected.
Unsatisfactory (U)	There were major shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution substantially lower than expected.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	There were severe shortcomings in quality of implementation or execution .
Unable to Assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of implementation or execution .

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Quality of project M&E will be assessed in terms of:

- i. design
- ii. implementation

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability will be assessed taking into account the risks related to financial, socio-political, institutional and environmental sustainability of project outcomes. The evaluator may also take other risks into account that may affect sustainability. The overall sustainability will be assessed using a four-point scale:

Rating	Description
Likely (L)	<i>There is little or no risk to sustainability.</i>
Moderately Likely (ML)	<i>There are moderate risks to sustainability.</i>
Moderately Unlikely (MU)	<i>There are significant risks to sustainability.</i>
Unlikely (U)	<i>There are severe risks to sustainability.</i>
Unable to Assess (UA)	<i>Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability.</i>

Appendix 4. GEF co-financing table

Name of the co-financer	Co-financer type ⁷⁵	Type of co-financing ⁷⁶	Co-financing at project start (Amount confirmed at GEF CEO endorsement/approval by the project design team) (in USD)			Materialized co-financing at project mid-term (in USD)		
			In-kind	Cash	Total	In-kind	Cash	Total
MINFOF	National Government	In-Kind	5,000,000 USD		5,000,000 USD	2 268 200 USD		2 268 200 USD
MINEPDED	National Government	In-Kind	4,500,000 USD		4,500,000 USD	1 730 000 USD		1 730 000 USD
FAO	International Organization	Grant & In-kind	400,000 USD	1,050,000 USD	1,450,000 USD	408 573 USD	285 414 USD	693 987 USD
Cameroon Ecology	Civil Society Organization	In-kind	3,500,000 USD		3,500,000 USD			
PNDP	Local Government program	In-kind	1,500,000 USD		1,500,000 USD			
GIZ	Bilateral Aid Agency	In-kind	1,900,000 USD		1,900,000 USD			
Grand total (in USD)			16,800,000 USD	1,050,000 USD	17,850,000 USD	4 406 773 USD	285 414 USD	4 692 187 USD

⁷⁵ Examples of categories include: local, provincial or national government; semi-government autonomous institutions; private sector; multilateral or bilateral organizations; educational and research institutions; non-profit organizations; civil society organizations; foundations; beneficiaries; GEF agencies; and others (please explain).

⁷⁶ Grants, loans, equity participation by beneficiaries (individuals) in form of cash, guarantees, in-kind or material contributions, and others (please explain).

Appendix 5. Results matrix

Output	Activities	Activities achieved	Activities remaining	% Achievement	Observations
Component 1: Establishment of council forests for sustainable management and biodiversity conservation					
Output 1.1.1 Database of biodiversity in the council forests established	Activity1: Develop criteria and indicators for designation of conservation sites, assessment and monitoring of biodiversity in the council forests	Technical publications on criteria and indicators for designation of conservation sites, assessment and monitoring of biodiversity in the council forests have been developed by the project	0	100	Activity completed
	Activity2: Mapping and inventory of biodiversity in the identified conservation sites to serve as reference for monitoring	The mapping and inventory of biodiversity were completed in 13 council forests (Ndikinimeki, Nanga-Eboko, Minta, Dimako, Gari-Gombo, Yokadouma, Lomie, Djoum, Messondo, Ngambe/Ndom/Nyanon, Mvangan, Oveng, Akom II/Efoulan) out of 17 council forests targeted by the project.	Conduct the inventory of biodiversity in the council forest of Mouloundou and complete data processing of Messamena/Mindoou rou, Dzen, Yoko where inventory was already conducted	76,47	In the 4 council forest remaining, the inventories of biodiversity was already done in three of them (Messamena/Mindoou rou, Dzen, Yoko). The only work to be completed is the data processing and reporting
	Activity 3: Create and update a database on biodiversity in the council forests	The database on biodiversity is created and installed in the computers provided by the project to the 17 council forests targeted by the project	0	100	Activity completed

Output	Activities	Activities achieved	Activities remaining	% Achievement	Observations
Output 1.1.2 Forest management plans, integrating biodiversity conservation, developed and implemented	Activity1: Gazetting of 561825ha of council forest into three blocks (10% for conservation site, 10% for enrichment and restoration and 80% for SFM)	The Gazetting of forest into three blocks (10% for conservation site, 10% for enrichment and restoration and 80% for SFM) is conducted in 15 council forests (Ndikinimeki, Nanga Eboko, Minta, Dimako, Gari Gombo, Yokadouma, Lomie, Djoum, Messondo, Ngambe/Ndom/Nyanon, Mvangan, Oveng, Akom II/Efoulan, Moloundou, Mindourou/Messamena)	Conduct the gazetting of 10% for enrichment and restoration in the two council forest of Dzeng and Yoko	88,23	Gazetting of 10% for enrichment and restoration to be conducted in 2 council forests (Dzeng, Yoko) out of 17
	Activity2: Development of forest management plans, integrating biodiversity conservation	Development of forest management plans, integrating biodiversity conservation in 9 council forests (Ndikinimeki, Nanga Eboko, Minta, Dimako, Gari Gombo, Yokadouma, Mvangan, Oveng, akom II/Efoulan) out of 17 council forests targeted by the project.	Perform the development of forest management plans, integrating biodiversity conservation in 08 council forest (Mouloundou, Dzeng, Yoko, Messamena/Mindourou, Djoum, Lomie, Messondo, Ngambe/Ndom/Nyanon)	52,94	The development of forest management plans, integrating biodiversity conservation in the remaining council forests.
	Activity3: Implementation of forest management plans, integrating biodiversity conservation	The forest management plans, integrating biodiversity conservation of 9 council forests (Ndikinimeki, Nanga Eboko, Minta, Dimako, Gari	Complete remaining forest management plans and seek for their official approval	0	The official approval of the forest management

Output	Activities	Activities achieved	Activities remaining	% Achievement	Observations
		<i>Gombo, Yokadouma, Mvangan, Oveng, akom II/Efoulan) out of 17 council forests targeted by the project finalized and approved by the Ministry of Forestry.</i>			<i>plans, integrating biodiversity conservation to be done by the ministry of forestry for their use and implementation by the councils</i>
	<i>Activity4: Monitoring of forest management plan implementation</i>	<i>The monitoring of forest management plan takes place once they start to be implemented by the councils after their approval by the ministry of forest.</i>	<i>Conduct monitoring activity once the council start with the implementation of the approved forest management plan by the interministerial commission</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>Activity out of FAO control and depending on when the council start to implement their approved forest management plan by the interministerial commission</i>
<i>Output 1.1.3 56,200ha of conservation sites formally designated</i>	<i>Activity 1: Establishment and designation of conservation sites</i>	<i>The establishment and designation of conservation sites was done in 13 council forests (Ndikinimeki, Nanga Eboko, Minta, Dimako, Gari Gombo,</i>	<i>Complete the establishment and designation of conservation sites in</i>	<i>76,47</i>	<i>Completed data processing in Yoko, Dzeng, Messamena/Mi</i>

Output	Activities	Activities achieved	Activities remaining	% Achievement	Observations
<i>and established within the council forests</i>		<i>Yokadouma, Lomie, Djoum, Messondo, Ngambe/Ndom/Nyanon, Mvangan, Oveng, akom II/Efoulan)</i>	<i>Moloundou and compete data processing in Yoko, Dzeng, Messamena/Mindourou)</i>		<i>ndourou and the establishment and designation of conservation sites in Moloundou</i>
	<i>Activity 2: Establishment of management effectiveness baseline</i>	<i>Capacity building of council forest staff, forest users and key stakeholders as well as guidelines, technical studies and practical tools of forest management, implementation and monitoring, were performed by the project to establish management effectiveness baseline</i>	0	100	<i>Activity completed</i>
	<i>Activity 3: Monitoring the management effectiveness of the conservation sites</i>	<i>Field monitoring of the effectiveness of the conservation sites was performed</i>	0	100	<i>Activity completed</i>
Component 2: Capacity Building to strengthen biodiversity conservation and SFM in Council Forests					
<i>Output 2.1.1 Technical guidance and standards for SFM and biodiversity conservation in conservation sites developed and disseminated in the council forests.</i>	<i>Activity1: Development, testing and review of draft technical guidelines</i>	<i>Technical guidelines and standards for SFM and biodiversity conservation in conservation sites including criteria and indicator for the selection of conservation sites and biodiversity monitoring, technical guidelines for monitoring and reporting on biodiversity, Training modules on inventory, monitoring and</i>	0	100	<i>Activity completed</i>

Output	Activities	Activities achieved	Activities remaining	% Achievement	Observations
		<i>conservation of biodiversity in council forests, training modules of integration of biodiversity conservation and forest sustainable management of council forests, Technical guidelines for sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation in council forest</i>			
	<i>Activity2: Dissemination of the technical guidelines</i>	<i>Technical guidelines produced by the projects were disseminated to 21 councils involved in the 17 council forests targeted by the project. In addition, the technical guidelines were disseminated to the Ministry of forest and environment and to the project key partners and stakeholders</i>	0	100	<i>Activity completed</i>
<i>Output 2.1.2</i>	<i>Activity1: Establishment and training of 45 forest protection committees (FPC) in forest management and monitoring</i>	<i>Establishment, structuring and training of 72 forest protection (comite paysan forest) 6 per council far beyond the targert of 45 planned</i>	0	160	<i>Activity completed beyond the target</i>
<i>85 local forest protection committees (FPCs) established and trained, and 170 local community leaders/change agents from the villages in/around the council forests trained in alternative livelihoods</i>	<i>Activity2: Training of 90 local stakeholders in SFM and alternatives forest income generating activities (NFTP, hunting, ecotourism)</i>	<i>110 stakeholders (10 participants per council) coming from 11 councils involved in the 17 council forests targeted by the project were trained in FAO's Market Analysis and Development (MA&D) approach and produced enterprise development plan (EDP) for alternatives forest</i>	0	122	<i>Activity completed beyond the target. In addition to the training of stakeholders , 440</i>

Output	Activities	Activities achieved	Activities remaining	% Achievement	Observations
		<i>income generating activities (NTFP, hunting, ecotourism)</i>			<i>communities members coming from 11 councils were trained on FAO's Market Analysis and Development (MA&D) approach and produced forest enterprise development plan (EDP).</i>
	<i>Activity3: Establishment and training of 40 forest protection committees (FPC) in forest management and monitoring</i>	<i>Establishment and training of 54 forest protection (comite paysan forest) 6 per council far beyond the targert of 40 planned</i>	0	135	<i>Activity completed beyond the target</i>
	<i>Activity4: Training of 80 local in SFM and alternatives forest income generating activities (NTFP, hunting, ecotourism)</i>	<i>100 stakeholders (10 participants per council) coming from 10 councils involved in the 17 council forests targeted by the project were trained in FAO's Market Analysis and Development approach and produced their enterprise development plan for alternatives forest income generating activities (NTFP, hunting, ecotourism)</i>	0	125	<i>Activity completed beyond the target</i> <i>In addition to the training of stakeholders , 400</i>

Output	Activities	Activities achieved	Activities remaining	% Achievement	Observations
					communities members coming from 10 councils were trained on FAO's Market Analysis and Development approach and produced forest enterprise development plan.
Output 2.1.3 17 functional technical units (FTU) established and 85 council staff trained in the development and implementation of forest management plans.	Activity1: Establishment of 17 FTUs in the council forests	Field studies were conducted in the 17 council forests to assess the existence and status of council forest technical unit (FTUs). Based on the studies new FTUs were established in the councils where they were absent and others structured and strengthened	0	100	Activity completed
	Activity2: Training of 45 council staff in the development and implementation of forest management plans	88 council forest staff from 11 councils (8 per council including members of comité paysan forêt were trained in the development and the development and implementation of forest management plans	0	195,5	Activity completed beyond the target
	Activity3: Training of 40 council staff in the development and	80 council forest staff (instead of 40) from 10 councils (8 per council including members of comite paysan	0	200	Activity completed

Output	Activities	Activities achieved	Activities remaining	% Achievement	Observations
	<i>implementation of forest management plans</i>	<i>foret were trained in the development and the development and implementation of forest management plans</i>			<i>beyond the target</i>
Component 3: Capacity building for the management of forest carbon					
<i>Output 3.1.1 Existing accounting and carbon monitoring systems adapted to council forests and tested.</i>	<i>Activity1: Assessment of existing accounting and carbon monitoring systems</i>	<i>Technical publication on the assessment of existing accounting and carbon monitoring systems produced</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>Activity completed</i>
	<i>Activity2: Adapting carbon accounting and monitoring system for the council forests</i>				
	<i>Activity3: Testing the adapted carbon accounting and monitoring system</i>	<i>Technical publication on the testing of adapted carbon accounting and monitoring system produced</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>Activity completed</i>
	<i>Activity4: Applying the carbon accounting and monitoring system in the council forests</i>				
	<i>Activity5: Measure and monitor carbon in the council forests</i>	<i>Technical guidelines and protocol for measuring, monitoring and sustainable management of carbon stock in council forest produced</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>Activity completed</i>
<i>Output 3.1.2</i>	<i>Activity1: Training of 17 FTU staff in methods for carbon accounting and monitoring,</i>	<i>20 council forest technical coming from 10 councils were trained on methods for carbon accounting and</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>117,6</i>	<i>Activity completed</i>

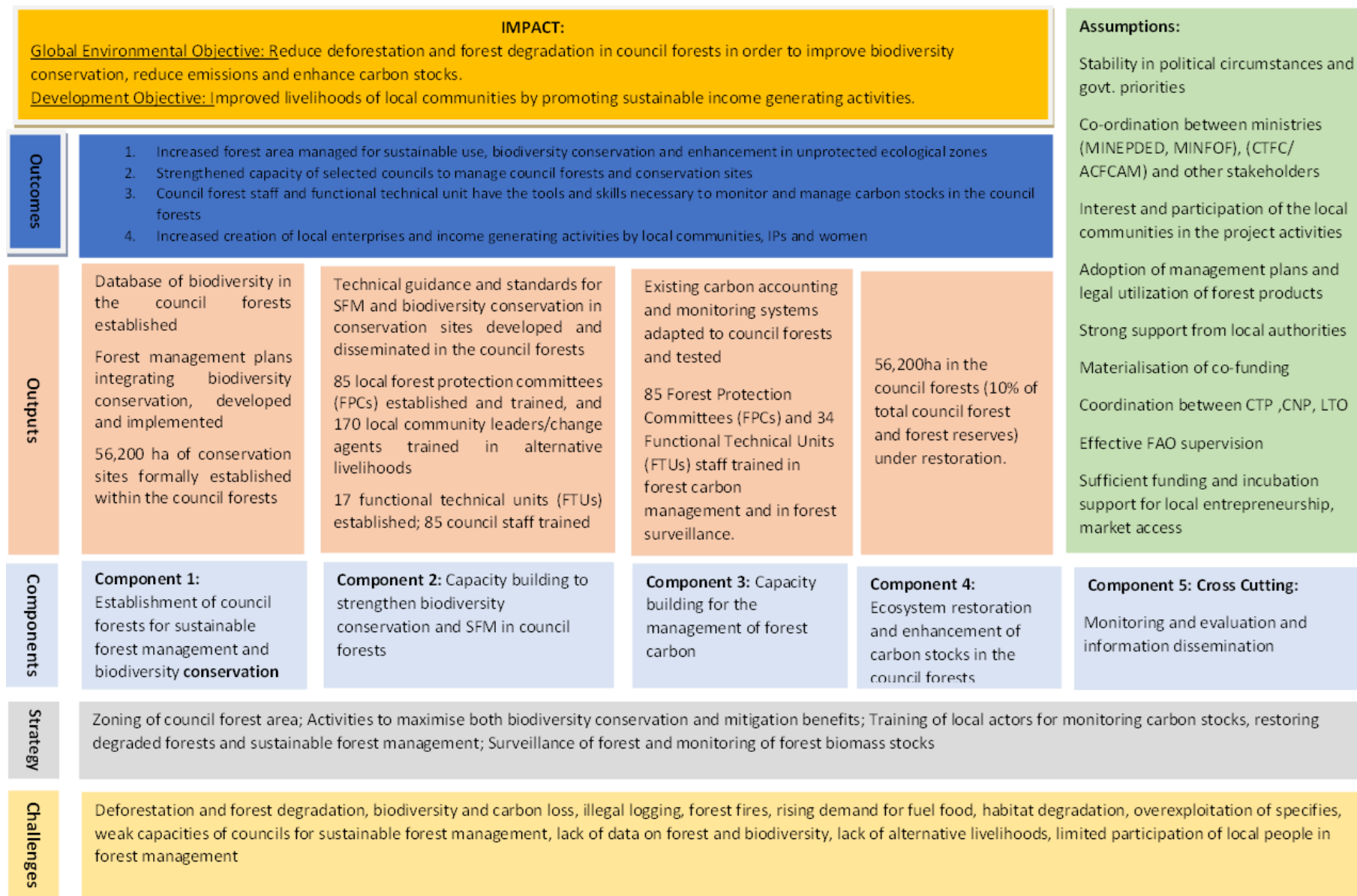
Output	Activities	Activities achieved	Activities remaining	% Achievement	Observations
85 forest protection committees (FPC) and 34 Functional technical units (FTU) staff trained in forest carbon management	<i>approaches to conserve and enhance forest carbon in the council forest and in forest surveillance and protection (combatting illegal logging, illegal grazing and forest)</i>	<i>monitoring, approaches to conserve and enhance forest carbon in the council forest and in forest surveillance and protection (combatting illegal logging, illegal grazing and forest)</i>			<i>beyond the target</i>
	<i>Activity2: Training of 45 forest protection committees (FPC) in forest surveillance and protection (combatting illegal logging, illegal grazing and forest fires)</i>	<i>40 member of comite paysan forets from 10 councils were trained on methods for carbon accounting and monitoring, approaches to conserve and enhance forest carbon in the council forest and in forest surveillance and protection (combatting illegal logging, illegal grazing and forest)</i>	0	88,9	<i>Activity completed</i>
	<i>Activity3: Training of 17 FTU staff in methods for carbon accounting and monitoring, approaches to conserve and enhance forest carbon in the council forest and in forest surveillance and protection (combatting illegal logging, illegal grazing and forest)</i>	<i>18 council forest technical coming from 9 councils were trained on methods for carbon accounting and monitoring, approaches to conserve and enhance forest carbon in the council forest and in forest surveillance and protection (combatting illegal logging, illegal grazing and forest)</i>	0	105,9	<i>Activity completed beyond the target</i>
	<i>Activity4: Training of 40 forest protection committees (FPC) in forest surveillance and protection (combatting illegal logging, illegal grazing and forest)</i>	<i>25 member of comité paysan forêts from 8 councils were trained on methods for carbon accounting and monitoring, approaches to conserve and enhance forest carbon in the</i>	0	62,5	<i>Activity completed</i>

Output	Activities	Activities achieved	Activities remaining	% Achievement	Observations
	<i>logging, illegal grazing and forest fires)</i>	<i>council forest and in forest surveillance and protection (combatting illegal logging, illegal grazing and forest)</i>			
Component 4: Ecosystem restoration and enhancement of carbon stocks in the council forests					
<i>Output 4.1.1 Reforestation and restoration of 56,200 ha in the council forests (10% of total council forest and forest reserves targeted by the project)</i>	<i>Activity1: Enrichment /rehabilitation of degraded fallow/arid lands and savannah land in the council forests (11,240 ha).</i>	<i>3 821,7 ha have been reforested/ rehabilitated by MINFOF and MINEPDED</i>	<i>Co-financing activity not supported by GEF budget</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
	<i>Activity 2: Reforestation (33,720 ha)</i>				
	<i>Activity 3: Restoration of degraded forest areas (11,240 ha)</i>		<i>Co-financing activity not supported by GEF budget</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
Component 5: [Monitoring and evaluation and information dissemination]					
<i>Output 5.1.1 M&E plan implemented and mid-term and final evaluations completed</i>	<i>Activity1: M&E plan implementation from year 1 to year 4 and preparation of all reports</i>	<i>Project M&E plan implementation produced</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>Activity completed</i>
	<i>Activity2: Midterm evaluation</i>	<i>Project Midterm evaluation performed and report available</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>Activity completed</i>
	<i>Activity3: Communication and awareness raising on project activities</i>	<i>Project communication and awareness raising on project activities performed</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>Activity completed</i>

Output	Activities	Activities achieved	Activities remaining	% Achievement	Observations
	<i>Activity4: Final evaluation</i>	<i>Project Final evaluation performed</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>Activity completed</i>
	<i>Activity5: Project best practices and lessons learned, captured, published and disseminated</i>	<i>In progress</i>			

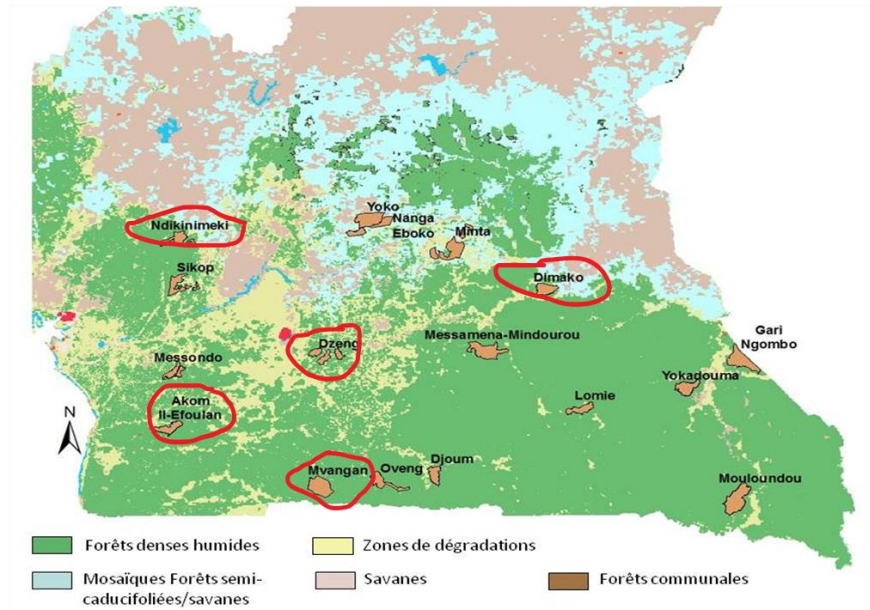
Annex 1: ToRs of the Evaluation (as separate attachment)

Annex 2: Revised Theory of Change Visual.



Annex 3: Summary of field visit sites and key criteria for selection

Activity	Akom II/Efoulan	Dimako	Dzeng	Mvangan	Ndikinimeki
A.1.1.1.1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.1.1.1.2	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.1.1.1.3	N	N	N	N	N
A.1.1.2.1	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.1.1.2.2	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.1.1.2.3	N	N	N	N	N
A.1.1.2.4	N	N	N	N	N
A.1.1.3.1	N	N	N	N	N
A.2.1.1.1	N	N	N	N	N
A.2.1.1.2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.2.1.2.1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.2.1.2.2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.2.1.3.1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.2.1.3.2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.2.1.3.3	N	N	N	N	N
A.3.1.1.1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.3.1.1.2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.3.1.1.3	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.3.1.1.4	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.3.1.1.5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.3.1.1.6	N	Y	N	Y	Y
A.3.1.2.1	N	Y	N	Y	Y
A.3.1.2.2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.3.1.2.3	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A.3.1.2.4	N	N	N	N	N
A.4.1.1.1	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
A.4.1.1.2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
A.4.1.1.3	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
LOA	MONITORTRUST	IUCN	GIZ/PROFE	MONITORTRUST	OCD
Part of MTE	Y	Y	N	N	N



Field data collection sites

Source: Project Team

Annex 4: State of implementation of communication activities

Articles	Status	Distribution status
Presentation leaflets	Completed	500 leaflets: Distributed at meetings, workshops organised within the framework of the project and also at the level of the different communes where the project is implemented.
Roll up	Completed	2 products: Used in meetings and workshops organised as part of the project.
A0 poster	Completed	21 A0 posters: Distributed to the 21 communes where the project is implemented.
Articles	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO Cameroon website Market Analysis and Development (MAD): members of the forestry-peasant committees trained in enterprise creation http://www.fao.org/cameroun/actualites/detail-events/fr/c/1273777/ A new annual work plan for the Community Forest Project https://www.fao.org/cameroun/actualites/detail-events/fr/c/1315308/
Tweets	In progress	https://twitter.com/FAOCameroun/status/1257943205091381248 https://twitter.com/FAOCameroun/status/1219260648229679104 https://twitter.com/FAOCameroun/status/1244678482212409345 https://twitter.com/FAOCameroun/status/1219259444363776000?t=f_uxjAGzNaEVKqdeTYJ8-A&s=19 https://twitter.com/FAOCameroun/status/1505908399531249669?t=zj_nq9iMJ-CsAwDmLGhVng&s=08 https://twitter.com/FAOCameroun/status/1531566316334850051?t=QucgmRttzaDoq0Xv1luTKw&s=08 https://twitter.com/FAOCameroun/status/1309172068026650627?s=08 https://twitter.com/FAOAfriqueCent/status/1527643214429278208 https://twitter.com/FAOAfriqueCent/status/1531577614036500480 https://twitter.com/FAOAfriqueCent/status/1527640753282883584 https://twitter.com/FAOAfriqueCent/status/1527636522828189696 https://twitter.com/FAOCameroun/status/1308371572865085441?s=08
Highlights / Factsheets	In progress	To be done towards the end of the project (Before December 2022)
Reprography and printing of documents	In progress	The editing work has been done; the documents are to be submitted to the PWS system; The order form for the prints is being validated

Annex 5 : Evaluability Framework

Terminal Evaluation of the project "Sustainable Forest management under the authority of Cameroonian councils"

Description	Description of Indicator	Target Level at end of the project	Specific	Measurabl	Achievable	Relevant	Time-
Global Environmental Objective To reduce deforestation and forest degradation in council forests in order to improve biodiversity conservation, reduce emissions and enhance carbon stocks.	Area of council forests covered by forest management plans that integrate biodiversity conservation and SFM practices	At least 449,425 ha of council forests (80% of total area targeted) implementing forest management plans. Conservation sites covering a total of 56,200 ha established	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Degraded forest area under restoration.	56,200 ha of degraded council forest under restored/enriched (10% of total targeted area).	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Total amount of carbon sequestered and emissions avoided	The total carbon benefit of the project for the four years is 23,349,330 tonnes CO2. The per hectare, Mitigation potential during project cycle is 10.4 tCO2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Development objective To improve the livelihoods of local communities by promoting sustainable forest-based income generating activities	Number of people (M/F) participating in sustainable income generating activities implemented (% increase in income against baseline).	1050 Trained on sustainable income generating activities by 2019 ⁷⁷	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Component 1: Establishment of Council forests for sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation							
Outcome 1.1 Increased forest area managed for sustainable use, biodiversity conservation and enhancement in unprotected ecological zones	561,825 ha of council forests gazetted for conservation, restoration and SFM, with forest management plans approved by MINFOF.	Biodiversity loss reduced in the council forests (species specific indicators to be provided after the mapping and identification of the threatened species and their number in the first year of the project)	N	Y	Y	N	Y
Output 1.1.1 Database of biodiversity in the council forests established	Existence of information on biodiversity in the council forests targeted by the project.	Database on biodiversity updated	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
1.1.2. Forest management plans, integrating biodiversity conservation, developed and implemented	Forest management plans for council forests integrating biodiversity conservation developed	Forest management plans implemented and monitored	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Output 1.1.3. 56,200 ha of conservation sites formally designated within the council forests	Area officially designated as biodiversity sites in council forests by forestry administration – MINFOF	56,200 ha	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Component 2: Capacity Building to strengthen biodiversity conservation and SFM in Council Forests							
	% increase in score of capacity of trainees compared to	% increase in score of capacity of trainees ⁷⁸	Y	N	Y	N	Y

⁷⁷ M&E plan October 2018 and project document results framework

⁷⁸ PIR 2020 also identifies these indicators

Terminal Evaluation of the project "Sustainable Forest management under the authority of Cameroonian councils"

Strengthened capacity of selected councils to manage council forests and conservation sites	Local actors (PFCs, CFC, and local leaders) trained on SFM, conservation and income generating activities	170 local actors trained on SFM, conservation activities	>	>	>	≥	>
Output 2.1.1 Technical guidance and standards for SFM and biodiversity conservation in conservation sites developed and disseminated in the council forests.	Technical guidance and standards for SFM and biodiversity conservation in conservation sites disseminated and applied in the council forests.	Technical guidance and standards for SFM and biodiversity conservation in conservation sites and disseminated and applied in the council forests.	≥	≥	>	>	>
2.1.2 85 local forest protection committees (FPCs) established and trained, and 170 ⁷⁹ local community leaders/change agents from the villages in/around the council forests trained in alternative livelihoods	Local actors (PFCs, CFC, and local leaders) trained on SFM, conservation and income generating activities	85 local forest protection committees (FPCs) established and trained	>	>	>	>	>
		1050 local actors trained on income generating activities ⁸⁰	>	>	>	>	>
2.1.3 17 functional technical units (FTU) established and 85 council staff trained in the development and implementation of forest management plans ⁸¹ .	Functional technical units (FTU) established	17	>	>	>	>	>
	Council staff trained in the development and implementation of forest management plans.	85	>	>	>	>	>
Component 3: Capacity building for the management of forest carbon							
Outcome 3.1	% improvement in the capacity score as a result of training of FTUs and FPCs in forest carbon management	% improvement in the capacity score as a result of training of FTUs and FPCs in forest carbon management	>	≥	>	≥	>

⁷⁹ Prodoc mentions 170, M&E manual states 1050 – why the increase of 7x people not disaggregated by gender

⁸⁰ No disaggregation by gender

⁸¹ Should have been reviewed to align with forestry legislation – Council Forest Cells – Cellules des forets communales

Terminal Evaluation of the project "Sustainable Forest management under the authority of Cameroonian councils"

Council forest staff and functional technical unit have the tools and skills necessary to monitor and manage carbon stocks in the council forests	Carbon accounting and monitoring system fully operational.	Carbon accounting and monitoring system fully operational.	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
3.1.1 Existing accounting and carbon monitoring systems adapted to council forests and tested	Existing accounting and carbon monitoring systems adapted to council forests and tested	Adapted system for carbon accounting and monitoring applied in the council forests	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.1.2 85 forest protection committees (FPC) and 34 Functional technical unit (FTU) staff trained in forest carbon management	Members of PFCs trained on forest carbon management	85	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Members of CFCs trained on forest carbon management	34	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Component 4: Ecosystem restoration and enhancement of carbon stocks							
Outcome 4.1 Forest degradation reduced through restoration and reforestation of 56,200 ha of degraded forests	56,200 ha of council forests under restoration and reforestation.	56,200 ha of council forests restored and reforested ⁸² .	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Component 5: Monitoring and evaluation and information dissemination							
Outcome 5.1. Project managed and monitored effectively and efficiently and best practices and lessons learned disseminated	M&E activities implemented according to the M&E plan (throughout project implementation), and mid-term evaluation findings used to refine/improve project design.	M&E activities implemented according to the M&E plan (throughout project implementation), and mid-term evaluation findings used to refine/improve project design.	N	Y	Y	N	Y
5.1.1: M&E plan implemented and mid-term and final evaluations completed	Midterm and end of project evaluations implemented	Midterm and end of project evaluations implemented	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Project best practices and lessons learned captured, published and disseminated.	Project best practices and lessons learned captured, published and disseminated.	N	N	Y	N	Y
			83%	83%	100%	67%	100%

⁸² Prodoc results framework states 14,050 ha of council forests under restoration with 1.2810 ha of degraded fallow/arid and savannah land in the council forests rehabilitated 2. 8430 ha reforested and 3.2810 ha of degraded forest areas restored.

Annex 6 : ToRs of Project Technical Coordinator

Technical Project Co-ordinator (TPC)

A Technical Project Co-ordinator (TPC) will be selected jointly by MINFOF, MINEPDED, ACFCAM and FAO through a transparent and open selection process.

Under the direct supervision of the FAO Representative in Cameroon/Budget Holder and MINFOF (National Project Coordinator) and the technical guidance of the FAO Lead Technical Officer, the Technical Project Coordinator will fulfil a dual role: first as Manager leading the PMU team in implementing the Project and as Secretary to the PSC (estimated at about 40% of the contract duration), and second as Project technical Specialist providing technical support to the Project (estimated at about 60% of the contract duration).

Specifically, as Project Manager, she/he will:

1. Be directly responsible for the overall functioning and performance of the PMU;
Manage and supervise the human resources allocated to the PMU;
2. Prepare and submit Annual Work Plans and Budgets;
3. Prepare draft TORs for consultancies and letters of agreement (e.g. NGOs, Universities..) and supervise their implementation
4. Ensure a systematic and regular monitoring of the Project's activities and prepare progress reports for transmission to FAO Cameroon and the Lead Technical Officer for clearance and approval, and to the PSC;
5. and coordination of activities with executing partner institutions, collaborative institutions and beneficiary stakeholders;
6. Ensure regular communication and coordination with appropriate national, local institutions, project partners and beneficiary stakeholders to ensure effective technical implementation of the project-activities;
7. Serve as FAO's point of contact (working with the National Project Coordinator) with the Project and Project partners;
8. Act as the Rapporteur for all PSC meetings and activities, including the preparation of documents and reports and the timely organization of PSC sessions;

As Project technical Specialist, she/he will:

9. Be responsible for organizing and providing technical support to workshops or meetings and training activities;
10. Provide technical inputs on methodologies/approaches and implementation of all project activities under the four technical components;
11. Review and give inputs in the preparation and finalization of technical reports before submission to FAO;
12. Be responsible for monitoring of project partners' technical performance in the implementation of co-financing project activities ;

13. Represent the project in relevant technical meetings, seeking to facilitate coordination and integration beneficial to the achievement of the project's objectives;
14. Ensure that the GEF Biodiversity, Climate Change and Sustainable Forest Management tracking tools are filled out in correct and timely manner;
15. Supervise the preparation of and edit technical reports and publications on project topics and contribute to guidelines and other publications associated with the project; results;
16. Perform other related duties as required.

Minimum requirements

Candidates should meet the following criteria:

- o University graduate degree in forestry, biology, geography or other relevant specialization.
- o A minimum of 7 years of relevant professional experience, including practical experience in biodiversity conservation, carbon management, forest management project implementation, institutional networking and decision-making advice.

Selection criteria

Candidates will be assessed against the following criteria:

- o Extent and relevance of experience and skills in project management and project and programme implementation in Cameroon or Central Africa, including supervision of contracts and institutional agreements, reporting and evaluation.
- o Extent and relevance of experience in and related to biodiversity conservation, carbon management and forest management in Cameroon or Central Africa.
- o Relevance of academic training and field experience in the areas of expertise as well as expertise in participatory approaches and dialogue building in multi-sectorial institutional frameworks.
- o Experience related to this GEF-funded Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Project would be an advantage.
- o Relevant expertise in research and development projects as well as international networking in forest management, biodiversity conservation, carbon management are an advantage.
- o Ability to write clear and concise analytical reports for project management, strategic decision making and technical advice on best practices.
- o Quality of communication and interpersonal skills.
- o Extent of language skills, including in writing.
- o Bilingual (French, English)

Additional information

Duty Station: Yaounde

Duration: Full-time (48 months)

Funding: GEF Funds.

Annex 6: Field mission report led by LTO from 16 – 20 May

Rapporteurs	:	Armand ASSENG ZE, Elvis NSOH NDAM, Olive ESSOMBA, Jerry KENGNE et Linus MBIFOR NFOR	
Titre de la fonction :	:	Chargé d'appui au secteur Forêt et Environnement ; Expert en aménagement forestier, projet forêts communales ; Assistante administrative du projet forêts communales et à l'Administration à la FAO Cameroun ; membre de la cellule de Communication ; Chauffeur FAO Cameroun.	
Division/Département	:	FRCMR	
Code Budget	:		
Pays visité	:	Cameroun	Ville : Djoum, Oveng, Mvangan, Akom2 et Efulan
Date de la Mission	:	Du 16 au 20 Mai 2022	Date du rapport : 29/05/2022
Objets de la mission	:	L'objectif principal de la mission était d'évaluer l'effectivité et la qualité technique des activités mises en œuvre dans les forêts communales visées par le projet GEF d'une part, et d'autre part attester la conformité des activités réalisées avec les attentes techniques des protocoles d'accord signés par les partenaires ainsi que préparer les communes à assumer la gestion des acquis du projet après sa clôture en juin 2022	
Approuvée par		Athman Mravili	Titre : Représentant de la FAO au Cameroun
Contexte et objectifs			
Contexte			
<p>Le projet sur la gestion durable des forêts communales a pour objectif de réduire la déforestation et la dégradation dans les forêts communales afin d'améliorer la conservation de la biodiversité, réduire les émissions et augmenter les stocks de carbone d'une part, et d'améliorer les conditions de subsistance des communautés locales en encourageant les activités génératrices de revenus durables d'autre part. Ce projet d'une durée de quatre ans qui a eu quelques extensions est financé principalement par le Fonds Mondial pour l'Environnement (FEM) et mis en œuvre sous la supervision technique de la FAO. Au cours de sa mise en œuvre, le projet a produit des guides et documentations techniques et opérationnelles sur la comptabilisation, la gestion et le suivi du carbone, la conservation de la biodiversité et les pratiques et techniques de gestion durable des forêts et conduit des activités d'inventaire du carbone et de la biodiversité.</p> <p>Afin de vérifier sur site l'effectivité des travaux réalisés dans les forêts communales visées par ce projet et d'attester de la qualité technique de ces travaux pour la consolidation des acquis du projet d'une part et de préparer les communes à prendre la relève du suivi de la gestion des acquis du projet qui prend fin en juin 2022, une mission de vérification et d'évaluation sur sites a été conduite sous la supervision technique du LTO du projet dans les forêts communales appuyées par le projet, à l'instar de Djoum, Oveng, Mvangan et Akom II-Efulan.</p>			
Objectifs			
<p>L'objectif principal de cette mission technique a consisté à évaluer l'effectivité et la qualité technique des activités mises en œuvre dans les forêts communales visées par le projet GEF d'une part, et d'autre part attester la conformité des activités réalisées avec les attentes techniques des protocoles d'accord signés par les partenaires ainsi que préparer les communes à assumer la gestion des acquis du projet après sa clôture en juin 2022. Les objectifs spécifiques sont :</p> <p>Organiser des séances de travail avec les maires des communes et les cellules de foresterie communales pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que sur l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet qui clôture en juin 2022 ;</p> <p>Organiser la remise aux maires du matériel de support du projet (ordinateurs, bases des données, panneaux signalétiques ...)</p> <p>Vérifier sur site le dispositif de jalonnage, la conformité des équidistances entre layons et la conformité des opérations de comptage des arbres et gaulis.</p> <p>Vérifier sur site l'effectivité des activités d'inventaires de la biodiversité et du carbone ;</p> <p>Organiser les séances de travail avec les groupes des PFNL bénéficiaires de la formation ADM pour évaluer les acquis de la formation reçue et leur maîtrise de PDE ainsi que leur capacité à mettre en place une entreprise forestière de PFNL durable.</p>			

Déroulement et résultats de la mission
<p>Déroulement de la mission</p> <p>La mission s'est déroulée du 16 au 20 Mai 2022 selon le programme suivant :</p> <p>Lundi 16 Mai 2022: Voyage Yaoundé – Djoum</p> <p>Séance de travail avec M. le Maire de la commune de Djoum, assisté par son équipe de la cellule de foresterie communale pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que sur l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture</p> <p>Remise officielle du matériel du projet (toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique, ordinateurs, onduleur, disque dur externe de capacité 1Tera, un GPS Garmin 64, panneaux signalétiques ...) à Monsieur le Maire de la commune de Djoum ;</p> <p>Réunion participative tenue dans le village Minko'o avec Mme Nyagone dans le cadre de la rencontre avec les groupes des PFNL bénéficiaires de la formation ADM afin d'évaluer leur maîtrise de l'approche ADM et des PDEs ainsi que leur capacité à mettre en place une entreprise forestière de PFNL durable.</p> <p>Mardi 17 Mai 2022 : Voyage Djoum-Oveng</p> <p>Séance de travail avec Mme la 3e adjoint au Maire de la commune de Oveng, assistée par son équipe de la cellule de foresterie communale et en présence des CPF pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que sur l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture ;</p> <p>Remise officielle du matériel du projet (toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique, ordinateurs, onduleur, disque dur externe de capacité 1Tera, un GPS Garmin 64, panneaux signalétiques ...) à Mme la 3e adjoint au Maire de la commune de Oveng;</p> <p>Voyage Oveng-Mvangan</p> <p>Mercredi 18 Mai 2022</p> <p>Descente sur le terrain dans la FC de Mvangan pour vérifier l'effectivité des travaux d'inventaire forestiers d'aménagement et de biodiversité réalisés par MonitorTrust ;</p> <p>Séance de travail avec M. le Maire de la commune de Mvangan, assisté de son 1er adjoint et du point focal de la cellule de foresterie communale pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que sur l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture ;</p> <p>Remise officielle du matériel du projet (toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique, ordinateurs, onduleur, disque dur externe de capacité 1Tera, un GPS Garmin 64, panneaux signalétiques ...) à Monsieur le Maire de la commune de Mvangan ;</p> <p>Voyage Mvangan-Sangmelima</p> <p>Jeudi 19 Mai 2022: voyager Sangmelima-Akom2</p> <p>Séance de travail avec le 2e adjoint au maire de la commune d'Akom II, M. Amvene assisté du 2e adjoint au maire et le responsable des opérations forestière de la CFC pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que sur l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture ;</p> <p>Remise officielle du matériel du projet (toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique, ordinateurs, onduleur, disque dur externe de capacité 1Tera, un GPS Garmin 64, panneaux signalétiques ...) au 2e adjoint au maire de la commune d'Akom II ;</p> <p>Réunion participative tenue dans le village Mvie pour la rencontre Madame Mengue Awouma Désirée dans le cadre de l'évaluation sur la maîtrise de l'approche ADM et des PDEs ainsi que la capacité à mettre en place une entreprise forestière de PFNL durable.</p> <p>Voyage Akom2-Ebolowa</p> <p>Vendredi 20 Mai 2022 : Voyage Ebolowa-Efoulan</p> <p>Séance de travail avec M. EBALE ADJOMO Richard, Maire de la commune d'Efoulan, assisté du chef de la CFC pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que sur l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture ;</p>

Remise officielle du matériel du projet (toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique, ordinateurs, onduleur, disque dur externe de capacité 1Tera, un GPS Garmin 64, panneaux signalétiques ...) au 2e adjoint au maire de la commune d'Efoulan.

Résultats de la mission

Les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que sur l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture ont été présentées aux Maires et leurs propositions ont été notées ;

Les kits de matériel du projet (toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique, ordinateurs, onduleur, disque dur externe de capacité 1Tera, un GPS Garmin 64, panneaux signalétiques ...) ont été remis aux Maires;

Les points d'amélioration des fonctionnement des groupes de PFNL ont été notés.

Conclusion et Recommandations

A l'issue de cette mission, quelques recommandations ont été formulées aux rangs desquelles :

L'ouverture, la délimitation et la matérialisation effective des limites externes des FC ciblées par le projet,

La mise en place d'un kit internet pour alimenter en connexion réseau, les bases de données qui seront enrichies au niveau de chaque commune ;

Mener les études pour identifier les sites potentiels de présence des PFNL dans les FC afin de déterminer le temps et l'effort de collecte ;

Proposer des notes d'idées de projet en prenant en compte prioritairement les activités non encore engagées ou non finalisées dans le cadre du projet GEF-FAO.

Annex 7: Field mission report led by LTO from 25 May – 04 June

Rapporteurs	:	Armand ASSENG ZE, Elvis NSOH NDAM, Olive ESSOMBA, Jerry KENGNE et Linus MBIFOR NFOR	
Titre de la fonction :	:	Chargé d'appui au secteur Forêt et Environnement ; Expert en aménagement forestier et GDF du projet forêts communales ; Assistante administrative du projet forêts communales et à l'Administration de la FAO Cameroun ; membre de la cellule de Communication ; Chauffeur FAO Cameroun.	
Division/Département	:	FRCMR	
Code Budget	:		
Pays visité	:	Cameroun	Ville : Messondo, Ngambe, Ndom, Nyanon, Ndikinimeki, Nanga-Eboko, Minta, Dimako, Gari-Gombo, Yokadouma, Lomié, Mindourou et Messamena
Date de la Mission	:	Du 25 mai au 04 juin 2022	Date du rapport : 05/06/2022
Objets de la mission	:	L'objectif principal de la mission était d'évaluer l'effectivité et la qualité technique des activités mises en œuvre dans les forêts communales visées par le projet GEF d'une part, et d'autre part attester la conformité des activités réalisées avec les attentes techniques des protocoles d'accord signés par les partenaires ainsi que préparer les communes à assumer la gestion des acquis du projet après sa clôture en juin 2022	
Approuvée par		Athman Mravili	Titre : Représentant de la FAO au Cameroun
Contexte et objectifs			
Contexte			
<p>Le projet sur la gestion durable des forêts communales a pour objectif de réduire la déforestation et la dégradation dans les forêts communales afin d'améliorer la conservation de la biodiversité, réduire les émissions et augmenter les stocks de carbone d'une part, et d'améliorer les conditions de subsistance des communautés locales en encourageant les activités génératrices de revenus durables d'autre part. Ce projet d'une durée de quatre ans qui a eu quelques extensions est financé principalement par le Fonds Mondial pour l'Environnement (FEM) et mis en œuvre sous la supervision technique de la FAO. Au cours de sa mise en œuvre, le projet a produit des guides et documentations techniques et opérationnelles sur la comptabilisation, la gestion et le suivi du carbone, la conservation de la biodiversité et les pratiques et techniques de gestion durable des forêts et conduit des activités d'inventaire du carbone et de la biodiversité.</p> <p>Afin de vérifier sur site l'effectivité des travaux réalisés dans les forêts communales visées par ce projet et d'attester de la qualité technique de ces travaux pour la consolidation des acquis du projet d'une part et de préparer les communes à prendre la relève du suivi de la gestion des acquis du projet qui prend fin en juin 2022, une mission de vérification et d'évaluation sur sites a été conduite sous la supervision technique du LTO du projet dans les forêts communales appuyées par le projet, à l'instar de Messondo, Ngambe/Ndom/Nyanon, Ndikinimeki, Nanga-Eboko, Minta, Dimako, Gari-Gombo, Yokadouma, Messamena/Mindourou et Lomié.</p>			
Objectifs			
<p>L'objectif principal de cette mission technique a consisté à évaluer l'effectivité et la qualité technique des activités mises en œuvre dans les forêts communales visées par le projet GEF d'une part, et d'autre part attester la conformité des activités réalisées avec les attentes techniques des protocoles d'accord signés par les partenaires ainsi que préparer les communes à assumer la gestion des acquis du projet après sa clôture en juin 2022. Les objectifs spécifiques sont :</p> <p>Organiser des séances de travail avec les maires des communes et les cellules de foresterie communales pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet qui clôture en juin 2022 ;</p> <p>Organiser la remise aux maires du matériel de support du projet (ordinateurs, bases des données, panneaux signalétiques ...)</p> <p>Vérifier sur site le dispositif de jalonnage, la conformité des équidistances entre layons et la conformité des opérations de comptage des arbres et gaulis.</p> <p>Vérifier sur site l'effectivité des activités d'inventaires de la biodiversité et du carbone ;</p>			

Organiser les séances de travail avec les groupes des PFNL bénéficiaires de la formation ADM pour évaluer les acquis de la formation reçue et leur maîtrise de PDE ainsi que leur capacité à mettre en place une entreprise forestière de PFNL durable.

Déroulement et résultats de la mission

Déroulement de la mission

La mission s'est déroulée du 25 Mai au 04 juin 2022 selon le programme suivant :

Mercredi 25 Mai 2022: Voyage Yaoundé – Messondo

Observation des activités de renforcement des capacités en gestion et suivi du carbone forestier tenue par le consultant carbone, Dr Libalah Moses.

Séance de travail avec M. le Maire de la commune de Messondo, assisté par le point focal de la cellule de foresterie communale pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture ;

Remise officielle de toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique et du panneau signalétiques pour la publicité du projet. Le LTO du projet a tenu aussi à informer M. le maire que le responsable IT de la FAO et le consultant mandaté pour la conception des bases de données biodiversité et carbone viendra avec le pack informatique constitué de l'ordinateur, onduleur, disque dur externe de capacité 1Tera et un GPS Garmin 64. Il a été constaté que le réseau téléphonique y est mais la commune n'est pas connectée à internet et l'immeuble de la commune n'est pas alimenté par un système électrique. Après remerciement et appréciation des efforts de la FAO, M. le maire a sollicité un autre appui pour finalisation des travaux d'aménagement, la dotation d'une plaque solaire pour l'électricité et la nécessité d'un dispositif d'internet pour le fonctionnement du dispositif de gestion des bases de données carbone et biodiversité.

Judi 26 Mai 2022 : Voyage Messondo-Ngambe

Rencontre du commandant de brigade de Ngambe, en l'absence du Sous-préfet empêché, pour présenter le but et le chronogramme de la mission.

Séance de travail avec le point focal de la cellule de foresterie communale, représentant de Monsieur le Maire de la commune de Ngambe pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture ;

Remise officielle de toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique et du panneau signalétiques pour la publicité du projet. Le pack informatique constitué de l'ordinateur, onduleur, disque dur externe de capacité 1Tera et un GPS Garmin 64 sera mis à disposition ultérieurement. La commune est alimentée par une plaque solaire, le réseau téléphonique y est mais elle n'est pas connectée à internet.

Visite des sites de travaux (parcelles d'échantillonnage) d'inventaire de biodiversité encours de réalisation par l'équipe du consultant Dr TABUE. Arrivée sur site, l'équipe a pu apprécier les difficultés liées au relief très accidenté et peu praticable, la multiplicité des blocs de forêts (06) dispatchés dans trois arrondissements/Communes et les distances entre arrondissements variant de 60 et 80 km sur des routes difficilement carrossables exigeant plus de temps pour le ralliement des sites de collecte des données. Le consultant a profité pour soulever le problème des intempéries (pluies) qui ne favorisent pas l'avancée des travaux en temps réel et le découragement voire la démission du personnel local qui ne supportent pas l'intensité du travail. Celui-ci a donc sollicité une prorogation de 05 jours pour finaliser la collecte des données. Le LTO du projet a ainsi accordé ce délai supplémentaire pour pouvoir collecter les données et produire les livrables de qualité technique attendu.

Voyage Ngambe-Ndom

Séance de travail avec M. BATOUM Hervé, Maire de la commune de Ndom, pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture. Après des remerciements, le maire a sollicité la continuité des actions d'appui technique et financier pour la gestion durable et la sécurisation du massif forestier et surtout de penser à une autre phase du projet pour finaliser les activités non accomplies.

Remise officielle de toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique et du panneau signalétiques pour la publicité du projet. Il a été stipulé que le consultant mandaté pour la conception des bases de données biodiversité et carbone viendra avec la dotation du kit informatique, le disque dur externe de capacité 1Tera et un GPS Garmin 64. La commune est alimentée par le système électrique ENEO, le réseau téléphonique y est mais l'immeuble n'est pas connecté à internet.

Voyage Ndom-Nyanon

Après consultation de monsieur le maire, empêché, l'équipe de mission a tenu une séance de travail dans les locaux de la commune, avec le point focal de la CFC de la commune de Nyanon, pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et

des acquis du projet après sa clôture. La commune est alimentée par le système électrique ENEO, le réseau téléphonique couvre la localité mais l'immeuble n'est pas connecté à internet.

Remise officielle de toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique et du panneau signalétiques pour la publicité du projet sans oublier l'arrivée de l'appareillage informatique qui sera mis à disposition plu tard. Le point focal de la CFC a remercié les efforts consentis par la FAO au nom de son maire.

Voyage Nyanon-Ndikinimeki via Ndom

Vendredi 27 Mai 2022

Séance de travail avec M. Belinga Mathieu, Secrétaire Général de la commune de Ndikinimeki, assisté du personnel de la cellule de foresterie communale pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture. Le SG a recommandé à l'équipe du projet d'informer au préalable le maire par courrier physique et expliquer au préalable les contours du projet. Dans le même ordre d'idées, il a réitéré au prestataire OCD, d'impliquer davantage le personnel de la commune dans les travaux de terrain et de faire tenir les copies dures des rapports des travaux à la mairie par le biais de l'agence de voyage @strandy basée à Etoudi, avant de contacter le maire et solliciter une séance de travail.

Remise officielle du matériel du projet (toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique, ordinateurs, onduleur, disque dur externe de capacité 1Tera, un GPS Garmin 64, panneaux signalétiques ...) à Monsieur le SG de la commune de Ndikinimeki, qui a profité de cette occasion la FAO et a tendu la main pour un accompagnement éventuel dans une autre phase du projet. La commune est alimentée par le système électrique ENEO, le réseau téléphonique beigne la ville la commune reste non connecté à internet.

Echange avec 1^{er} adjoint au maire, madame ENGANEMBEN Eveline dans le cadre de l'évaluation sur la maîtrise de l'approche ADM et des PDEs ainsi que la capacité à mettre en place une entreprise forestière de PFNL durable. Très impliquée dans le volet PFNL, elle a remercié la FAO pour le renforcement des capacités de ses communautés et a déclaré que la commune a un projet de création d'une pépinière de 70ha de *Gnetum africanum* (Okok) et Djansang conformément au plan de développement communal. Le germe est déjà mis en place et la commune s'est doté de 2000 sachets pour la mise en pot des plants en pépinière. Les sauvageons de Djansang déjà disponibles et ceux de l'Okok seront prélevés dans les champs de Ndokohok. Elle a informé sur l'existence d'une coopérative PFNL de la Région du Centre regroupant les communes de Ndikinimeki, Ndom, Minta, Messondo et Dzen pour la collecte et la vente du Djansang. C'est dans ce cadre que GIZ a doté la commune d'une concasseuse de Djansang et aide aussi à la domestication de ce PFNL. Elle sollicite à la FAO de renforcer les capacités des communautés riveraines de Ndikinimeki à la transformation de l'Okok en produits dérivés non encore connus. Un échange s'est tenue avec une participante aux formations en analyse et développement des marchés (ADM) et plan de développement des entreprises (PDE) et celle-ci déclare qu'elle évolue dans la collecte et la vente d'Okok de façon individuelle et quelle est en attendre la saison de production du Mango pour implémenter les enseignements reçus et la mise en œuvre du PDE élaboré.

Descente de terrain dans la FC de Ndikinimeki pour vérifier l'effectivité des travaux d'inventaire forestiers d'aménagement et de biodiversité réalisés par l'Organisation pour la conservation et le développement (OCD). Le dispositif d'échantillonnage identifié en partie parce que le cabinet OCD ayant mandaté Buredip n'avait pas intégré dans son plan de sondage, un dispositif d'échantillonnage focalisé sur le layon de base. Aussi, les jalons de distance ne sont pas installés à des distances identiques de 50m avec les jalons des extrémités des parcelles de 250m x 20m et des sous parcelles floristiques de 20m x 5m non codifiés conformément aux dispositions des directives d'inventaire d'aménagement et de préinvestissement en vigueur. Il a été constaté plusieurs incursions au sein de la FC pour la création des champs. Ceci à cause de l'absence d'ouverture et de matérialisation des limites externes de la FC pour conscientiser ceux qui ignorent ou doutent encore de la localisation des limites réelles.

Samedi 28 Mai 2022: voyage Ndikinimeki-Nanga-Eboko

Après consultation de monsieur le maire, empêché, l'équipe de mission a tenu une séance de travail dans les locaux de la commune, avec le point focal de la CFC de la commune de Nanga-Eboko assisté d'un personnel de la mairie, pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que sur l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture. La commune est alimentée par le système électrique ENEO, le réseau téléphonique y est mais l'immeuble n'est pas connecté à internet.

Remise officielle de toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique et du panneau signalétiques pour la publicité du projet sans oublier l'arrivée de l'appareillage informatique qui sera mis à disposition plu tard. Le point focal de la CFC a remercié les efforts consentis par la FAO au nom de son maire et a sollicité la poursuite des activités d'aménagement (PGQ et inventaires d'exploitation des AAC) dans le cadre d'un nouveau projet FAO.

Voyage Nanga-Eboko pour Minta

En l'absence de Monsieur le maire de Minta, empêché, la séance de travail a eu lieu sous la présence de M. ZANGA, point focal de la cellule de foresterie communale pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture. Celui-ci a remercié la FAO et a proposé de se rendre en forêt pour la vérification des travaux d'inventaire d'aménagement et de biodiversité réalisés par OCD. Rendu sur les lieux, le dispositif d'échantillonnage a été identifié dans la FC mais avec des manquements en termes d'absence de layon de base et des jalons de distance non installés à chaque 50m le long du layon, avec les layons d'extrémités des parcelles de 250m x 20m et des sous parcelles floristiques de 20m x 5m non codifiés

conformément à la réglementation en vigueur. Aussi, le cabinet BUREDIP, mandaté pour les travaux n'a pas pris la peine de badigeonner à la peinture rouge, les arbres situés aux abords des cours d'eau qui constituent les limites naturelles de la FC. Ceci servira d'aide-mémoire pour la conscientisation des paysans qui ignorent ou doutent encore de la localisation précise des limites de cette FC.

Echange avec le groupe PDE Djansang de Mendoum, sous la houlette de la présidente Sophie et quelques membres dudit groupe. Ceux-ci n'ayant pas encore implémenté ce qui est consigné dans le PDE soumis à la FAO à cause de la difficulté de convaincre les femmes à adhérer à la vente groupée. Les membres déclarent être en attente de la maturité des fruits de Djansang bien que les alentours des tiges repérées ont été nettoyées. Le LTO du projet a éclairci sur les manquements constatés dans le PDE et a proposé la meilleure stratégie d'implémentation pour afin un gain arithmétique. Il est proposé de faire les achats de produits auprès des collecteurs des villages avoisinants et prendre en compte toutes les charges et penser à créer un compte pour la coopérative afin d'éviter d'éventuel détournement ou cambriolage.

Remise officielle de toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique et du panneau signalétiques pour la publicité du projet sans oublier l'arrivée de l'appareillage informatique qui sera mis à disposition plu tard. Le point focal de la CFC a remercié les efforts consentis par la FAO au nom de son maire et a souhaité que la FAO pense à la commune de Minta comme bénéficiaire des projets à venir. Le bureau de la CFC est détaché de l'immeuble qui abrite la commune. Ce bureau est alimenté par le système électrique ENEO, le réseau téléphonique beigne la ville par endroit et ceci impacte la connectivité en internet.

Dimanche 29 Mai 2022 : Voyage Minta-Bertoua

Lundi 30 mai 2022 : Voyage Bertoua-Dimako

Séance de travail avec M. TOKAMBOU NTEME Yves Didier, Maire de la commune de Dimako, assisté du chef de la CFC, le partenaire Expertise Forestière d'Afrique (EFA), représentant de UICN pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture. Le maire a remercié la présence de la FAO dans sa circonscription et l'appui apporté pour l'aménagement de la FC de Dimako. Il a déclaré avoir pris des engagements notamment, la restructuration de la CFC pour intégrer les professionnels en foresterie avec des responsabilités partagées, la réorganisation et le fonctionnement de la FC, la revue de la régénération du massif afin d'éviter la disparition des essences, la titularisation d'un seul partenaire pour l'achat du bois et la rupture des autres contrats formels et informels engagés par l'ancien exécutif municipal. Le maire a donné sa confirmation sur le travail exécuté sur le terrain par le prestataire UICN via l'entremise de son partenaire EFA. La commune de Dimako est interconnecté par un système intranet. Le maire a précisé que la commune est confronté au défis de financement de la décentralisation et du développement local. Pour ce faire, Il sollicite l'appui incommensurable de la FAO pour mener à bien l'aménagement de la FC.

Remise officielle du matériel du projet (toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique, ordinateurs, onduleur, disque dur externe de capacité 1Tera, un GPS Garmin 64, panneaux signalétiques ...) à Monsieur le maire de la commune de Dimako, qui a profité de cette occasion la FAO et a tendu la main pour un accompagnement continué dans une éventuelle phase du projet.

L'équipe de mission s'est constitué d'un consortium constitué du point focal de la CFC, M. WESSIKI Bertrand et le personnel de la société EFA. Les travaux ont débuté par le choix des layons à identifier sur le terrain à partir de la carte de parcellaire du plan de sondage. Arrivé sur les lieux, l'équipe a vérifié le rafraichissement et la matérialisation des limites externes de la FC puis s'est rendu au point de croisement entre le layon de base et le layon L5. En cheminant vers le sens EO, les jalons de distance ont été installés et matérialisés à chaque 50m le long du layon L5 qui convergent vers le layon de base. Les parcelles de comptage des arbres ayant plus de 20cm de diamètre et les sous parcelles pour évaluer la régénération par recensement des gaulis ont été identifiées avec leur codifications respectives et conformes aux exigences des directes d'inventaire d'aménagement et de préinvestissement. Cette FC regorge d'une série agroforestière de 824 ha où se sont déroulées les activités de recherche tels que le projet API Dimako. Dans cette partie de la FC on y retrouve des palmiers à huile et des plants de Moabi.

Accompagné par le chargé du développement local de la commune de Dimako, l'équipe de mission s'est rendu au village Mayos pour rencontrer un groupe de collecteurs et de valorisation des PFNL, composé en majorité par les Baka, sous la présidence de madame Mahondo et la traduction du français-Baka par M. MVELE. Dans ce village on retrouve deux associations aux rangs desquelles « Solidarité » et « Essayons voir ». Il a été démontré à la communauté par le LTO du projet que les ventes groupées des PFNL (Djansang, Moabi, Mango et Mbalaka) ont une influence sur le prix du produit et le transport desdits produits vers les débouchés revient à moindre coût lorsqu'on évolue en groupe. La rareté des tiges des Moabi est due à l'exploitation sélective par les exploitants forestiers. La communauté se sent délaissé par la commune de Dimako malgré les initiatives engagées dans la filière PFNL. Ceux-ci déclarent ne pas avoir mis en œuvre leur PDE à cause du manque de suivi par l'équipe de projet qui devait jouer régulièrement le rôle de rappel mémoire. La communauté a proposé que la collecte des PFNL se fasse par zone de prédilection des produits et le principe d'interchangeabilité des produits se fasse entre coopérative.

Voyage Dimako-Bertoua

Mardi 31 Mai 2022 : Voyage Bertoua-Gari-Gombo

Séance de travail avec M. METAND METAND Vincent, SG de la commune de Gari-Gombo, assisté du chef de la CFC, le prestataire UICN et son partenaire, le cabinet EFA, pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis

du projet après sa clôture. Le SG a remercié l'équipe de la FAO au nom du maire de la commune de Gari-Gombo pour les efforts consentis et a sollicité une connexion permanente en internet à mettre en place grâce à l'existence du réseau téléphonique GSM existant. Il a précisé qu'il y a un besoin pour le recrutement du personnel aguerris pour la CFC parce que l'actuel point focal de la CFC n'est pas un technicien en foresterie. Il a ainsi émis le souhait de renforcer les capacités du chef de la CFC afin de lui permettre de mener à bien ses missions régaliennes.

Remise officielle de toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique et du panneau signalétiques pour la publicité du projet sans oublier l'arrivée de l'appareillage informatique qui sera mis à disposition plu tard.

L'équipe de mission rendu dans la FC pour la vérification des travaux d'inventaire forestier d'aménagement et de biodiversité était composé du point focal de la CFC, M. SAMAGUI Achille, M. BITCHICK Augustin, représentant de UICN et le personnel de la société EFA commis pour les travaux susmentionnés. Ces travaux ont débuté par le choix des layons à identifier sur le terrain à partir de la carte de parcellaire du plan de sondage. Après plusieurs efforts et difficultés dues à l'obstruction du chemin par les chablis, l'équipe s'est rendu sur les lieux et a débuté par la vérification du rafraichissement et de la matérialisation des limites externes de la FC. Le layon de base, les layons reliant les parcelles et sous placettes ont été identifiés sur le terrain.

Voyage Gari-Gombo-Yokadouma

Réunion participative avec le groupe de coopérative de Mango et Djansang de Yokadouma, sous la houlette de Mme AMPOME Marie Claire épouse NKONDI. Il est ressorti de cette assiste que les collectrices de PFNL continuent de travailler de façon individuelle et le principe de vente groupée des produits n'a pas été appliqué à cause du faible coût d'achat et la rareté des acheteurs due à la crise du Covid-19. Celles-ci n'ont pas fait une étude de marché, d'où la difficulté de cibler des débouchés promoteurs. La transformation du Djansang se fait de façon artisanale parce que la concasseuse doter par la GIZ a broyé la production de 2021 et l'association a subi beaucoup de pertes. Elles éprouvent un besoin d'amélioration de la qualité des produits pour faire l'objet de convoitise des acheteurs. Il a été proposé à ces femmes de prendre en compte tous les coûts de production dans le PDE qui sera actualisé en fonction des réalités et cibler les marchés des grandes métropole en se focalisant sur le principe de vente groupée qui fera accroître le bénéfice à chaque vente.

Mercredi 01^{er} juin 2022

Remise officielle de toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique au 1^{er} adjoint de la commune de Yokadouma pour la publicité du projet sans oublier l'arrivée de l'appareillage informatique qui sera mis à disposition plu tard. Remerciement recueillis et besoins sollicités en termes de continuité d'appui technique à la commune de Yokadouma.

Descente dans la FC pour la vérification des travaux d'inventaire forestier d'aménagement et de biodiversité réalisés par le cabinet EFA. L'équipe est entièrement satisfaite des observations de terrain et ensemble avec les autres parties prenantes, le cabinet a présenté le site qui sera érigé pour la conservation de la biodiversité. Il a été recommandé à la commune de déterrer la plaque signalétique installé dans la FC et le placer au niveau du pont qui constitue la limite naturelle externe de ladite FC.

Voyage Yokadouma-Lomié

Jeudi 02 juin 2022

Séance de travail avec le 2^e adjoint au maire, Mme OLOA Nadège et le SG, M. MATANGUITI de la commune de Lomié pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture et s'en est suivi par la remise officielle de toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique et du panneau signalétiques pour la publicité du projet sans oublier l'arrivée de l'appareillage informatique qui sera mis à disposition plu tard. Remerciement recueillis et besoins sollicités en termes de continuité d'appui technique à la commune de Yokadouma. Il a été recommandé à la commune de s'engager fortement dans le suivi des sites carbone et biodiversité qui seront délimités et matérialiser afin de prétendre bénéficier à d'éventuels financement carbone. La commune sollicite la dotation d'un point de connexion internet pour assurer la connectivité des bases de données aux serveurs du MINFOF et MINEPDED. Il a été constaté que la couverture du réseau téléphonique y est par endroit et la commune a installé une plaque électrique pour alimenter ses bureaux.

Réunion participative avec les membres du Réseau pour le Groupement des Femmes du Dja et Mpomo (Mindourou, Lomié, Messok et Ngoyla) ou REFEDM. Ce réseau est constitué de 25 membres représentants les associations diverses avec des points focaux dans les villages pour informer sur la disponibilité des PFNL. Ce réseau souhaite avoir un ancrage sur tous les groupe de production afin de procéder à la vente groupée pour influencer le prix auprès des acheteurs. Ce réseau est fonctionnel et a bénéficié des dotations en machine (presse à huile, séchoir de fruits de Moabi et un groupe électrogène) de la part de la GIZ pour la transformation. Le besoin souhaité ici est la sécurisation du bâtiment abritant les bureaux et les machines afin d'éviter le cambriolage comme à l'accoutumé.

Descente de terrain dans la FC Lomié pour la vérification des travaux amorcés par Dr TAEDOUMG Herman relativement aux inventaire de la biodiversité. Rendu sur les lieux en compagnie du ROF de la CFC, le jalon de base qui détermine le début du transept a été identifié sans difficulté et quelques PFNL ont été identifiés. Il a été recensé la nécessité de rafraichir les limites et badigeonner à la peinture rouge, les grands arbres qui bordent le cours d'eau qui représente la limite naturelle de la FC parce que ce titre jouxte une forêt communautaire où les traces d'exploitation anarchique ou artisanale se sont faits identifiées.

Voyage Lomié-Mindourou

Vendredi 03 juin 2022 :

Séance de travail avec M. ZENGLE NTOUH Richard, maire de la commune de Mindourou et président de l'AFCAM, assisté du SG, Mme ZOKADJA Emilienne et du point focal de la CFC pour présenter les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture. Le maire a stipulé que les autres maires sont sceptiques par rapport au changement de la vocation des séries de production en site carbone et biodiversité. Il a recommandé d'inviter dorénavant les maires lorsqu'il faut promouvoir une nouvelle initiative ou idée. Il souhaite une compensation relativement aux pertes en superficies des sites de biodiversité et carbone. A l'entame, le maire a remercié les initiatives de la FAO dans sa localité et insisté sur un appui continu des organisations des femmes et la facilitation du travail par le biais de la dotation du petit matériel de transformation des PFNL. Ceci passera par une organisation paysanne en coopérative par village centrées sur l'union dirigée par le 1^{er} adjoint au maire, Mme AGOULE Marie Thérèse épouse DJOH.

Remise officielle du matériel du projet (toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique, ordinateurs, onduleur, disque dur externe de capacité 1Tera, un GPS Garmin 64, panneaux signalétiques ...) à Mme le SG de la commune de Mindourou. La couverture réseau pas très fluide dans la ville, le bâtiment abritant la commune est encours de connexion à la couverture internet.

Des causeries avec les femmes collectrices et vendeuses de PFNL de Mindourou, il ressort que celles-ci ont relâché l'activité à cause du manque de suivi régulier, de motivation et de galvanisation de la part de la FAO. Les spécimens de PDE transmis au consultant n'ont pas été retournés pour suivre le processus de bout en bout tels que décrit dans le document. Il a été expliqué que le PDE est basé sur l'esprit d'entreprise avec des marges bénéficiaires différent de la coopérative n'a pas le même fondement. Elles ont été appelé à travailler sans relâche et si possible intégrer les produits agricoles dans le cycle de marketing du PDE afin d'occuper les période creuses.

Echange avec le CFC de la commune de Mindourou qui sollicite un moyen de locomotion, l'élaboration du plan de gestion quinquennal après l'approbation du plan d'aménagement et les inventaires d'exploitation de 02 ou 03 AAC de leur FC. Ceci étant faisable, mais la commune doit disposer des moyens pour rafraîchir à nouveau les limites des AAC qui seront mises en exploitation deux ou trois années plus tard.

Voyage Voyage Mindourou-Messamena

Séance de travail avec le 2^e adjoint au maire, M. NDIND NKOUM David, le SG, M. LIBAM LINDIP Cédric et le personnel de la CFC de la commune de Messamena. Le maire a insisté sur la gouvernance forestière pour l'harmonisation des points de vue des parties prenantes, l'assurance de l'opérationnalité du suivi des sites carbone et biodiversité, l'accès à internet pour alimenter les bases de données, la limitation des incursions dans la FC pour la pratique de l'agriculture à cause de l'ignorance des limites par les communautés. Le maire a précisé que la FC est entourée de 86 villages, d'où le besoin de moyen de locomotion pour surveiller en permanence et traquer tous ceux qui rament à contre vent. Il souhaite que la seconde phase du projet prenne corps et il a émis le vœux d'être informer sur les résolutions de l'assise FAO-GIZ pour la suite des travaux d'aménagement dans le massif intercommunal Mindourou-Messamena via la boîte mail commune_messamena21@yahoo.com. La réunion s'est achevée par la remise officielle de toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique et du panneau signalétiques pour la publicité du projet sans oublier l'arrivée de l'appareillage informatique qui sera mis à disposition plu tard.

Réunion participative à Obemetum pour l'évaluation du niveau de mise en œuvre des activités relatives à l'approches ADM et PDE. Au terme de cette assise, il a été identifiés les problèmes liés au non décollage de la coopérative dû à la difficulté de légalisation par les autorités, l'abandon des groupes à eux-mêmes, le manque de moyens pour collecter davantage les PFNL, le manque d'acheteurs, l'accès aux marchés avec la dynamique des prix, l'entente pour harmoniser la production et fixer un prix commun entraînant ainsi la vente individuelle des produits. Il a été précisé que l'approche PDE est basé sur la volonté, le gout du risque, la patience et la mise à disposition d'un capital. Ce qui fait sa différence avec l'approche classique qui est la transposition d'un projet à succès, calqué ailleurs et forcé aux communautés.

Samedi 04 juin 2022 : Voyage retour Messamena-Yaoundé

Résultats de la mission

Les réalisations du projet et la stratégie de sortie du projet ainsi que sur l'importance d'une implication plus accrue des communes dans le suivi de la gestion de la base des données et des acquis du projet après sa clôture ont été présentées aux Maires et leurs propositions ont été notées ;

Les kits de matériel du projet (toute les études et publications du projet en version physique et électronique, ordinateurs, onduleur, disque dur externe de capacité 1Tera, un GPS Garmin 64, panneaux signalétiques ...) ont été remis aux Maires;

Les points d'amélioration de fonctionnement des groupes de PFNL ont été notés.

Les éléments de bases et actions justificatives pour un nouveau projet ont été recensées ;

Conclusion et Recommandations

A l'issue de cette mission, quelques recommandations ont été formulées aux rangs desquelles :

L'ouverture, la délimitation et la matérialisation effective des limites externes des FC ciblées par le projet,

La mise en place d'un kit internet pour alimenter en connexion réseau, les bases de données qui seront enrichies au niveau de chaque commune ;

Renforcer les capacités des maires et leurs SG en gouvernance forestière ;

Assurer la surveillance forestière des massifs forestiers par la dotation des moyens de locomotion aux CFC ;

Intégrer les comités riverains aux renforcements des capacités en gestion durable et surveillance des forêts

Opérationnaliser le plan d'aménagement de la FC de Dimako en élaborant le plan de gestion quinquennal et l'inventaire dans les deux premières AAC conformément à la réglementation en vigueur.

Continuité de formation des communautés de Mayos (Baka) pour la création de 03 coopératives distinctes (Mango, Huile de Moabi et Djansang) dans l'arrondissement de Dimako ;

Elaborer un projet qui prend en compte la sécurisation des PFNL dans les forêts communautaires ;

Finaliser les travaux d'inventaire forestier d'aménagement et élaborer le plan de gestion quinquennal de la FC de Lomié dans une autre phase du projet ;

Renforcer les capacités du personnel de la CFC de Lomié en cartographie ;

Sensibiliser davantage les maires sur les thématiques liées à la gestion de l'environnement afin de leur présenter les bienfaits de la préservation des sites à ériger pour le captage du carbone forestier ou la conservation de la biodiversité ;

Penser aux actions compensatrices relativement aux pertes en superficie des sites érigés pour la conservation de la biodiversité et le carbone forestier ;

Intégrer les comités riverains et les SG des communes dans les processus de renforcement des capacités ;

Outils davantage les CFC, CPF et comités riverains ;

Créer des petits groupes d'échange sur la plateforme WhatsApp pour discuter des initiatives importantes et véhiculer rapidement les messages ;

Rédiger les mémos pour les CFC et CPF (slogans avec phrases précises et concises et résumant tout un document) ;

Suivre régulièrement les personnes formées à temps et aux périodes précises et de préférence lorsque l'activité est en cours de réalisation ;

Apporter les aidées novatrices sur la gestion et la transformation des PFNL auprès des paysans

Intégrer les SG des communes dans le processus de partage des correspondances aux maires ;

Doter les CFC des moyens de locomotion pour assurer la surveillance régulière des limites et la collecte des données de suivi des sites carbone et de biodiversité

Appui à la gouvernance forestière

Appui à la structuration des femmes impliquées dans la gestion des PFNL ;

Impliquer davantage les CFC dans le processus ADM afin de jouer le relais pour le suivi régulier des femmes impliqués dans la gestion des PFNL

Engager les points focaux des CFC comme facilitateurs communaux pour l'éveil de la communauté sur le suivi des activités menées et les formations ;

Mener les études pour identifier les sites potentiels de présence des PFNL dans les FC afin de déterminer le temps et l'effort de collecte ;

Proposer des notes d'idées de projet en prenant en compte prioritairement les activités non encore engagées ou non finalisées dans le cadre du projet GEF-FAO.

Annex 8: Property transferred form synthesis based on receipts shared by the project team (; reconstructed by the evaluation team

Date	Commune	Moniteur	Disque Dur Externe	GPS	Desktop/Unite Centrale	Onduleur
5/16/2022	Djourn	1	1	1	1	1
5/17/2022	Oveng	1	1	1	1	1
5/18/2022	Mvangan	1	1	1	1	1
5/19/2022	Akom II	1	1	1	1	1
5/20/2022	Efoulan	1	1	1	1	1
5/23/2022	Ndikinimeki (illegible)	1	1	1	1	1
5/26/2022	Ngambe	1	1	1	1	1
5/30/2022	Dimako	1	1	1	1	1
6/3/2022	Mindourou	1	1	1	1	1
8/29/2022	Dzeng	1	1	1	1	1
8/31/2022	Nyanon	1	1	1	1	1
8/31/2022	Ndom	1	1	1	1	1
9/1/2022	Nanga-Eboko	1	1	1	1	1
9/2/2022	Minta	1	1	1	1	1
9/30/2022	Messondo	1	1	1	1	1
NA	Ngambe	1	1	1	1	1