



**GREEN
CLIMATE
FUND**

Meeting of the Board

16 – 19 March 2021

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Provisional agenda item 14

GCF/B.28/02/Add.06

23 February 2021

Consideration of funding proposals - Addendum VI

Funding proposal package for FP159

Summary

This addendum contains the following seven parts:

- a) A funding proposal titled "PREFOREST CONGO - Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments in the Republic of Congo";
- b) No-objection letter issued by the national designated authority(ies) or focal point(s);
- c) Environmental and social report(s) disclosure;
- d) Secretariat's assessment;
- e) Independent Technical Advisory Panel's assessment;
- f) Response from the accredited entity to the independent Technical Advisory Panel's assessment; and
- g) Gender documentation.

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Funding Proposal

Project/Programme title:

PREFOREST CONGO - Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments in the Republic of Congo

Country(ies):

Republic of Congo

Accredited Entity:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Date of first submission:

[2020/01/16]

Date of current submission

[2020/12/17]

Version number

[V.10]



Section A	PROJECT / PROGRAMME SUMMARY
Section B	PROJECT / PROGRAMME INFORMATION
Section C	FINANCING INFORMATION
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Section H	ANNEXES

Note to Accredited Entities on the use of the funding proposal template

- Accredited Entities should provide summary information in the proposal with cross-reference to annexes such as feasibility studies, gender action plan, term sheet, etc.
- Accredited Entities should ensure that annexes provided are consistent with the details provided in the funding proposal. Updates to the funding proposal and/or annexes must be reflected in all relevant documents.
- The total number of pages for the funding proposal (excluding annexes) **should not exceed 60**. Proposals exceeding the prescribed length will not be assessed within the usual service standard time.
- The recommended font is Arial, size 11.
- Under the [GCF Information Disclosure Policy](#), project and programme funding proposals will be disclosed on the GCF website, simultaneous with the submission to the Board, subject to the redaction of any information that may not be disclosed pursuant to the IDP. Accredited Entities are asked to fill out information on disclosure in section G.4.

Please submit the completed proposal to:

fundingproposal@gcfund.org

Please use the following name convention for the file name:

“FP-[Accredited Entity Short Name]-[Country/Region]-[YYYY/MM/DD]”

A. PROJECT/PROGRAMME SUMMARY			
A.1. Project or programme	Project	A.2. Public or private sector	Public
A.3. Request for Proposals (RFP)	<p>If the funding proposal is being submitted in response to a specific GCF Request for Proposals, indicate which RFP it is targeted for. Please note that there is a separate template for the Simplified Approval Process and REDD+.</p> <p>Choose an item</p>		
A.4. Result area(s)	<p>Check the applicable GCF result area(s) that the <u>overall</u> proposed project/programme targets. For each checked result area(s), indicate the estimated percentage of <u>GCF budget</u> devoted to it. The total of the percentages when summed should be 100%.</p> <p>Mitigation: Reduced emissions from:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Energy access and power generation:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low-emission transport:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Buildings, cities, industries and appliances:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forestry and land use:</p> <p>Adaptation: Increased resilience of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Most vulnerable people, communities and regions:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Health and well-being, and food and water security:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure and built environment:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ecosystem and ecosystem services:</p>		<p>GCF contribution:</p> <p><u>Enter number</u>%</p> <p><u>Enter number</u>%</p> <p><u>Enter number</u>%</p> <p>100%</p>
			<p><u>Enter number</u>%</p> <p><u>Enter number</u>%</p> <p><u>Enter number</u>%</p> <p><u>Enter number</u>%</p>
A.5. Expected mitigation impact	16.77 million t CO ₂ eq in 20 years	A.6. Expected adaptation impact	<p>41,373 direct beneficiaries (35% women)</p> <p>870,649 indirect beneficiaries (35% women)</p> <p>0.78% of the population (direct)</p> <p>16.49% of the population (indirect)</p>
A.7. Total financing (GCF + co-finance)	46,567,138 Choose an item.	A.9. Project size	Small (Upto USD 50 million)
A.8. Total GCF funding requested	28,988,852 USD For multi-country proposals, please fill out annex 17.		
A.10. Financial instrument(s) requested for the GCF funding	<p>Mark all that apply and provide total amounts. The sum of all total amounts should be consistent with A. 8.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant 28,988,852 USD <input type="checkbox"/> Equity <u>Enter number</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Loan <u>Enter number</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Results-based payment <u>Enter number</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Guarantee <u>Enter number</u></p>		
A.11. Implementation period	8 Years	A.12. Total lifespan	20 years
A.13. Expected date of AE internal approval	5/28/2020	A.14. ESS category	B

A.15. Has this FP been submitted as a CN before?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	A.16. Has Readiness or PPF support been used to prepare this FP?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A.17. Is this FP included in the entity work programme?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	A.18. Is this FP included in the country programme?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
A.19. Complementarity and coherence	<i>Does the project/programme complement other climate finance funding (e.g. GEF, AF, CIF, etc.)? If yes, please elaborate in section B.1.</i> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
A.20. Executing Entity information	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAEP)		
A.21. Executive summary (max. 750 words, approximately 1.5 pages)			
<p>Congo is committed to pursuing low-emission carbon-resilient development seeking to reduce its GHG emissions by 48% by 2025 under the business as usual (BAU) scenario of its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), and by 55% by 2035. The country's GHG reduction strategy is principally based on its sustainable forest management efforts, particularly the reduction of GHG emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. According to Congo's NDC, carbon emissions from deforestation represent 81% of the country's total GHG emissions. To reduce these, the Government of Congo developed their national REDD+ strategy, followed by the REDD+ National Investment Framework (NIF) for the period 2018–2025.</p> <p>Located at the heart of the Congo Basin forests, the Republic of Congo possesses a vast forest area estimated at 23 million ha (69.8% of total land area), including 59,000 ha of planted forests.¹ Despite a relatively low historical deforestation rate estimated at 0.05% (2000–2012), Congo's forests are now subject to increasing anthropic pressure to overcome the agricultural production deficit and meet the energy needs of its increasing local population. Slash-and-burn farming for agricultural expansion and fuelwood collection are the main interlinked, direct drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Congo.² The increase in deforestation and forest degradation is more pronounced in the south of the country where the majority of the population lives.</p> <p>In the south, where the Project will be located, the large majority of the rural population practices subsistence farming as their principal economic activity, and more than 80% of the Congolese population depends on fuelwood as their main source of energy for cooking. The most important BAU barriers include: (i) limited access to improved crop production technology to intensify productivity and quality of crops such as cassava, maize, groundnuts and plantains as well as increasing soil fertility in order to reduce the need to clear additional forests; (ii) limited land access and security rights which prevents a long term investment in low emission crop production; (iii) limited access to a sustainable source of fuelwood which would reduce pressure on natural forest; (iv) limited access to markets to increase incomes and invest in low emission crop production; and (v) limited access to climate finance for green agroforestry investments which prevents smallholders from accessing and ultimately adopting low-emission technologies that would help them shift away from unsustainable and high emission practices without the need for additional public finance.</p> <p>Congo believes that its deforestation rate could double in the coming years, mainly due to pressure on the forests. This BAU scenario³ suggests a sixfold increase in total CO₂ emissions (approximately 34,527 kt eq CO₂) by 2035, while it would only multiply by 2.7 in a low-carbon scenario. Increased deforestation not only contributes to the country's rising GHG emissions, but also exacerbates the vulnerability of people and ecosystems to climate change.</p> <p>This project aims at reducing carbon emissions, while also providing important adaptation co-benefits, focusing its action on three deforestation and forest degradation hotspots. These agricultural and fuelwood supply basins are located in rural areas in the South of the country and feed Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, as well as the Niari valley and the towns of Dolisie, Madingou and Nkayi. They extend over the departments of Plateaux, Pool, Bouenza, Niari and Kouilou. These five departments experienced the greatest increase in deforestation and forest degradation rates during the period 2012–2016.</p> <p>Slash-and-burn farming and unsustainable production and consumption of fuelwood are intrinsically linked and cannot be addressed in silos, as fuelwood is collected mostly from clearing more and more land for farming. The situation is rapidly worsening and is fueling an increase in land clearing due to population pressure and very low agricultural productivity as a result of obsolete farming practices. Additionally, limited access to land and insecure land tenure favour short-cycle agricultural practices associated with high GHG emissions, while also preventing the planting of</p>			

¹ Republic of Congo forest cover monitoring report for the period 2014–2016. CNIAP 2019.

² Congo REDD+ Strategy (2017)

³ Congo's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC, 2015)

trees. This is compounded by poor communities' restricted access to finance, which prevents them from adopting low-emission technologies that would help them shift away from unsustainable practices.

To address these critical issues, **the project adopts a holistic approach**, essential to achieve transformational change at scale, and to ensure sustainability and **proposes a series of interventions structured around three integrated components**, all of which are key to transitioning towards low-emission development pathways. The first component lays the groundwork for other activities by focusing on the securing of land access for small producers, participatory mapping and research into agroforestry systems. The second, major, component provides for 2,700 ha of forest systems and the establishing of approximately 11,800 ha⁴ of micro and small-sized low emission, climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems. Under the third component, the Project will ensure sustainability by tackling the main barriers faced by farmers in accessing micro-finance, assisting them to produce business plans for further development and providing capacity building for MFIs' loan officers in climate finance and the creation of new credit/service products adapted to the needs of farmers.

It is anticipated that this holistic approach will result in a **paradigm shift for the poor communities** by enabling them to transition away from a high-emission and unsustainable BAU scenario towards a long-term, sustainable low-carbon development pathway.

PREFOREST will build on FAO's extensive experience, both in the country and in the sector. **Co-financing from FAO through resources provided by the Central Africa Forest Initiative (CAFI), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Ministry of Forest Economy** has been mobilized to complement GCF funding for wider impact. The project will also catalyse private sector investment in order to sustain and scale up interventions beyond the project duration. This project represents the first forestry GCF project in the Congo Basin and the first collaboration between the GCF, FAO, CAFI and IFAD. It has the potential to significantly transform forestry and land-use practices in the Congo Basin. In addition, the model proposed by this project can be scaled up and replicated in other areas of the Congo Basin – by these key players – through a programmatic approach and in a coordinated manner.

Numerous private actors have expressed interest in purchasing crops produced by PREFOREST through letters of intent: Eco-Oil Energy S.A, SCDIE, Cluster Union and Zando with respect to groundnut; COFCAO and EPPAPVA for cocoa ; Agrideck, SCDIE, Cluster Union, Zando, Hani transformation company and the World Food Programme (WFP) for cassava; Tolona, SCDIE, Cluster Union for plantains, and MFIs such as MUCODEC, COFINA, CODEC, CAPPED, FCECM and HOPE have also sent letters of intent to facilitate project beneficiaries' access to credit.

The project will directly contribute to reducing carbon emissions by **0.84 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (tCO₂ eq)** per year, **6.72 million tonnes of CO₂ eq** over the **eight-year period of project implementation**, or **16.77 million tonnes of CO₂ eq** over the **20-year project lifespan**. The project will also have important adaptation co-benefits, reducing the vulnerability and increasing the adaptive capacity of approximately **41,373 direct beneficiaries (35% women) and 870,649 indirect beneficiaries⁵ (35% women)** from the most vulnerable segment of Congolese society (i.e. small farmers including women, young people and indigenous populations). In addition, the project will contribute to achieving transformational change, specifically by: (i) establishing an enabling environment favourable to the *mobilization of investment* in sustainable practices in the forestry and agricultural sectors (e.g. strengthening of land access and security rights, building of entrepreneurial capacities, increased supply of credit by local banks, purchase agreements, etc.); (ii) human and institutional capacities building for an effective contribution to low-emission climate-resilient development; and (iii) the transfer, dissemination and adoption by beneficiaries of innovative and locally relevant technologies to increase agricultural yield in order to foster food security and sustainable fuelwood supply and also reduce pressure on forests.

The economic analysis confirms the importance of the reduction in carbon emissions with an almost 50% rate of return (EIRR) over a twenty five year period when these are taken into account, while the return drops to 14% in their absence. This can only be achieved by funding from an institution such as the GCF, which provides grants, as it is necessary to provide grants to the small farmers in their first year to motivate them to adopt the agroforestry and forestry systems. Once these become established and MFIs, helped by the project, develop appropriate products for such activities, sustainability will follow.

⁴ In addition to 2,700 ha to be established under FAO (CAFI) financing.

⁵ Indirect beneficiaries have been estimated taking into consideration those who will benefit indirectly from the establishment of the local participatory mapping in 13 districts.

B.1. Climate rationale and context (max. 1000 words, approximately 2 pages)

The Republic of Congo (Congo) is situated in Central Africa at the heart of the world’s second largest contiguous forest and extends over an area of approximately 342,000 km². Congo’s forest area is estimated at 23 million hectares, approximately 69.8% of the total land area.⁶ Within the context of its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), Congo is committed to pursuing low-emission carbon-resilient development in line with global efforts seeks to reduce its GHG emissions by 48% under the business as usual (BAU) scenario by 2025, and by 55% by 2035.

The country’s GHG reduction strategy is principally based on its sustainable forest management efforts, particularly the **reduction of GHG emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and increased forest carbon stocks**. In fact, despite low deforestation rates, according to the 2017 Forest Resource Emission Level (FREL) with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), **emissions from the forestry sector represent the country’s largest emission sector at 19.2 MtCO₂/year in 2015**, or 81% of the country’s total GHG emissions⁷. According to Congo’s NDC, **GHG emissions could double in the coming years, mainly due to pressure on forests from mining and agro-industrial sectors**.

A business as usual (BAU) scenario suggests a sixfold increase in total CO₂ emissions (approximately 34,527 kt eq CO₂) by 2035, while it would only multiply by 2.7 in a low-carbon scenario. To reduce its GHG emissions, the Government of Congo developed their REDD+ national strategy, followed by the REDD+ National Investment Framework (NIF) for the period 2018–2025.

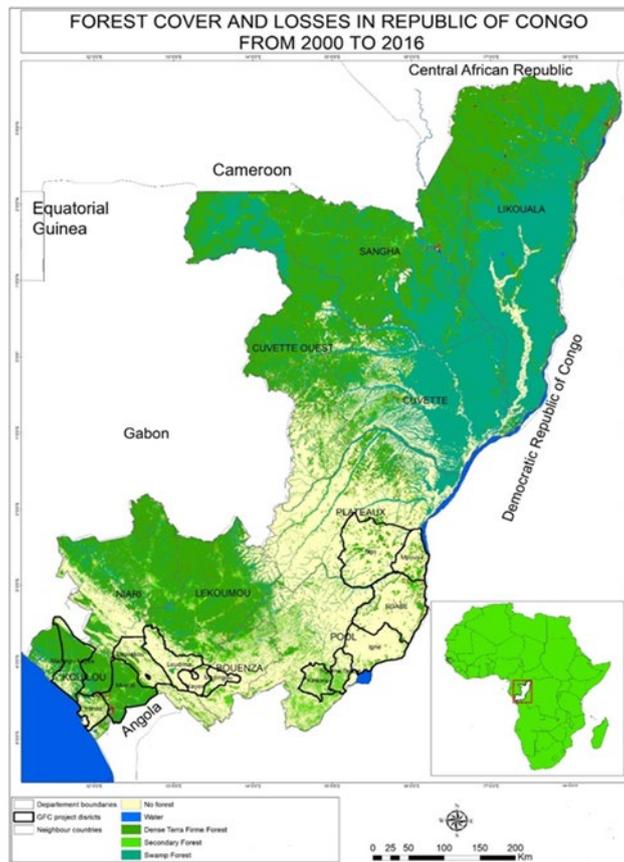


Figure 1: Forest cover and losses in Congo from 2000-2016

Source: REDD+ Investment Strategy, CNIAF and FAO, 2019⁸

Main drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in southern Congo:

The Congo REDD+ Strategy (2017) identifies the main direct drivers and indirect drivers of deforestation as follows:

⁶ Republic of Congo forest cover monitoring report for the period 2014–2016. CNIAF 2019.

⁷ NDCs 2015

⁸ The black contour indicates the areas targeted by the PREFOREST

Direct drivers of deforestation and forest degradation: i) Slash-and-burn agriculture; ii) Industrial agriculture; iii) Fuelwood production; iv) Commercial and illegal logging; v) Mining development; vi) Road and urban infrastructure;

Indirect (or underlying) drivers of deforestation and forest degradation: i) weak governance due to weak institutional capacity, particularly in terms of control of the sectors influencing deforestation; ii) weak intersectoral coordination and lack of land-use planning, leading to overlapping and incompatible land uses; iii) poverty and lack of financing (or access to finance) for economic and technological alternatives – according to the World Bank, 40.9% of the population lives below the national poverty line, and 69.5% lives in rural areas; and iv) population growth of 2.6%, leading to an increase in domestic demand for agricultural land, fuelwood and infrastructure. Congo's forests are indeed subject to increasing anthropic pressure to overcome the agricultural production deficit and meet the energy needs of increasing local populations. Slash-and-burn farming aimed at agriculture expansion and fuelwood collection is the main direct driver of deforestation and forest degradation in Congo. The increase in deforestation and forest degradation is more pronounced in the south of the country where the majority of the population lives and where the Project will be located.

Slash and burn for agriculture expansion: In the south, the large majority of the rural population practices subsistence farming with slash and burn as their main economic activity, and more than 80% of the Congolese population depends on fuelwood as their main source of energy for cooking. In Southern Congo, agriculture is mainly practiced by low-income smallholder farmers (earning less than USD 2 per day) using rudimentary techniques and limited inputs, which generate limited yields and soil infertility.

Subsistence farming using rudimentary means represents approximately **81% of cultivated land and 98% of national food production** (BRLI, 2014). Smallholder farmers engage in traditional agriculture based mainly on cassava and plantains⁹, on a maximum of 2 to 3 ha where land is cultivated for a 2-year period and left to lie fallow for 7 to 10 years, which allows the forest to replenish. Although slash and burn agriculture may be practiced sustainably under certain conditions, the demographic growth in southern Congo, causing an increasing demand of crops and fuelwood, as well as unsustainable agricultural practices characterized by low productivity¹⁰, are pushing smallholder farmers to practice slash-and-burn agriculture with ever decreasing rotations which prevents the natural regeneration of fallow land, leading farmers to constantly **push back the agricultural frontier to the detriment of the forest**.¹¹

The rates of yields reduction and increased soil infertility leading to increasing deforestation are accelerating because of climate change (*section II D of feasibility study*). In southern Congo, the average temperatures have increased by 0.6°C during the period 1950–1980, while rainfall have decreased by 10-20% between 1980 and 1990.¹² Climate projections from RCP4.5 emission scenario reveal an increase in temperatures of about 2.5°C over the period 1960–2090 with important regional variations.¹³ It is estimated that precipitation will decrease, particularly in southern Congo, by at least 30 mm by 2030–2050.¹⁴ The direct impacts of rainfall variability on crop production include: early sowing and shorter crop cycles; leaching and erosion of the soil making certain crops unsuitable (e.g. peanuts due to their poor root system); and increased risk of flooding which has a considerable impact on agricultural systems. The result is a significant reduction in food production and productivity, which translates into food insecurity and increased vulnerability for low-income smallholder farmers. IFAD's Climate Adaptation in Rural Development – Assessment Tool (CARD)¹⁵ climate models under projected climate change indicate a significant decrease in major crop production due to climate change. Cassava production is predicted to decrease by approximately 20%, peanuts by 16%, and maize by 9.75% between the 2020 baseline and 2050 at the national level.

Slash and burn for fuelwood collection: Most of the fuelwood collected is collected from fallow land cleared for slash-and-burn agriculture (Louzinga 2017). Approximately 4/5 of fuelwood is collected from natural forests and only 1/5 from planted forests.¹⁶ Fuelwood (firewood and charcoal) accounts for 53% of national energy consumption and is the main source of energy for 90% of households.¹⁷ According to the FREL,¹⁸ the exploitation of fuelwood was responsible for

⁹ maize, cassava, peanuts, vegetables and plantains in forest land and cassava, maize, peanut in savanna lands

¹⁰ Please refer to the feasibility study section D for more information

¹¹ REDD+ National Strategy for the Republic of Congo. REDD+ National Coordination. 2016. Page 35.

¹² Samba, G. et Nganga, D. 2012. Rainfall variability in Congo-Brazzaville 1932-2007. International Journal of Climatology.

¹³ Sonwa et al. 2013. Climate change and adaptation in Central Africa: Past, scenarios and options for the future.

¹⁴ The line represents the ensemble mean while the shaded area represents the model spread. The projections are based on the emission scenario RCP4.5.

¹⁵ Platform that helps explore the effects of climate change on the yield of major crops. It is intended to support the quantitative integration of climate-related risks in agricultural and rural development investments and strategies, including economic and financial analyses (EFA). Various climate models are included in the tool for 17 major crops in nearly all African countries.

¹⁶ Nkoua & Gazull, 2010

¹⁷ FAO, 2018

¹⁸ https://redd.unfccc.int/files/2016_submission_frel_republicofcongo.pdf

0.3 MtCO₂/year of estimated emissions over the historical 2000–2012 period.¹⁹ Per capita consumption per day is estimated at 1.2 kg and 1.5 kg of wood/inhabitant in Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville respectively. According to the Second National Communication (2009), **energy consumption is expected to increase at a 3.4% annual rate – higher than the population growth rate of 2.8% – up to 2030**, mostly driven by fuelwood consumption.

Table 1. Proportion of energy use by source in the main two cities of Congo

Type of energy	% Used by the population	
	Brazzaville	Pointe-Noire
Fuelwood	67.10	48.50
Gas	21.30	40.20
Petroleum	9.90	8.50
Others	1.70	2.80

The most important business as usual (BAU) barriers that are perpetuating deforestation and forest degradation through slash and burn in southern Congo include:

- (i) limited access to improved crop production technology to intensify productivity and quality of crops such as cassava, maize, groundnuts and plantains and to increase soil fertility **in order to reduce the need to clear additional forests;**
- (ii) limited land access and security rights which prevents **a long term investment in low emission crop production;**
- (iii) limited access to a sustainable source of fuelwood which would reduce pressure on natural forest;
- (iv) limited access to markets to **increase incomes and invest in low emission crop production;**
- (v) limited access to climate finance for green agroforestry investments which prevents smallholders from accessing and ultimately adopting low-emission technologies that would help them **shift away from unsustainable and high emission practices without the need for additional public finance.**

In order to reduce this trend and improve the livelihoods of the smallholders farmers in Southern Congo, the following needs have been identified in the project area:

- (i) **Regenerate degraded areas from slash and burn agriculture and increase soil fertility and crop productivity** for low emission and sustainable crop production by introducing innovative **agro-forestry practices and natural regeneration;**
- (ii) **Reduce pressure on existing natural forests** by planting trees for sustainable fuelwood production in already degraded areas from slash and burn agriculture;
- (iii) Strengthening land access and land security to allow for plot delimitation and plot investment in order to **reduce the need to access additional forested land;**
- (iv) **Strengthening connection between smallholder farmers and markets**, as well as strengthening business capacities of smallholder farmers in order to increase their income and invest in high quality and low emission crop production from agro-forestry;
- (v) **Strengthening access to adapted micro-credit** in order to increase investment and scaling up of high quality and low emission crop production from agro-forestry.

Government integrated approach to reduce emissions in the forestry and land use sector:

Congo ratified the Paris Climate Agreement on April 21st, 2017, having previously submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) on September 21st, 2015. The NDC submitted at COP 21 in Paris aims to reduce national emissions **mainly through the implementation of the REDD+ mechanism** compared to the trend scenario (uncontrolled). To achieve its emission reduction targets, the Republic of Congo has set itself two areas of results: i) Maintain, or even strengthen, the carbon sequestration potential by forests, through better management of the sector, as well as through reforestation; ii) Reduce GHG emissions from the energy sectors and the fight against unplanned deforestation.

¹⁹ The energy sector in Congo is the second largest source of GHG emissions, after the land-use change and forestry (LUCF) sector with about 5.23Mt (10.5%) of total CO₂eq emitted in 2016.

In order to tackle the deforestation problem Congo has developed important elements of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+: i) the submission of its Forest Reference Emission Levels (FREL)²⁰ to UNFCCC in 2017; ii) the adoption of a **REDD+ National Strategy** (Decree 2018-223 of June 5, 2018) and iii) a **REDD+ Investment Plan** (REDD+ IP), which together form concrete instruments to guide its REDD+ investments.

The REDD+ IP, validated in June 2018, constitutes the **reference framework** for actions to be implemented during the period 2018-2025 in respect to the reduction of emissions from deforestation, forest degradation and enhancement of carbon sequestration.

The REDD+IP adopts a **programmatic approach** by identifying 5 enabling programs and 6 geographically integrated programs for the 2018-2025 period to be financed through existing bilateral and multilateral funding (see *feasibility study section II C*). Proposed funding from climate funds include the Forest Investment Program (FIP), the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and other multilateral, bilateral donors as well as the private sector.

PREFOREST has been formulated to be perfectly aligned with the REDD+ IP priority programs in coordination with other investments (CAFI, World Bank) in order to support Congo implementing its programmatic approach for emissions reduction. PREFOREST will indeed support the country implementing a priority program²¹.

The main actors involved in this programmatic approach to achieve NDCs targets through REDD+ are:

CAFI: Congo is a member of the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI)²² a funding initiative created by several donor countries to support REDD+ investments in the sub region. Congo received support from CAFI to develop its REDD+ IP²³ and to implement a Letter of Intent (LoI) signed on 3 September 2019 with CAFI donor countries. This LoI defines Congo political commitments to reduce emissions in the LULUCF sector and confirms the intention of CAFI donor countries to invest an initial amount of USD 65 million to implement the REDD+ IP, with fund mobilization being based on performance.²⁴ CAFI comparative advantage and role in the programmatic approach is to reduce deforestation from energy access (see table 3). CAFI and FAO have been collaborating in Congo since 2018 and have agreed to work together in the context of the PREFOREST in order to increase the overall impact and coordination of the interventions. In this regards, **CAFI has agreed to provide resources to the amount of USD 7 million, to be channeled and executed by FAO, to reinforce PREFOREST impact under Components 2 by strengthening access to sustainable fuelwood.** The combined impact of these interventions will multiply the individual results of each project, while generating economies of scale. PREFOREST has been formulated in order to ensure strong complementarity and alignment with the CAFI results framework as, amongst their ultimate objectives, both are expecting to contribute to the reduction of GHG emissions from LULUCF. CAFI and PREFOREST collaboration is expected to be sustained in the long term in order to leverage additional funding for forest restoration (within the framework of UN Decade on ecosystem restoration), to access REDD+ results-based payment, and to access private carbon markets. **This project represents the first GCF and CAFI collaboration to fight climate change.**

World Bank: the WB is supporting Congo through the ER-Programme which targets mainly the Northern Congo (Sangha and Likouala Department), for an estimated amount of 92M USD. The ER-Program presents an opportunity for these departments to build a sustainable commodity sector from the ground up aiming to improve the livelihoods of local communities while reducing emissions from land use. The total amount of 16M USD for the establishment of an agroforestry project under the Forest Investment Programme (FIP) and 8M USD for the “Community Agroforestry and Wood Energy Project (PACBE) are already secured and likely to be established in 2021.

Government (Ministry of Forest Economy): the Government started promoting agroforestry systems through the PRONAR (National Program for Afforestation) in 2011. The PRONAR aims to reduce deforestation of natural forests for fuelwood to supply the Brazzaville market. As an example, PRONAR has signed in 2019 a partnership with the *Société des plantations forestières Batéké Brazzaville* (SPF2B), for the establishment of 10,000 ha of plantation in

²⁰ https://redd.unfccc.int/files/nerf_soumission_de_la_r_publicque_du_congo_version_finale.pdf

²¹ Emissions reduction achieved under PREFOREST (entire funded activity) will not eligible for RBPs, and therefore retired

²² <http://www.cafi.org/content/cafi/en/home/partner-countries/republic-of-congo.html>

²³ <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/cafi/docs/RoC%20documents/PI%20REDD%20RoC%20version%207%20finale.pdf>

²⁴ A copy of the Letter of Intent is available here :

<https://www.cafi.org/content/dam/cafi/docs/RoC%20documents/Letter%20of%20Intent/Letter%20of%20Intent%20-%20CAFI%20Republic%20of%20Congo%20-%20ENG.pdf>.

²⁵ Funding for the implementation of the PACBE was finally approved on January 27, 2020, and the project yet to start will be implemented as a component of the “Agricultural Value Chain Development Programme”

(https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/sites/cif_enc/files/meeting-documents/investment_plan_congo_republic_approved_decision.pdf)

Plateaux Batéké, Bambou Mingali area. The Government also promoted community-based forest management such as the Makala Project to address the sustainable supply of fuelwood.

FAO: the PREFOREST builds on FAO's extensive experience in agroforestry and sustainable supplies of woodfuel.²⁶ The PREFOREST represents a key investment in southern Congo to reduce deforestation from agricultural expansion and fuelwood collection in order to achieve REDD+ targets.

In addition, FAO has identified synergies with under development "Projet Agriculture, Jeunes et Entrepreneuriat" (PAJE) project led by **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)**. In order to increase the overall impact of FAO and IFAD interventions, **IFAD has agreed to provide cofinancing of USD 1.5 million** through its upcoming PAJE project in Congo estimated at USD 23 million.²⁷ The Development Objective of PAJE is to reduce poverty and optimize economic benefits of agrifood value chains, which are aligned with the ones targeted by PREFOREST, with high potential by facilitating access to tailored (appropriate/adapted and targeted) financial services for the first time to more than 5,000 beneficiaries. Two principal outcomes are the creation of over 6,000 agrifood MSME and improvement of the access of 4,000 small-scale producers and their organizations to markets by means of long-term, equitable contract farming arrangements with agroindustries.

Unlike CAFI interventions, which seek to reduce GHG emissions from the forest sector, PAJE is a development project with no GHG emission reduction targets. Nevertheless, there are potential synergies/complementarities between PREFOREST and PAJE, and between PREFOREST and CAFI as illustrated in the Table below. Overall, **PAJE activities will increase PREFOREST impact** under Component 3 by **strengthening and scaling up smallholder farmers' access to finance and markets**.

An overview of these and other projects in the sector is provided in the table below:

Table 2: Overview of main climate and forest related funding initiatives in Congo

Initiatives / projects / programmes	Amount	Intervention areas	Potential complementarity with PREFOREST
PREFOREST (2021–2028)	USD 29 M (for which cofinancing should be added: USD 9 M from Government, USD 1.5 M from IFAD and USD 7 M from CAFI (channeled through FAO))	Land-use planning; Deployment of climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems; Fuelwood sustainable supply; Strengthening national agricultural financing structures, business capacities and value chains	
CAFI (2021–2025)	USD 45 M (+20 M from bilateral channels)	Land-use planning; Development of agroecology and agroforestry; Sustainable management of forest; Development and implementation of energy strategy; Improvement of the safeguard monitoring system; Capacity strengthening of non-government actors on the monitoring of the implementation of the Letter of Intent	Strengthening sustainable access and use of energy through: (i) the development of forestry and agroforestry systems for energy production; and (ii) the promotion of the production and utilization of improved cookstoves
IFAD PAJE (2021–2025)	USD 23 M	Strengthening of entrepreneurship on agriculture sector	Strengthening farmers access to finance and markets through: (i) financial and technical support and the establishment of commercial partnerships and

²⁶ Experiences and knowledge from the following programme/projects implemented by FAO will be taken into account and valorized during the project implementation: (i) French-funded project "Forest and Landscape Restoration and Sustainable Land Management in the Sahel" (Burkina Faso and Niger); (ii) FAO project on the GEF-6 "The Restoration Initiative (TRI)"; (iii) FAO project on the GEF-5 "Community-based Miombo forest management in south East Katanga" in DRC; (iv) FAO project on the GEF-7 "Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program on Dryland Sustainable Landscapes (DSL)," particularly its component on Miombo forest ecosystems.

For these projects, FAO is providing countries with the following technical support: (i) restoration of degraded areas for agriculture and fuelwood purposes and improvement of sourcing of wood; and (2) improved governance of the fuelwood sector, including interventions in the value-chain. Other experiences are detailed in the feasibility study.

²⁷ PAJE is still under development and is expected to be approved by IFAD Board in April 2021. The total amount of the project may vary until the finalization of the project development.

			other stable procurement mechanisms; (ii) the development of a national financial inclusion strategy with emphasis on rural agriculture financing; and (iii) the formalization of MFIs
Forest Investment Programme (FIP)	USD 24 M	Considered as a component of the "Agricultural Value Chain Development Programme"	Development of agroforestry plantations (for subsistence and commercial agriculture), and fuelwood plantations in degraded and non-forest areas, in the Northern Congo.
Gov led interventions (PRONAR, Makala)	USD 10M (+ national budget)	Plantation for energy purpose	Strengthening access to sustainable fuelwood, for Brazzaville supply

B.2. Theory of change (max. 1000 words, approximately 2 pages plus diagram)

This Theory of Change (ToC) seeks to address the main driver of deforestation and forest degradation in Congo²⁸ by transitioning away from slash-and-burn agriculture caused by agriculture expansion mainly for subsistence and unsustainable fuelwood production in southern Congo, towards low-emission, climate-resilient development pathways.

Current slash-and-burn farming caused by agriculture expansion and the consequent unsustainable production of fuelwood cannot be addressed in silos, as fuelwood is collected mostly from clearing land for farming. This situation is compounded by very low agricultural productivity due to obsolete farming practices, increased demand of crops and fuelwood and climate change impacts. Additionally, limited access and insecure land tenure favour short-cycle agricultural practices associated with high GHG emission, and discourages long-term investment and planting of trees.

PREFOREST proposes a holistic approach to sustainably address the main driver of deforestation in southern Congo: *slash-and-burn agriculture* for agriculture expansion and unsustainable production of fuelwood. The holistic approach of the PREFOREST Project is based on the underlying theory that **if** (i) tenure access and tenure rights are secured; (ii) low-emission climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems are adopted; and (iii) access to finance and markets for agroforestry and forestry is enhanced, **then** deforestation and forest degradation and associated GHG emissions from slash-and-burn agriculture caused by agricultural expansion and fuelwood production will be reduced and ultimately halted.

Strengthening of land access and security rights – The current practice of “temporary leases”²⁹ limited to one subsistence crop cycle favours short-cycle agricultural practices and impedes the investment required to stabilize slash-and-burn agriculture, increase main crops’ yields, and consolidate the sustainability of the fuelwood sector and therefore reducing the pressure on natural forests. The project proposes three support options³⁰ to improve access of small farmers to land suitable for agroforestry and to secure tenure rights. Under the project, activities to promote land access and tenure security will provide the foundation for the establishment long of agroforestry/forestry systems.

Deployment of low-emission climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems – The knowledge of climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry practices in the project area is weak. Women farmers interviewed during project formulation claimed that they had never practiced or been trained in agroforestry, though they were interested to learn more with a view to adoption. Small tools such as hoes, axes, machetes, saws, chainsaws, predominate. This lack of modern technologies not only increases the drudgery of agricultural work, but also significantly limits productivity, often resulting in agricultural expansion at the expense of forests. The project would address these technical/knowledge constraints through communication about the opportunities and advantages of agroforestry and fuelwood plantations and significant support for the establishment of such systems.

As an immediate measure to reduce forest degradation, existing operations³¹ will be built on to provide fuelwood through plantations of fast-growing species. A major project innovation for the Congo will be the introduction of the

²⁸ Described in the previous section.

²⁹ Between private landowners (formal land ownership or customary land ownership) and small producers, on private land.

³⁰ Detailed in Section B.3.

³¹ Such as the “Société des Plantations Forestières Batéké Brazzaville”, which planted 200 ha *Acacia auriculiformis* on its 10,000ha of secured land in the Plateau Batéké in 2018 for the production of fuelwood.

mampu system of agroforestry,³² providing an alternative source of fuelwood and thereby preventing further loss of indigenous forest. Initial plantations of fast-growing species and subsequent adoption of the *mampu* system will provide alternative sources of firewood. Together with increased productivity of cash crops due to the adoption of improved production techniques and financial support these will lead to a decrease in deforestation and forest degradation and the reduction of associated GHG emissions as well as improvement in the livelihood of poor farmers. While fuelwood plantations provide a relatively quick response to the requirement for fuelwood, agroforestry provides a long-term solution by being a remunerative alternative to slash-and-burn agriculture. Both practices limit the destruction of the natural forest. Natural regeneration will also be introduced on already degraded land from previous slash and burn in order to reestablish the natural forest.

Facilitating access to markets, strengthening national agricultural financing structures, and business capacities – Farmers and producers have little information on market opportunities and quality requirements, which constrains their commercial opportunities for the produced crops. These are further limited by issues related to transport costs and packaging requirements for higher value products. Through IFAD co-financing, the project will build capacity on transport efficiency, storage and transformation in order to ensure high quality of products. The project will then link producers of agroforestry products supported by the project with markets through the development and implementation of long-term, fair price purchase agreements between beneficiaries and off-takers. Some of these have already been identified (see Letters of Intent from WFP, Eco-Oil, SCDIE, EPPAVPA, AGRIDECK, Zando market, Cluster Union pour une Agriculture Competitive and COFAO in Annex 23). It is estimated that the demand from these buyers will already cover the yearly production of most of the crops produced under the agro-forestry systems established by PREFOREST. Other partnerships with the private sector will be explored and developed during project implementation.

The financial sector in Congo is still evolving with the agriculture sector representing only 6% of the total portfolio in April 2018. The majority of agricultural producers in Congo have difficulty accessing finance from bank or Micro Financial Institutions (MFIs). The majority of credit applications by farmers do not meet the minimum requirements for solvency and profitability required by local financial institutions. Poor business management, limited land access and insecure tenure rights (MFIs don't finance such farmers) and the informal and embryonic nature of the value chains for the agricultural and fuelwood sectors are major barriers. On the supply side the inadequacy of the financial products offered (i.e. high interest rate of about 4-5% per month and short-term maturity) and lack of technical skills to assess agricultural loans by MFIs limit credit supply to farmers. Smallholder farmers mainly resort to traditional savings and credit practices, which are widespread in all departments, notably tontines or rotating savings and credit associations, loans in the form of seed, animal loans to start up small-scale livestock production, loans from family and friends, and money collection services on local markets (mobikissi). This situation makes it difficult to invest in sustainable low emission agroforestry practices and severely compromises rural entrepreneurship.

Project activities to secure small farmers' tenure rights will be fundamental to improving their access to credit. In addition the development of business plans and the creation of strategic partnerships with MFIs with an interest in financing the agroforestry sector will further ease constraints to financing. The partnerships with MFIs will serve to develop micro-credit in line with harvest cycles with low interest rates and longer maturity periods. Increased access to microcredit will encourage the adoption of the best adaptation and mitigation practices, while also building beneficiaries' entrepreneurial skills to sustain their activities.

³² Named after a successful project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo which introduced an improved fallow agroforestry practice, involving planting a fast growing species fixing nitrogen (e.g. *Acacia auriculiformis*) to accelerate soil fertility recovery. It consists in rotational woodlots that are planted together with food crops. The use of annual food crops also contributes to reducing risks for fires. The second year a new plot is planted as in the first year (with a fast growing species planted along with an annual crop). Every year a new plot is planted. After 7-10 years the trees planted the first year are cut and that plot is planted again as occurred the first year.

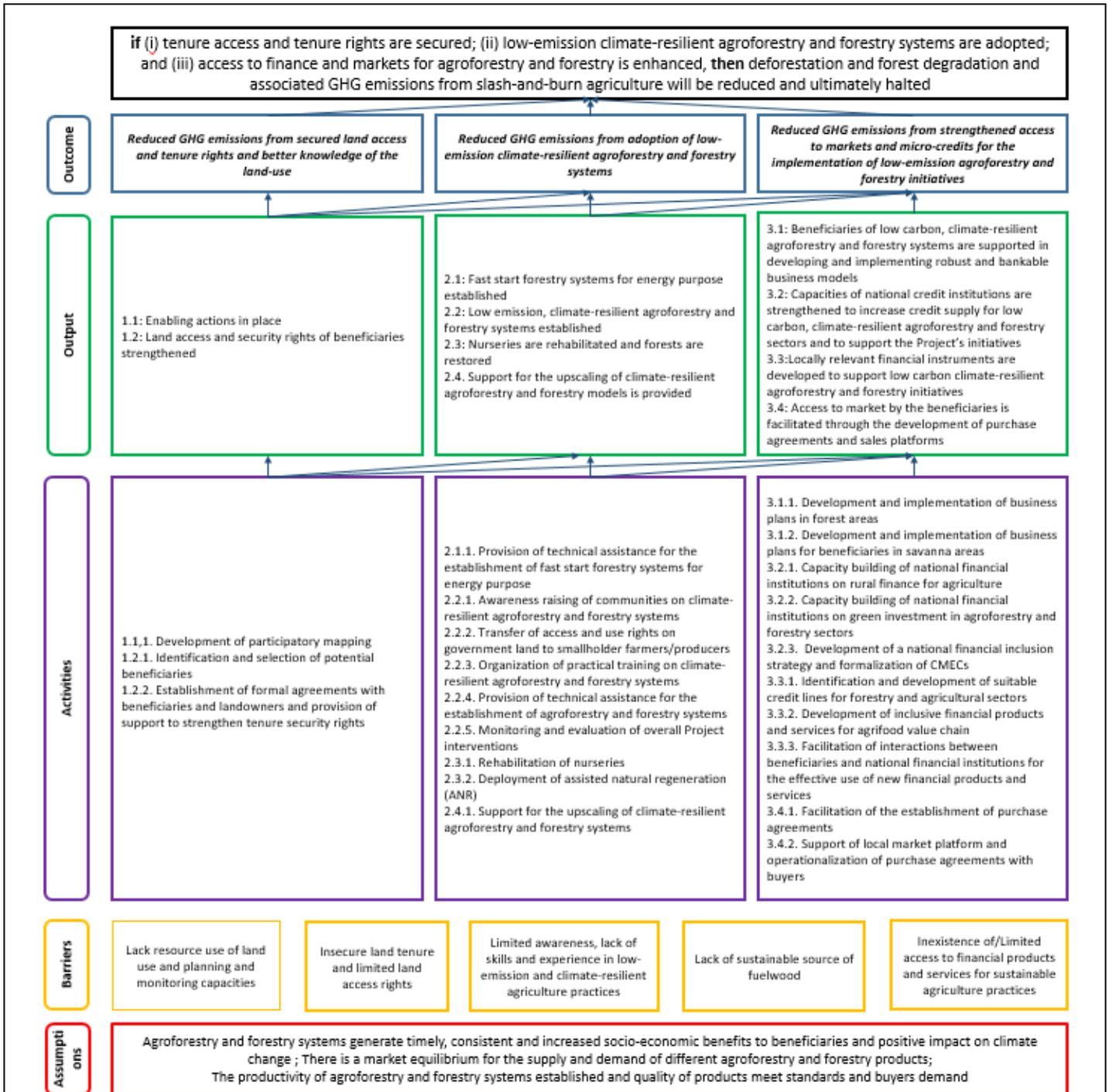


Figure 2: Diagram of the Theory of Change

B.3. Project/programme description (max. 2000 words, approximately 4 pages)

Introduction

The PREFOREST project aims to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation caused by slash-and-burn agriculture aimed at the interlinked issues of agriculture expansion and unsustainable production of fuelwood through a holistic approach (see section B.2.). The project's synergistic components reinforce its potential to achieve transformational change at scale, thus optimizing impact in terms of emission reductions, and ensuring long-term sustainability. The approach includes the following: (i) Strengthening of land access and security rights for long term

agro-forestry investments; (ii) Deployment and stabilization of low-carbon agroforestry and forestry systems to increase production, increase soil fertility and regenerate and reduce pressure on natural forests; and (iii) Strengthening of national structures for sustainable financing of low-carbon agricultural and forestry sectors.

The Project fits into Congo's overall efforts to reduce GHG emissions from land use, land use change and deforestation (LULUCF) and climate change vulnerability under its NDC. In particular, the project is aligned with the National REDD+ Strategy and the National REDD+ Investment Plan, which *inter alia* identified the improvement of farming conditions and agricultural productivity as part of the priorities to reduce emissions from deforestation and land degradation in Congo. Improve land property management in order to create an enabling environment to reduce deforestation.

The Project will focus its action on large agricultural and fuelwood production basins in the Republic of Congo, which host numerous primary and secondary forests of strategic importance to combat climate change, and where a large majority of the Congolese population resides. PREFOREST will build on successful experiences within the Congo and neighboring countries, such as the National Programme for the Development of Cocoa Production, implemented in North Congo and the Mampu agroforestry system developed in DRC which contributed to agriculture sedentarisation and helped avoid the annual destruction of 500 ha of savanna and gallery forests, while contributing to the sequestration of 113,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year over an area of 7,500 ha, as well as the production of fuelwood in a way that preserved natural forest areas. The project has been developed and will be implemented in collaboration with key development partners, such as IFAD, CAFI and the Ministry of Forest Economy as co-financers, WFP, ECOIL, COFCOA, SCDIE, Agrideck, EPPAVPA and other identified entities as buyers of the beneficiaries' production. Moreover, the PREFOREST project has been designed to complement more than fifteen ongoing related initiatives,³³ as well as future investments to help catalyze wider impact.

Justification of the project site selection

The Project will concentrate its action on three large agricultural product and fuelwood supply basins in the country, specifically the rural basins of Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and the Niari valley basin. This area of intervention covers five departments, namely Kouilou, Niari, Bouenza, Pool and Plateaux.³⁴ These departments are characterized by the highest rates of forest degradation in the country for the period 2012–2016, as well as the substantial deforestation rate.³⁵ Thirteen districts of intervention have been identified within these five departments, notably Madingo-Kayes and Hinda, Mvouti (Kouilou), Louvakou (Niari), Loudima, Kayes and Madingou (Bouenza), Kinkala, Ngoma Tsé-Tsé, Igné, Ngabé (Pool), as well as Ngo and Mpouya (Plateaux). A map of the project area is presented below:

³³ Refer to REDD+ Investment Plan of the Republic of Congo (2018-2025) for the full list of REDD+ projects and programmes implemented and planned in Congo

³⁴ In addition to the cities of Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, which will be the subject of actions to stimulate the adoption of improved stoves.

³⁵ The maps and statistics have been developed by our team and CNIAC with the CNIAC most updated data for PREFOREST purpose. Data is consistent with the ones used for the third national communication under development by Congo.

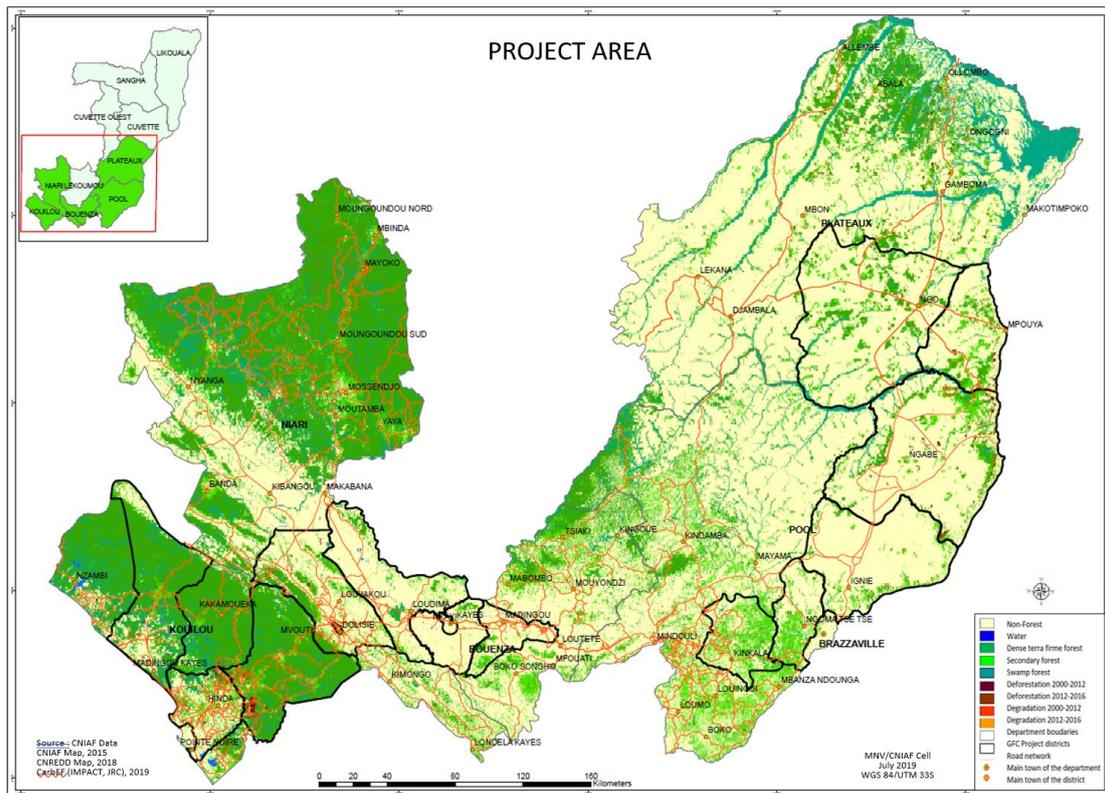
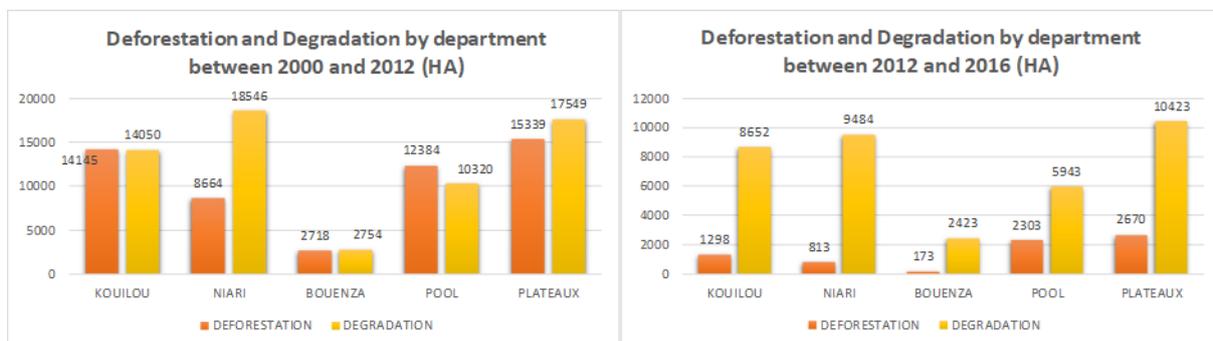


Figure 3: Map of Project sites (contoured in black) and forest cover loss for the period 2000–2016

Source: CNIAF and FAO (2019).

All 13 identified districts experienced an increase in mean annual forest cover loss (deforestation and degradation combined³⁶) between the two periods of comparison (2000–2012 and 2012–2016), notably with respect to forest degradation. This area, which stretches along the National Road no. 1, supplies the three largest cities in the country (Pointe-Noire, Dolisie, and Brazzaville) and the northern towns with agricultural, forestry and fuelwood products. The area includes a large gallery forest area, as well as important forest ecosystems, such as Mayombe and the Léfini Reserve. The forests under pressure were largely affected by deforestation during the period 2000–2012, and by degradation during the period 2012–2016³⁷ (see Figure 5).



³⁶ Congo's Forest Reference Emissions Level (FREL) submitted to UNFCCC in 2016 defines a forest as 'A space covering a minimum area of 0.5 hectare, with trees having a minimum height of 3 meters and a minimum crown cover rate of 30%'. Deforestation (déboisement) is defined by Article 31 of the Forest Code as 'the induced removal or dieback of trees or other forest plants to give the land a new use, whatever the means used for this purpose'. There is no official definition for forest degradation in Congo. In practice however, CNIAF uses a specific approach to classify vegetation cover loss as either deforestation or forest degradation.

³⁷ Latest official data available as of November 2020

Figure 4: Respective comparison of deforestation and forest degradation areas (ha) in the five target departments for the periods 2000–2012 and 2012–2016³⁸

The departments most affected by deforestation during the period 2000–2016 are respectively: Plateaux (18,809 ha), Pool (14,687 ha) and Kouilou (15,443 ha). In terms of forest degradation, although Pool and Plateaux show significant degraded areas, Kouilou (22,703 ha) and Niari (28,030 ha) are the most affected departments. The most exposed areas are situated on: (i) the main roads linking Brazzaville to Pointe-Noire and (ii) the secondary roads connecting the three departments of Niari, Kouilou and Bouenza (see Figure 4).

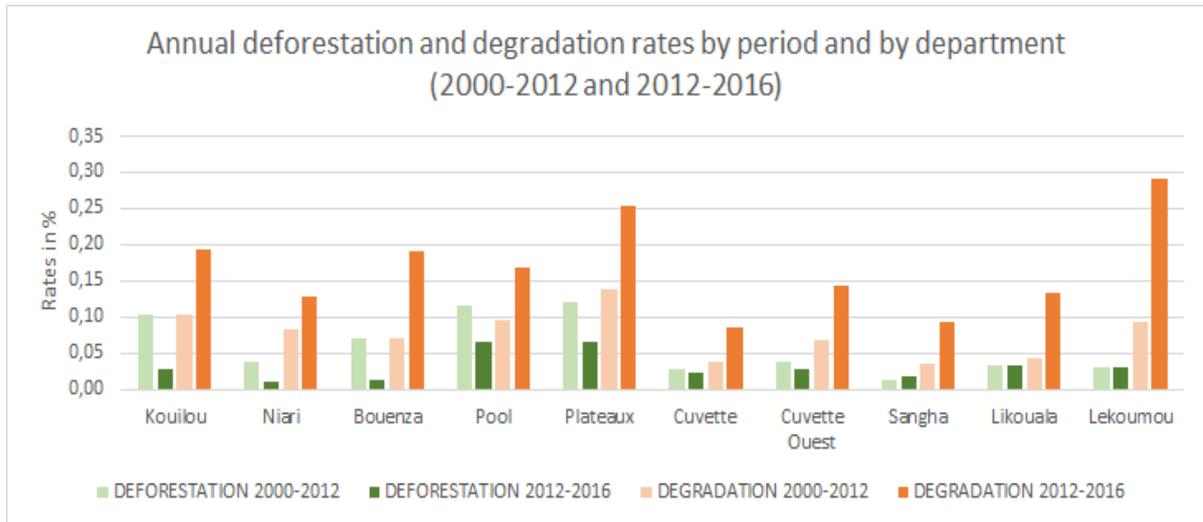


Figure 5: Annual deforestation and degradation rates by period (2000–2012 and 2012–2016) and by department (ha)³⁹

Project Components, Outputs and Activities

The project is structured around three interlinked components, the complementarities of which tackle the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in the targeted areas in a holistic manner:

- Component 1: Land-use and resources planning and strengthening of land access and security rights. Deployment of low-emission climate-resilient
- Component 2: Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems for climate change mitigation;
- Component 3: Strengthening of agroforestry financing structures, business capacities and value chains

Component 1: Land-use and resources planning and strengthening of land access and security rights.

Component 1 puts in place the elements necessary for the successful establishment of the fuelwood forestry and agroforestry systems required to combat deforestation and forest degradation envisaged under components 2 and 3.

Output 1.1. Enabling actions in place

Activity 1.1.1. Development of participatory mapping

This mapping⁴⁰, to be carried out with the communities before the establishment of the agroforestry and forestry system, is an essential planning tool to ensure the sustainable natural resources management required to

³⁸ CNIAF 2019.

³⁹ CNIAF 2019.

⁴⁰ The mapping will start in year 1 and then be regularly updated. The map will highlight intervention areas and locations of potential beneficiary farmland. In year 1 the project will outline the approach for project implementation for reducing land degradation through inclusion of regenerative agriculture, agroforestry and forestry models.

achieve the desired low-emission carbon-resilient development. In an absence of a well-defined land-use plan, digital maps of village land will be drawn up on the basis of participatory mapping. The maps will allow a better knowledge of the landscape mosaic, support resource diagnosis and support a decision making-process (in an inclusive manner) on the desired changes (zoning), which will be recorded in these small scale land use maps. Two maps series (reference level and communities objectives) will be developed by the project for the targeted villages, using the same tools⁴¹ for the establishment of the maps themselves as for NFMS-MRV as much as possible for a sake of consistency. The areas dedicated for the establishment of the agroforestry systems and ANR planned in Component 2 will be included in these maps.

Output 1.2. Land access and security rights of beneficiaries strengthened

It is firmly established – including in Congo - that any robust response to deforestation and forest degradation relies heavily on both land tenure access and security of rights.⁴² Field visits in the project areas revealed that access rights to land are based on random and insecure practices.⁴³ Though the institutional framework on land tenure rights in Congo has evolved significantly over the last decade, access and security rights still have many limitations, especially for local communities and indigenous peoples. The current practice of “temporary leases” between private landowners (formal land ownership or customary land ownership) and small producers, on private land, which are limited to one subsistence crop cycle, does not allow farmers to invest in climate-resilient agroforestry or forestry practices, as this discourages the plantation of trees. Under such conditions where the access and security rights are not guaranteed, it is appropriate to provide means to strengthen land access and security rights for these beneficiaries.

Three support options are considered by the project, and the relevance of each will depend on the local context of each site: (i) **Transfer of user rights** on land secured by the National Afforestation and Reforestation Programme (Programme National d’Afforestation et de Reboisement – PRONAR) or land available on former State farms, free of charge, for beneficiaries wishing to implement climate-resilient agroforestry or forestry activities;⁴⁴ (ii) **Transfer of a part of land to beneficiaries for climate-resilient agroforestry or forestry activities in exchange for the project’s support to secure landowners tenure rights;**⁴⁵ and (iii) **The shared remuneration system** under which landowners commit to making land available to beneficiaries interested in implementing climate-resilient agroforestry or forestry activities for a defined period of time in exchange for shared remuneration as a partner or shareholder. Direct beneficiaries for these interventions are local communities interested in agroforestry and forestry systems; local landowners and the departmental directorates of the ministry in charge of land affairs (*please refer to section V B of the feasibility study for more details on each option*).

Activity 1.2.1. Identification and selection of potential beneficiaries and land owners partners

Initially a communication campaign and a call of expressions of interest will be conducted in the targeted districts to explain direct land access and security rights modalities under PREFOREST, in line with the different legislations, and to pre-select potential beneficiaries and landowners interested in strengthening land access and/or security rights for the implementation of PREFOREST interventions. Beneficiaries and landowners will be selected based on locally specific criteria defined and applied by a local multi-stakeholder committee composed of representatives of the communities, district officials and independent observers.⁴⁶ Selection criteria for landowners will include: (i) Proof of ownership of the land;⁴⁷ (ii) Area of the land and susceptibility to deforestation and forest degradation (or the expansion thereof); and (iii) Willingness to subdue part of the land for an extended period of time for agroforestry and forestry activities. The final decision will be made by the PMU. Pre-selected beneficiaries will be notified formally, and provided with information about the next steps.

⁴¹ Openforis suites – collect mobile – (<http://www.openforis.org/tools/collect-mobile.html>). These tools are softwares to map land use

⁴² See for example: Robinson BE, Holland MB, Naughton-Treves L. 2011. Does secure land tenure save forests? A review of the relationship between land tenure and tropical deforestation. CCAFS Working Paper no. 7. CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS). Copenhagen, Denmark.

⁴³ Report of the Technical and economic feasibility study CIRAD. 2019. Page 103.

⁴⁴ Nearly 6,000 ha of land have been secured by PRONAR in Bambou Mingali (2,000 ha), Pool and Ombima (4,350 ha) and Plateaux respectively. Blocks of land are in the process of being secured in other departments targeted by the Project. The Bouenza Departmental Council may also contribute to the Project by transferring some available land in former State farms. The contract duration will vary depending on the production systems and could be up to 10 years with possible renewal.

⁴⁵ Law 21-2018 of June 13, 2018, which sets the rules for land acquisition and use, is innovative in that it allows local communities to register land that they are holding under customary rights and to develop this land based on a land-use plan.

⁴⁶ Beneficiaries are the same ones who will establish agroforestry and forestry system under Activity 2.2.4, selected based on the same selection criteria detailed Output 2.2.

⁴⁷ Mostly through testimony by traditional leaders and local communities.

Activity 1.2.2. Establishment of formal agreements with beneficiaries and landowners and provision of support to strengthen tenure security rights

Then, the Project will provide legal and administrative support for the development, signature and formalization of agreements (e.g. notarized agreements) between beneficiaries and PRONAR and between beneficiaries and landowners. Transfer of user rights will be subject to compliance to a list of specifications, including the obligation for the beneficiaries to sustainably manage the transferred land following a plan approved by PRONAR. In respect to tenure security rights, the Project will primarily support departmental directorates of land affairs, particularly in the land adjudication process⁴⁸, and will support landowners over the administrative procedures to obtain land titles. The procedures for transferring land access rights to beneficiaries⁴⁹ will be defined with the objective to ensuring equity and providing equal opportunity to all stakeholders, especially the most marginalized (e.g. women, indigenous people). In this regard, the Project will seek to secured access and tenure right over a total area of at least 5,000 ha for women and marginalized groups, notably indigenous people.

Component 2: Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems for climate change mitigation

Component 2 consists of supporting initiatives, implemented by individual smallholder farmers and their communities in the three supply basins targeted by the Project, that aim to stabilize slash-and-burn agriculture to avoid further deforestation for agricultural extension through increased soil fertility and productivity and provide a sustainable source of fuelwood in order to reduce the pressure on natural forests. This will significantly reduce deforestation and forest degradation, increase smallholder farmers' adaptive capacity, and reduce their vulnerability to climate change. The activities under the component will be sustainably implemented even after the end of the project thanks to the enabling environment developed under Component 1. The activities carried out by the beneficiaries of this component will eligible for the marketing support and financial schemes to be developed and implemented under Component 3.

The component will follow an integrated landscape approach (ILA) framed around multifunctionality of the forest ecosystem and driven by participatory and cross-sectoral processes. In this approach, individual farms will be managed from an integrated landscape perspective to achieve sustainable agriculture production, higher productivity, and also sustainable wood energy availability. This will also contribute to biodiversity conservation as well as improved well-being and poverty alleviation through increased and diversified incomes in every specific location (*please refer to section III B of the feasibility study for more information*).

Output 2.1. Fast start forestry systems for energy purposes established (FAO co-financing through CAFI resources)

Activity 2.1.1. Provision of technical assistance⁵⁰ for the establishment of fast start forestry systems for energy purposes

Through resources provided by CAFI and executed by FAO, this output seeks to establish approximately 2,700 ha of forestry systems⁵¹ specifically for energy use. The aim is to provide a readily available sustainable fuelwood supply source from the early stages of project intervention in order to avoid tree cutting of natural forests for fuelwood. Indeed, these fast start actions are essential since the production of fuelwood from plantations of fast growing species like acacia⁵² will take at least 7-8 years. Forestry systems will be carried out in already degraded land. From year 1, the project will identify existing community-based initiatives with the potential to be scaled up. Potential partners have been identified during the formulation phase.⁵³ The project

⁴⁸ Process through which existing rights in a particular parcel of land are finally and authoritatively ascertained

⁴⁹ Beneficiaries are the same ones who will establish agroforestry and forestry system under Activity 2.2.4, selected based on the same selection criteria detailed Output 2.2.

⁵⁰ Specific criteria will be applied for the value and scope of the TA (for 2.1.1 and 2.2.4):

- Area for which beneficiaries have secured access through component 1
- Capacity of each beneficiary : availability of workforce and of tools
- Status of the beneficiaries: if structured or not within an association

This information will be aligned with and highlighted in the business plans.

⁵¹ It will be achieved taken into consideration that fast start forestry systems will be implemented with contributions of beneficiaries through supporting existing initiatives and/or supporting new initiatives that could be implemented rapidly. CAFI kept the same assumptions used under PREFOREST to estimate the conservative objective of 2,700 Ha for the PREFOREST proposal. This objective may be updated.

⁵² Acacia is not considered as exotic nor invasive in Congo as per national legislation and CABI database (<https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/2157>). Acacia is already widely valorized by PRONAR (Ministry of Forest Economy), including for previous systems established by PRONAR in Bambou Mingali area.

⁵³ For example of "Société des Plantations Forestières Batéké Brazzaville", which planted 200 ha *Acacia auriculiformis* on its 10,000ha of secured land in the Plateau Batéké in 2018 for the production of fuelwood.

will provide the resources required for the establishment of the systems by selected beneficiaries, monitor implementation and document lessons learned to inform subsequent interventions.⁵⁴ Activity 2.1.1 will be carried out by FAO through the implementation of technical assistance to establish the systems which shall not exceed 80% of the costs of establishment the respective fast start tree plantation; The project will cover 100% of the total cost of the establishment of the forestry systems for indigenous people. The beneficiaries may also carry out supporting activities in relation to establishment of agroforestry systems (such, as watering), which will be outside the scope of the activity 2.1.1.

Output 2.2. Low emission, climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems established.

Activity 2.2.1. Awareness raising on climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems

A communication (information and awareness) strategy targeting smallholder farmers as well as policy makers, will be developed and implemented to provide them with detailed and context-specific information about local opportunities and benefits with respect to agroforestry and forestry systems. The communication strategy will be implemented through context specific and locally relevant communication channels and on a regular basis with a greater emphasis on the direct participation of local communities.

Activity 2.2.2 Transfer of access and use rights on government land to smallholder farmers/producers (MEF co-financing)

The project and the Government of Congo will finalize administrative and legal modalities to transfer land from PRONAR and other land available on former State farms to beneficiaries for the implementation of PREFOREST interventions. The project will support selected beneficiaries in all legal and administrative processes required under the transfer of user rights. Meetings will be organized with relevant government sectoral ministries and agencies to elaborate terms of land transfer and use rights, including duration.

Activity 2.2.3. Organization of practical training on climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems

Selected beneficiaries will be trained on innovative/proven and locally relevant low emission, climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems using the Farmers Field School methodology.⁵⁵ Through the trainings, smallholder farmers will learn appropriate combinations of ground and tree crops and the ways in which certain tree crops can enrich the soil and improve the environment for other crops.

Training will combine off-site teaching and practical application on-site; a training program specific to the needs and constraints of each group will be developed and implemented. Beneficiaries will be organized into groups based on their interest in specific agroforestry and forestry systems as well as level of literacy, gender, social proximity, etc. A specific training format will be developed for the training of trainers.

Key elements of the FFS approach include:

- (i) Practical sessions take place in fields;
- (ii) Training is in groups (i.e. diverse in terms of age, gender, experience, etc.);
- (iii) Education is hands-on, experiment-based, learning through discovery;
- (iv) Local and outside knowledge are integrated through observation, critical analysis, sharing and debate;
- (v) Conclusions and implementation are based on the knowledge generated, enhancing decision-making skills;
- (vi) Learning is a continuous process – regular meetings are held at critical crop production stages.

Activity 2.2.4. Provision of technical assistance for the establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems

⁵⁴ Establishment of plantations will be implemented by FAO through procurement of goods and services.

The same modality for the coverage of the establishment of the agroforestry systems necessary cost in the activity 2.2.4 applies.

⁵⁵ The FFS is an approach based on people-centered learning. It offers space for hands-on group learning to shift towards more sustainable production practices through better understanding of complex agro-ecosystems. Participants learn how to improve skills through observing, analyzing, and trying out new ideas on their own fields, contributing to improved production and livelihoods. Upscaling is achieved through training of trainers approach to FFS. More information available [here](#).

The project will support beneficiaries in establishing approximately 11,800 ha⁵⁶ of micro and small-sized low emission, climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems (5-50 ha on average)⁵⁷ in the 13 target districts. By establishing agroforestry and forestry systems for fuelwood and crop production, the project will directly reduce pressure on natural forests, leading to GHG emission reductions from slash-and-burn agriculture for agricultural expansion and fuelwood production as well as an increase in carbon stocks. At formulation stage, different agro-forestry models have been analysed by FAO and CIRAD⁵⁸ and the models selected for PREFOREST have been assessed as ones most relevant and adapted to the specific context of Southern Congo, increasing the impact potential in terms of climate change mitigation with adaptation co-benefits (please refer to the Section III " Technical and economic feasibility study" and activity 2.2.4 in the Feasibility study Feasibility study for detailed information).

Innovative, proven⁵⁹ and locally relevant production systems will be developed, depending on the type of vegetation cover in the targeted districts. These production systems will specifically be agroforestry systems, integrating tree species for the production of charcoal and fruit trees with subsistence crops (e.g. cassava, peanuts, maize, beans, etc.) and market garden crops.⁶⁰

The agroforestry models introduced will have the following direct climate change mitigation benefits by increasing the productivity and avoiding the expansion of deforestation, as well as adaptation co-benefits (please see feasibility study Section V B for more details):

- a) increase soil quality and fertility by nitrogen fixation with use of leguminous
- b) increase carbon sequestration and improve the land-use through more forest cover
- c) introduce adapted crop varieties that are more resilient to droughts and water stress especially for cassava, fuelwood production and fruit-trees
- d) increase resilience by diversifying crops within the agroforestry system
- e) introduce the use of trees in order to protect crops from erratic rains and provide shade

The agroforestry models have been identified through the following criteria: i) crops locally used and that are part of the current diet; ii) crops and trees adapted to be produced in the area; iii) resilience to climate-stressors such as generalized temperature and water stress recurrence in order to improve climate-change resilience; vi) market demand; v) capacity to be produced by smallholder farmers; and vi) environmental and social safeguards for a category B project.

In the forested areas of Kouilou, Niari, Pool and Bouenza: forestry and agroforestry species will be integrated into the systems in the following combinations: woodfuel trees-cassava-peanuts-maize; cocoa-plantains-peanuts; fruit trees-vegetables or annual staple food crops (e.g. groundnut, pigeon pea, cassava, maize); fruit trees-vegetable crops; forest trees-fruit trees; forest trees-bananas.

In the savanna areas of Plateaux: crop-tree combinations will be developed through cropping systems under tree cover, improved fallow land with trees, hedges demarcating farms, and the Taungya technique.⁶¹ For example, production systems for cocoa-based agroforestry plantations in savanna areas will essentially consist of cocoa and could include other small species such as guavas, butter fruit, soursop and citrus trees for the low stratum (0-7 meters); fruit trees (butter fruit, avocado, cola) and palm trees for the middle stratum (10-20 meters); and forest trees (kapok, limba, iroko, njansang, ayous) which recycle nutritional elements and provide some shade for the upper stratum (> 20 meters).

The beneficiaries are low-income smallholder farmers associated in micro and small-sized community-based initiatives.⁶² The project will provide equipment, improved seed materials and other agricultural inputs (i.e. organic fertilizers, materials for integrated pest and soil fertility management), and any logistic support for agroforestry and forestry work which will be necessary for clearing, cutting old trees, transport of seedlings,

⁵⁶ In addition to 2,700 ha to be established under FAO (CAFI) co-financing in the activity 2.1.1.

⁵⁷ Micro size system (5-10ha); Small size systems (>10-50ha). Systems between 2-5ha will also be considered.

⁵⁸ CIRAD is one of the leading international research centres world wide

⁵⁹ Some agroforestry and forestry models promoted by this Project are innovative in the Project area in Congo, but have been successfully implemented elsewhere (e.g. Mampu system using acacia species from DRC). All the models will includes only native and already well adopted species by local communities.

⁶⁰ For more details, please refer to the report of the technical and economic feasibility study. CIRAD 2019.

⁶¹ A system whereby villagers are given the right to cultivate agricultural crops during the early stages of forest systems establishment. Cultivation is often allowed to continue until trees shade crops due to canopy closure.

⁶² Initiative refers to micro (5-10 ha) and small (>10-50 ha) sizes agroforestry and/or forestry projects carried by beneficiaries as part of PREFOREST interventions.

marking, digging, planting, weeding, pruning trees, fertilization, plant protection, harvest, firewood cut amongst others. The smallholder farmers will need to comply with the environmental and social safeguards established in advance⁶³ and confirmed in agreements signed between the project and the beneficiaries. In alignment with the content of the approved business plans (output 3.1), the project will cover between 50-80% of the investment cost for smallholders' groups or individuals through technical assistance and procurement of different required items (including equipment).⁶⁴ For indigenous groups (typically the poorest part of the Congolese population) the project will cover 100% of the investment. The beneficiaries may also carry out supporting activities in relation to establishment of agroforestry systems (such, as watering), which will be outside the scope of the activity 2.2.4. Even though farmers will be able to plant some short-cycle crops before tree cover is established, the period before fuelwood or tree crops can be harvested means that this first investment is essential to ensure the establishment of forestry and agroforestry systems. Financial viability will be secured in the long term but the essential mitigation impact will not be achieved in the absence of this initial project investment. Once farmers are convinced of the results of the systems, it is assumed that sustainability will be ensured without the need for further support.

Activity 2.2.5. Monitoring and evaluation of overall Project interventions

The Project will conduct a performance evaluation. An M&E officer will be contracted to carry out overall monitoring throughout the Project lifetime, but independent evaluators will be contracted for the interim and final project performance evaluation.

Output 2.3. Nurseries are rehabilitated and forests are restored

The project will support the rehabilitation of nurseries and adjoining infrastructures in Ngondji (Kouilou), Dolisie (Niari), Loudima (Bouenza), and Kintélé (Pool) to scale up seedling and sapling production potential in order to provide a sustainable source of high-quality plant materials for the establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems. In parallel, the project will support the implementation of assisted natural regeneration activities⁶⁵ in areas already degraded by slash and burn and protection of the main forest ecosystems subject to pressure from the local population in savanna-forest transition areas. More specifically, the activity will target community land subject to strong anthropic pressure due to slash-and-burn agriculture for agricultural expansion and fuelwood production.

Activity 2.3.1. Rehabilitation of nurseries (MEF co-financing)

Government managed nurseries within SNR (Service Nationale de Reboisement) premises will be restored and additional nurseries will be established. A needs assessment will be conducted to identify logistical needs for rehabilitation of existing nurseries (*please refer to section F of the feasibility study for more information about the current status of nurseries*). Based on the results from the needs assessment, a fast start rehabilitation plan will be developed to cater for the needs identified.

The project will also support women's and other smallholder farmer groups to establish and/or manage tree nurseries as part of the establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems.

Activity 2.3.2. Deployment of Assisted Natural Regeneration

The target area for the assisted natural generation is 5,000 ha. Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) will be carried out in areas already degraded by slash and burn in order to regenerate the natural forests and contribute to carbon sequestration. Criteria for selecting degraded forest areas include: (i) The level of degradation; (ii) The potential for natural regeneration; (iii) The potential for community engagement for safeguarding; (iv) The location of the areas within the Project boundaries; (v) The potential to create synergies with ongoing and future

⁶³ Which include the commitment to zero-deforestation practices

⁶⁴ The project will cover 100% of the investment for smallholder farmers member of indigenous population or minority ethnic group and that have all rights to the land parcel that are required to establish the forestry/agroforestry system pursuant to applicable law
The project will cover 80% of the investment of individual smallholders who have all rights to the land parcel that are required to establish the forestry/agroforestry system pursuant to applicable law and have capacity (workforce and tools) to carry out the remaining 20% of establishing forestry/agroforestry system.

The project will cover 50% of the investment for smallholder groups or smallholder farmers that have all rights to the land parcel that are required to establish the forestry/agroforestry system pursuant to applicable law; own more than 10 ha of land; possess or be able to access machinery for land clearance, transportation; have capacity (workforce, and tools and management skills) to carry out the remaining 50% of establishing the forestry/agroforestry system.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

forest restoration initiatives. The degraded forest landscape of the western part of Mayombe, as well as forest areas recently converted to agricultural land, have already been pre-identified by PRONAR and FAO for assisted natural regeneration activities. The project will refine the identification of targeted ANR areas, for 5,000 ha, through additional GIS analysis and participatory ground truthing activities. ANR methodological approaches will be defined based on site-specific environmental conditions. A community-based landscape approach⁶⁶ will be promoted. Several technical options will be developed, each of which should be based on a combination of different silvicultural treatments, among others gazetted forest areas, fire management, enrichment planting of multiple-use species, thinning, pruning, etc.

Output 2.4. Support for the upscaling of climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry models is provided

Activity 2.4.1. Support for the upscaling of climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry models

The project will support the improvement and dissemination of selected agroforestry and forestry production systems through the establishment of demonstration and trial plots. This work will be potentially carried out by the IRF and IRA as procured parties in close collaboration with other relevant institutions, such as *Lycée Agricole AMILCAR CABRAL Brazzaville* for agroforestry and forestry activities, *Institut de formation technique professionnelle de Loudima*. Formal partnerships will be established with the objective of advancing actions aimed at developing context-specific and locally relevant agroforestry and forestry systems. The terms of partnerships with each institution will stipulate roles and responsibilities from each party, including monitoring modalities for the effective implementation of the agreements.

The project will therefore monitor the production systems implemented by beneficiaries, measure their productivity as well as their efficacy in reducing GHG emissions and creating multiple ecosystem services, and will propose improvements along the way. Site specific model concepts will be developed by the selected research institutions based on existing identified models, then approved by a scientific committee established by the project. Demonstration plot sites will be secured for the implementation of selected concepts and site-specific technologies will be adopted consistent with the methodological approach. Data will be collected, analyzed and successful results broadly disseminated through community-friendly communication channels and eventually published in peer review journals. The local community will be the main beneficiary of the intervention.

Component 3: Strengthening agroforestry financing structures, business capacities and value chains.

Component 3 aims to support the growth of resilient community-based, low carbon agroforestry and forestry entrepreneurship in Congo by strengthening access to rural credit by beneficiaries and by developing business capacities. The Project will tackle the main barriers faced by farmers in accessing micro-finance from both the demand and supply sides. On the demand side, the Project will support the development of market-oriented agroforestry systems through training and mentoring in the development and implementation of business plans. On the supply side, the Project will support the capacity building of MFIs' loan officers in climate finance and the development of new credit/service products adapted to the needs of farmers. The Project will also support intermediation between farmers and MFIs for the effective use of new credit/service products.

Output 3.1. Beneficiaries of low carbon, climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems are supported in developing and implementing robust and bankable business models

The Project will support beneficiaries who implement low-emission agroforestry and forestry systems in developing robust and bankable business plans to be then funded by MFIs and private sector entities. The business plans will be selected based on their climate change mitigation impact potential⁶⁷ and according to the sustainability of operations once the initial project support is over. Support will be available for development of business plans from the beginning of the Project and will include mentoring and training beneficiaries on financial and accounting aspects, effective management of operations, as well as processing and marketing.

⁶⁶ Forest areas to be regenerated will not be considered as silos separated from other landscape types. They have to be closely linked to the same landscape and administrative unit.

⁶⁷ The criteria for selection of the business plans includes beneficiaries commitment to engage in non slash/burn agricultural practices.

Smallholder farmers will be supported in this through the development of beneficiaries' business capacities and the development of bankable business plans. These activities will be carried out in coordination with IFAD-PAJE, which will provide co-financing. PREFOREST will be assisting smallholder farmers in:

- (i) Developing comprehensive and sustainable business plans suitable for presentation to financing institutions;
- (ii) Providing technical advisory services ranging from production to processing, including mechanization where required; and
- (iii) Financing of approved business plans under a shared cost financing mechanism.⁶⁸

In parallel to PREFOREST activities that will mainly take place at the forest frontier and be focused on climate change mitigation, IFAD-PAJE activities will be located primarily in savanna and clearing areas and geared towards strengthening climate change resilience. Accordingly, technical and financial support provided for the development and implementation of business plans under PREFOREST and IFAD-PAJE will complement and reinforce each other, while also maximizing overall PREFOREST impacts. In particular, IFAD-PAJE will be addressing one of the main constraints to marketing of produce, namely training and leverage of funding for storage and transportation. Direct beneficiaries of all these activities are smallholder farmers, who will benefit from new skills and knowledge in respect of the development and implementation of bankable business plans.

3.1.1. Development and implementation of business plans in forest areas

The business plans are an essential tool to guarantee sustainability of the interventions and will be used for the identification of the investment necessary for the establishment of the agroforestry systems (output 2.2.) after the initial phase of project support. These business plans will also emphasize the whole products value chain, by linking the producers to markets and by including other costs which could be related to transportation, storage and transformation. They will be used to leverage additional funding from MFIs (output 3.3.) and for the establishment of partnerships with private sector entities (Output 3.4.).

The use of Rural Invest – a free FAO software – will be promoted for the development of business plans. Particular emphasis will be placed on building women and youth organizations' capacities with regard to business plan implementation and monitoring.

Selected beneficiaries will be supported in the development and implementation of business plans. Each beneficiary will be assigned a personal mentor for targeted support for the development and implementation of his/her business plan, and each mentor may support several beneficiaries at the same time (between 5-10 beneficiaries each). Mentors will need to be familiar with business development and project management in the agriculture and forestry sectors, as well as having some knowledge of the local environment.

Activity 3.1.2. Development and implementation of business plans for beneficiaries in savanna areas (IFAD co-financing)

In parallel to the development and implementation of business plans in forested areas, the project will support the development and implementation of business plans specific to agriculture development, including agroforestry, in savanna areas under IFAD-PAJE co-financing. These business plans will also emphasize the whole products value chain, by linking the producers to markets and by including other costs which could be related to transportation, storage and transformation. The approach in this regard will be similar to the one in forest areas, the main difference being the type of landscape.

Output 3.2. Capacities of national credit institutions (banks and microfinance institutions) are strengthened to increase credit supply for low carbon, climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry sectors and to support the Project's initiatives

The project aims at leveraging resources from microfinance institutions in order to finance part of the business plans to ensure the sustainability of the mitigation impact and enhanced climate resilience. The institutions will be supported in developing appropriate credit lines for these purposes. To this end, strategic partnerships will be established with national microcredit institutions in order to increase credit availability for the climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry initiatives created by the beneficiaries. Several financial institutions with interest in leveraging financing for investment in the agroforestry and forestry systems promoted by the Project have been identified during the formulation of the Project and have already sent letters of intent to support the project. These include:

⁶⁸ Depending on the beneficiaries, the project could support 50 to 100% of the first investment required for the establishment of the agroforestry system, as per the content of the Component 2, Activity 2.2.2

Table 3: Potential financial partners to the Project

Financial institution	Sector of intervention	Regions of interventions in relation to PREFOREST	Credits amounts	Loan terms/ Requirements	Interest rate	Profile
CAPPED	Commercial Agriculture	Brazzaville, Pointe Noire, Bouenza	Between 300.000 et 10.000.000 FCFA (600 and 20.000 USD)	Owner of savings account for at least 3 months old; Warranties: 20% of the loan amount; Present material warranty	3% per month	Created in 2003. Launch in February 2020 of an agricultural loan
CODEC	Agriculture Trade Craftsmanship Payroll domiciliation Entrepreneurship	Brazzaville, Pool, Pointe Noire, Oyo	Up to 2.5 M FCFA for agriculture Up to 10 M FCFA for companies	Active membership, Owner of an used account (for the last 3 months); Have 1/3 of the requested loan in the account	Negotiable (from 1.5 % per month)	Created on February 8, 2019 in Brazzaville Several agencies Already collaborating with the PDAC Project of the World Bank where beneficiaries have opened accounts.
MUCODEC	Agriculture Trade Construction Craftsmanship business creation Equipment Payroll domiciliation	Present in all departments (country-wide)	Up to à 100 M FCFA ; Equipment up to 25 M FCFA Building up to 50 M FCFA Agriculture up to 50 M FCFA Trade up to 5 MFCFA	Owner of a checking account; Active membership Have sufficient savings; Justify the means of reimbursement. Provide guarantees (guarantees, mortgage, etc.).	Depend on the total amount and the duration of the loan Average 1.7% per month	Created in 1984 in Madingou (Bouenza). Important local network; Experience: presence in the MFI sector for over 36 years; 53 Local Banks (CLM) and Points of Sale (PV) Has a radio channel (100.3 FM).
HOPE CONGO	Trade Building Transport Agriculture	HQ in Brazzaville Agencies in Pointe Noire	Community Bank Loans For solidarity groups (20–30 members) Loan btw 55.000–599.000 FCFA with 5% interest rate per member For smaller Solidarity groups (5–20 members) with long term partnership Loan btw 0.6 to 2M FCFA	Requirements: 18 to 65 years old; Be a Congolese citizen or legal resident; Provide a valid identification document; Owner of a commercial activity; Participation in 3 training sessions on business before joining a group; Deposit 10% of the initial loan balance (compulsory savings).	4,5% to 5% per month depending on the amount	HOPE Congo is a Christian microfinance institution that officially launched its activities in 2010. HOPE Congo is part of HOPE International, a microfinance network that works in sixteen (16) countries around the world.

			with 4.5% to 5 interest rate per member			
COFINA (Present in 6 African countries)	Trade Construction Agriculture Transport	Brazzaville	Between 100.000 and 150.000.000 FCFA (200 and 325.000 USD)	Owner of an account, Proof of the ability to reimburse; Present 15% of the requested amount.	Between 1.5 and 2% monthly	Installed in Congo in 2017. No specific product dedicated to agriculture.

Activity 3.2.1. Capacity building of national financial institutions on rural finance for agriculture (IFAD co-financing)

With IFAD-PAJE (Projet Agriculture, Jeunes et Entreprenariat – Agriculture, youth and entrepreneurship project) co-financing, the Project will build the capacity of selected MFIs in rural finance for agriculture as per PAJE project approach, including agro-forestry. This approach is based on the following (i) update of their related policies and procedures; (ii) strengthening of the approval process of loans attribution and monitoring in order to better secure operations linked to new products developed through an integrated risk management system; (iii) development of appropriate tools for the recording and monitoring of the new financial products to be developed; and (iv) re-specification (and / or refinement) of agri-food financing in their strategic orientation. A methodological guide will also be developed on rural finance for agriculture and this guide will be used as a basis of the capacity building to be provided Ministry of Agriculture (MAEP) executing IFAD co-financing. Technical support will be provided to the selected MFIs on a regular basis so as to mainstream rural finance for agriculture development in their operations.

Activity 3.2.2. Capacity building of national financial institutions on green investment in agroforestry and forestry sectors

A capacity needs assessment will be carried out with respect to financial products and services that best fit the needs of beneficiaries. Local MFIs will be assisted to develop responsible green investment criteria specific to the low carbon climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry sectors, taking account of the need to better understand and manage associated risks. Loan officers, who will work directly with the beneficiaries and support them in developing their business models, will be given specialized training. Specific attention will be paid to mainstreaming the Project’s outputs (e.g. green investment criteria, micro-credit products) into MFI’s financial operations for sustainability.

Training for banks and microfinance institutions will include information on the particular constraints faced by women in accessing finance and financial products in order to raise awareness on this issue. There will also be efforts to tailor financial products to women’s needs⁶⁹.

External evaluations of the MFI that have received training will be conducted on a regular basis in order to identify gaps and to provide corrective actions to improve capacity building. These evaluations will look specifically into how the knowledge from the training is being integrated into the regular financial operations of the MFI.

Activity 3.2.3. Development of a national financial inclusion strategy and formalization of MFIs (IFAD co-financing)

The project will support the development of a national financial inclusion strategy with special emphasis on agroforestry and forestry financing. The main beneficiaries of this intervention – and of the project – are smallholder farmers who will benefit from new financial products and services, as well as MFIs, whose capacity

⁶⁹ For example, women may be interested in local savings groups and credit unions which are closer to home and easily accessible – e.g. they may be close to markets or hospitals. Women are interested in financial credit primarily to support their own agricultural activities (seeds, etc.). Some of these issues were raised in the pre-project consultations, but additional surveys and consultations will be conducted on this topic during inception to further refine the strategy to best fit women’s needs

will be strengthened to widen their portfolios to the agro-forestry and forestry sub-sectors. Particular attention will be given to gender and women's access to financial institutions.

Under IFAD co-financing, a methodological approach for the development of a national financial inclusion strategy with special emphasis on agroforestry and forestry financing will be developed and approved through widespread consultation. The strategy will then be elaborated based on the approved methodology and the results validated at a national workshop. In parallel, up to 20 MFIs will be selected based on their potential for operations in the agriculture and forestry sectors. These MFIs, will eventually serve as reference financial institutions with respect to climate finance in general and rural financing for agroforestry and forestry in the Congo in particular. In order to become part of the financial inclusion strategy, these MFIs will need to go through the formal accreditation process.⁷⁰ An institutional analysis of the shortlisted MFIs will be conducted to identify relevant gaps with respect to this process. The project will then provide support, which includes information on administrative process and description of the different steps/paperworks necessary for the formalization of the MFIs, to fill the gaps identified with a view to completing and following up on this as it will be an important part of ensuring the sustainability of funding of activities contributing to climate change mitigation.

Output 3.3. Locally relevant financial instruments are developed to support low carbon climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry initiatives

The Project's sustainability is based *inter alia* on the stimulation of an affordable supply of credit suitable for the forestry and agricultural sectors. An increased supply of credit to support the development of agroforestry and forestry initiatives is considered essential to stimulate the expansion of rural Congolese entrepreneurship, mobilizing the capital of micro and small-sized initiatives carried out by smallholder producers and associations, and support the development of value chains.

The project will partner with national and local MFIs (MUCODEC, CAPPED, CODEC, COFINA, Hope Congo and FCECM) to develop microcredit and meso-finance products with conditions favourable to the adoption of climate-friendly practices based on predefined investment criteria that builds on environmental and social safeguards also to be elaborated or strengthened with project support (characterization of the MFIs are detailed in the Feasibility Study, Section C). The main beneficiaries of this intervention are smallholder farmers, who will benefit from the new credit lines, and MFIs which will increase their portfolio.

Activity 3.3.1. Identification and development of suitable credit lines for forestry and agricultural sectors

An in-depth diagnostic analysis of potential micro-finance products and services suitable for local conditions will be carried out⁷¹. Based on the findings of the analysis, targeted support will be provided to selected micro-finance institutions for the development and mainstreaming of new credit lines. These could offer credit with low interest rates and with long-term maturity periods, in line with harvest cycles and to facilitate the adoption of best adaptation and mitigation practices along the agroforestry and forestry value chains. The technical assistance and the inputs provided to the beneficiaries in the framework of the project will reassure the MFIs that the beneficiaries are already familiar with the establishment of sustainable and profitable agroforestry and forestry system and will be able to carry out the activities. The project will monitor and evaluate the suitability of the new credit lines with respect to their accessibility by beneficiaries and initiate corrective actions as needed.

Activity 3.3.2. Development of inclusive financial products and services for agri-food value chain (IFAD co-financing)

Under IFAD co-financing, the project will develop and mainstream inclusive financial products and services for agri-food produced under the agroforestry system into financial institution operations, which include value chains promoted by PREFOREST under component 2. A mapping analysis will be conducted to identify relevant products and services that can be further adapted to the agri-food sector. The project will then work

⁷⁰ The "accreditation" refers to the formalization and the obtainment of formal authorization to work as official MFI by the Ministry of Finance of Congo.

⁷¹ In year 1, the project will develop an outline of the financial instruments and options to be offered to farmers, and demand thereof, by microfinance institutions, which will be regularly updated.

with relevant MFIs to adapt and mainstream the locally relevant and agri-food friendly financial products and services into selected MFI operations, which will include transportation, storage and transformation of the crops. The performance of new financial products and services will be evaluated in terms of their inclusiveness potential on a regular basis and appropriate actions taken to improve results.

Activity 3.3.3. Facilitation of interactions between beneficiaries and national financial institutions for the effective use of new financial products and services

The Project will support various interventions aimed at facilitating interactions between MFI and producers adopting climate-friendly practices.⁷² The objective of the partnerships is to leverage financing for the implementation of robust business plans developed by the beneficiaries. Approximately 900,000 USD are targeted for the micro-finance institutions to complement costs for the establishment of the small size agroforestry systems. The availability of this seed money will provide an incentive for the MFIs to provide additional resources. The sum is well below the absorption capacity of the MFIs which has been evaluated at around 5M USD from only MUCODEC, COFINA and HOPE, because of the strong support and partnership provided by the project considered by the MFI as warranties of their involvement. More commitment from the other MFIs are expected during the strengthening of the partnership with the MFIs and the development of more adapted financial services/ products expected.

Output 3.4. Access to market by the beneficiaries is facilitated through the development of purchase agreements and sales platforms

The Project will also link producers to the market by supporting the development and implementation of long-term, fair price purchase agreements between groups of beneficiaries and selected off-takers / agro-industrial enterprises in Congo throughout a more equitable value chain. Following the stakeholder consultations and technical assessments undertaken during the formulation of the PREFOREST (see FS Annex 7) as well as supplementary work carried out in the project area in late 2020 to enrich the analysis, four primary avenues to sell and market crop and commodity products from beneficiaries' farms have been identified, namely: (i) company food enterprises; (ii) institutional off-takers; (iii) local farmers' markets; and (iv) urban wholesalers and retailers through rural middlemen. For each group, names of specific companies/markets, the products in which they deal and their location are given in the feasibility study. Many Letters of Intent including amounts of produce that they would purchase are already secured are provided in the Annex 23 (Support letters from partners).

Company food enterprises' market: This market consists of the local food systems represented by supermarkets and local restaurants. Social networks are extremely important for farmers to develop personal connections for direct sales to these actors. However, the fragmented nature of the local food value chain, presents many small-scale farmers with obstacles. To address this issue, the Project initiated consultation with several restaurants (e.g. Hôtel Elonda - Brazzaville; Hôtel Elais - Pointe-Noire; Grand Hôtel de Dolisie - Dolisie) in each of the five departments in the Project area during the formulation process as well as certain supermarkets. For example, Zando Market in Brazzaville has provided detailed information on its readiness to buy fresh produce from PREFOREST beneficiaries, specifying quantities required per week. Approximately 10% of the beneficiaries' total production will be purchased by company food enterprises.

Institutional off-takers' market: This consists of public and private off-takers who will purchase crops and commodities from beneficiaries farms either for local transformation or to fulfill requirements of their food supply service. The PREFOREST has secured letters of intent from several institutional off-takers. This includes: (i) Eco-Oil Energy S.A. interested in purchasing greasy crops (e.g. peanut and soybeans) to produce vegetable oil; (ii) COFCAO interested in purchasing cocoa products from agroforestry plantations through different market derivatives (e.g. forwards, future, etc.); (iii) SCDIE, which is in the process of building a cold storage facility, has indicated quantities of fresh produce that it would be interested in buying on an annual basis and (vi) World Food Programme interested in purchasing various crops (e.g. beans, cassava, etc.) for school canteens. 'Diamon Cacao' is another player for cocoa but not present in the PREFOREST project area. Approximately up to 70% of farmers' production will be purchased by institutional off-takers.

Local farmers markets: There are several local farmers' markets in each of the 13 districts (e.g. Marché de Kinkala; Marché de Igné). Some markets are open seasonally, while others are open on weekends or daily. Farmers sell crops and commodities at these markets in order to get money rapidly to address pressing household needs. This short

⁷² The project will facilitate interactions between MFIs and producers through:

- information sharing related to development, access and use of new and adapted credit lines for agro-forestry and forestry systems
- organization of meetings between MFIs and producers to facilitate exchanges and knowledge.

market circuit is mostly informal and relies to some extent to personal relationship between producers and buyers. The project will encourage producers to maintain and extend such connections.

Urban wholesalers' and urban retailers' markets: These are weekends and/or daily markets located in the big cities (i.e. Brazzaville, Pointe Noire, etc.). Rural middlemen provide intermediation services between the producers and these urban market off-takers. The project has identified and initiated discussions with a dozen rural middlemen during the formulation phase in each of the five departments. During implementation, the project will establish a committed group of rural middlemen and will link them with producers to coordinate supply and demand (i.e. joint sales) and to facilitate negotiation of fair prices.

Approximately 20% of farmers total production will service these two specific markets.

Additional negotiations have started at formulation stage and will be further explored at implementation stage: (i) BAYO, which is a dairy company based in Brazzaville that has set up supply arrangements with small-scale fruit producers near Brazzaville (Departements of Pool and Bouenza mainly). BAYO is planning to expand its business, (ii) Saris-Congo (<http://www.somdiaa.com/groupe/filiales/saris-congo/>), a commodity company (part of the SOMDIAA group), as well as (iii) CODIPA have potential interest in purchasing maize.

The main beneficiaries of this intervention will be smallholder farmers, who will obtain secure access to markets and clients who will acquire a reliable and high quality source for their products. Beneficiaries also include the institutional and non-institutional off-takers, who will benefit from a secure source of low carbon footprint products.

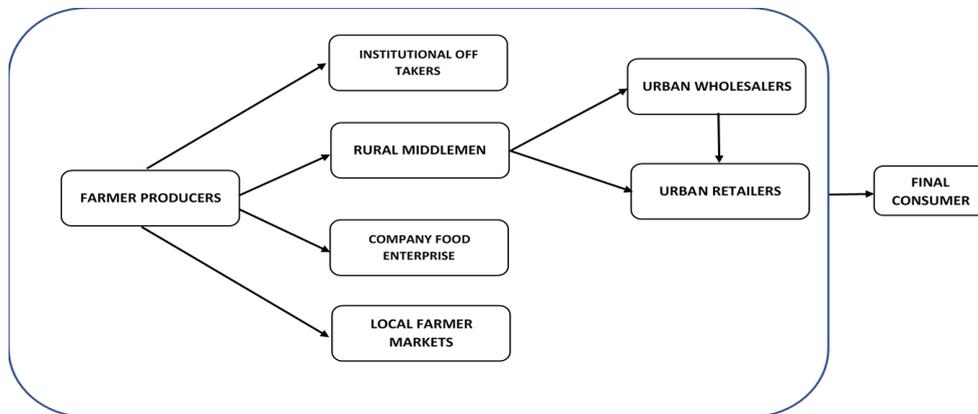


Figure 6. Project market scheme

Activity 3.4.1. Facilitation of the establishment of purchase agreements

The commodities produced with the technical support of the project will target smallholder farmers' subsistence consumption and sales. The project scenario developed in the economic and financial analysis shows an increase of the targeted crops as follows:

Table 4: With project crop production during project implementation

Tons	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8
Maize	0	401	1,135	1,375	1,778	2,194	2,927	2,402
Cassava	0	0	2,536	5,365	10,730	15,929	17,619	21,680
Charcoal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,656
Cocoa	0	0	0	0	0	0	76	152
Groundnut	0	463	1,948	2,299	2,614	2,930	3,972	2,803
Safou	0	0	0	0	0	428	998	1,710
Plantain	0	0	2,565	3,933	4,959	4,959	4,959	2,394

Box ⁷³	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8
Avocado	0	0	0	0	7,650	38,250	68,850	99,450
Orange	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,650	15,300
Aubergine	0	0	24,225	48,450	64,600	72,675	80,750	64,600
Okra	0	0	24,225	48,450	64,600	72,675	80,750	64,600

The project will identify potential off-takers – in addition to those already identified and explore opportunities to establish purchase agreements. Four primary avenues available to sell and market crop and commodity products from beneficiaries' farms have been indicated above.

Institutional off-takers will be more active in commodities requiring transformation, such as cocoa and groundnuts. The project's groundnuts production could be easily absorbed by Eco-Oil which is aiming to expand the country's oil production to an amount that would require 160,000t of shelled groundnuts from only 26,000 tonnes absorbed in 2015 (interest in project production has been confirmed in a letter of intent). COFCAO is ready to invest more than provided for under the project in order to increase cocoa production as cocoa demand has been identified and production is currently especially low in the south of the country where the project will be based (this has also been indicated in the letter of intent). SCDIE is an important off-taker for cassava, avocado and plantains and the *Cluster Union pour une agriculture compétitive* is ready to purchase important quantity of cassava, safou, plantain, avocado, orange and groundnuts.

PREFOREST has identified and initiated discussions with a dozen rural middlemen during the formulation phase in each of the five departments for the supply on cassava, maize, plantains; safou, aubergines, fuelwood and different fruits.⁷⁴ During implementation, the project will link these middlemen to producers through its market platform (see activity 3.4.2.) to coordinate supply and demand and to facilitate negotiation of fair prices.

PREFOREST has also initiated consultation with several local restaurants and chefs in each of the five departments in the project area during the formulation process. To strengthen networking and connection during implementation, the project will use workshop mingles, farm and restaurant tours, and locally sourced food events to bring producers and restaurants closer together. The production of plantain, cassava, okra, aubergine and different fruits will focus on these local markets.

The country needs on fuelwood is huge. For the supply of Brazzaville and Nkayi only, 47,500 ha additional plantations would be needed and the project objective could contribute to this need. To be noted that this need has been confirmed during consultation at local level, including with local Government.

Based on the contacts already established with off-takers and others to be prospected during project implementation, the demand will already cover the yearly production of many crops produced under the agro-forestry systems established by PREFOREST, such as cassava, cocoa, groundnut, avocado and orange. PREFOREST will thus facilitate the negotiation of prices and the signature and formalization of purchase agreements between respective off-takers and beneficiaries.

Table 5: market demand of the crops produces by the beneficiaries

Products	Maximum quantity produced per year by project beneficiaries (tonnes)	Market demand (per year)
Cassava	21,680	Agrideck- 450 tonnes SCDIE- 30,000 tonnes Cluster Union pour une agriculture compétitive- 30,000 tonnes

⁷³ Box equals about 5 kilos

⁷⁴ Information on markets are from the following studies: Ministère de l'agriculture et de l'élevage et FAO. 2013. Document synthèse du Bilan diagnostique de la filière manioc en République du Congo. And OTF, 2009. Etude sur la commercialisation de l'agriculture et sur l'investissement dans le secteur privé domestique. Banque Mondiale.

		Zando Marke-: 5 tonnes World Food Programme (WFP) Hani Transformation company: 6,300 tonnes
Cocoa	152	EPPAPVA- 150 tonnes COFCAO- no mentioned quantity but ready to invest more on cocoa production, on top of the project surface objective
Groundnut	2,930	Eco-Oil- equivalent of 50,000 ha production needed per year SCDIE- 10 tonnes Cluster Union pour une agriculture compétitive- 15 tonnes
Safou	1,710	Agrideck- 40 tonnes SCDIE 1,500 tonnes Cluster Union pour une agriculture compétitive- 2,000 tonnes
Plantain	4,959	Tolona- 300 tonnes SCDIE- 1,500 tonnes Cluster Union pour une agriculture compétitive- 2,000 tonnes Zando Market- 1 tonne Importation in 2018 : 370,000 tonnes
Avocado	99,450 boxes/ ~450 tonnes	SCDIE- 1500 tonnes Cluster Union pour une agriculture compétitive- 2,000 tonnes
Orange	15,300 boxes/ ~76 tonnes	SCDIE- 200 tonnes Cluster Union pour une agriculture compétitive- 250 tonnes
Maize	2,927	CODDIPA needs: 13,000 tonnes per year currently not covered

The project will draw on FAO's "Forest and Farm Facility"⁷⁵ (FFF) experience with respect to the establishment of short market circuits. This approach is based on:

- Access to information and market analysis: facilitating knowledge exchange and market intelligence among producers, who can work towards getting a better price for their products and identifying potential business partners that can help them access new markets. Market information is collected from remote rural areas and crosschecked with market data from across the regions and central level. This system is helping farmers become more aware of market trends and to be better organized in their negotiation with buyers.
- Organization of local forest and farm producers (project beneficiaries) into strong groups: strengthening the horizontal linkages between such producers and their enterprises has tremendous potential for scaling up their influence and creating thriving rural economies for the long term. The lack of such groups has been identified as a major impediment to successful marketing of products such as maize where substantial demand exists for animal feed.
- Negotiating fair prices: this action will rely on the information gathered on food prices. More efficient results, especially increased profits, are observed when producers are grouped within associations or cooperatives. PREFOREST beneficiaries will be connected in order to access the right market information and obtain the technical support needed for successful partnership with potential off-takers.

Activity 3.4.2. Support of local market platform and operationalization of purchase agreements with buyers (IFAD co-financing)

The Project will establish market platforms bringing together buyers and producers for the operationalization of purchasing agreements. The Project will support interactions within the platforms by coordinating demand and supply, delivery and other relevant interventions to facilitate the effective implementation of agreements throughout the value chain. For example, PREFOREST, in association with MAEP, will support the organization of community market days, joint sales, and the development of brands (name/logo, etc.) to communicate the

⁷⁵ The Forest and Farm Facility is a platform which seeks to strengthen and empower FFPOs, including women, youth and indigenous peoples as primary change agents for climate resilient landscapes and improved livelihoods. The Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) supports beneficiaries in improving livelihoods, while safeguarding the environment and responding to climate change. FFF offers a range of capacity-development services, including advocacy, information sharing, business incubation, access to financing and links to social services. For more information, please see: <http://www.fao.org/forest-farm-facility/en/>

quality of products to consumers. Producers will also receive technical support, mainly training, for the improvement of transportation,⁷⁶ storage and potential transformation of their production,⁷⁷ including for those produced with GCF proceeds.⁷⁸

General Selection Criteria for the Beneficiaries:

The beneficiaries (smallholder farmers) of the Project will be selected by the PMU according to the following criteria:

- Dependence to agriculture, natural resources and forest, and proximity⁷⁹ to forest area (potential actors for deforestation and forest degradation);
- Low income level (up to 2 USD/day, as defined by the Ministry of Finance of Congo);
- “Ownership” of degraded fallow and plot with high restoration potential;
- Vulnerability of key livelihoods to climate change impacts;
- Insecure land rights for women, indigenous peoples and smallholder farmers;
- No access / very limited access to public finance; and
- None or limited access to micro-finance institution; and
- Association or group membership.

Table 6: Scope of technical assistance to be provided under Activities 2.1.1 and 2.2.4

Beneficiaries	Share of the TA in the costs of establishment of a tree plantation or forestry/agroforestry system	Criteria	Scope of TA
Smallholder farmer	100%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be a member of indigenous population or minority ethnic group; 2. Have all rights to the land parcel that are required to establish the respective forestry/agroforestry system pursuant to applicable law. 3. Commitment to maintain forestry / agroforestry systems beyond establishment. 	<p>Technical advice, backstopping and capacity building on agroforestry and forestry systems.</p> <p>Equipment, improved seed materials and other agricultural inputs (i.e. organic fertilizers, materials for integrated pest and soil fertility management), and any logistic support. TA will be aligned with the specific needs indicated in the business plans to be developed by beneficiaries.</p>
Smallholder farmer	80%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have all rights to the land parcel that are required to establish the forestry/agroforestry system pursuant to applicable law; 	<p>Technical advice, backstopping and capacity building on agroforestry and forestry systems.</p>

⁷⁶ For the reduction of the production waste during transportation for example, by organizing the planning of the collection along the main roads.

⁷⁷ Drying methods, selection of optimal products, etc.

⁷⁸ MAEP may conduct a need assessment to determine needs in terms of equipment and to identify the beneficiaries. All detailed subactivities and modalities in the ground will be planned with beneficiaries once their needs assessed.

⁷⁹ closely linked in the same landscape and administrative unit.

		<p>2. Have capacity (workforce and tools) to carry out the remaining 20% of establishing the respective forestry/agroforestry system</p> <p>3. Commitment to maintain forestry / agroforestry systems beyond establishment.</p>	<p>Equipment, improved seed materials and other agricultural inputs (i.e. organic fertilizers, materials for integrated pest and soil fertility management), and any logistic support. TA will be aligned with the specific needs indicated in the business plans to be developed by beneficiaries.</p>
Farmer producer group or smallholder farmer	50%	<p>1. Have all rights to the land parcel that are required to establish the forestry/agroforestry system pursuant to applicable law;</p> <p>2. Own more than 10 ha of land;</p> <p>3. Possess or be able to access machinery for land clearance;</p> <p>4. Have capacity (workforce, tools and management skills) to carry out the remaining 50% of establishing the respective forestry/agroforestry system</p> <p>5. Commitment to maintain forestry / agroforestry systems beyond establishment.</p>	<p>Technical advice, backstopping and capacity building on agroforestry and forestry systems.</p> <p>Equipment, improved seed materials and other agricultural inputs (i.e. organic fertilizers, materials for integrated pest and soil fertility management), and any logistic support. TA will be aligned with the specific needs indicated in the business plans to be developed by beneficiaries.</p>

Selection criteria for MFI:

Identification of the potential MFI by PMU and in collaboration with stakeholders will be done through the following criteria:

- Presence of the MFI in the targeted area
- Credits allocated to cooperatives (not only individuals)
- Credits allocated for agriculture, forestry, fishery activities
- Reasonable credit rate (the level of the “reasonable rate” will be defined before applying the criteria)
- Simplified process (with low or without financial guarantee).

Please refer to section VI-F of the feasibility study for additional selection criteria per activity.

B.4. Implementation arrangements (max. 1500 words, approximately 3 pages plus diagrams)

Project Governance

Project governance will be carried out by two entities mandated for the supervision and technical oversight of the Project. These are: (1) the Steering Committee (SC) and (2) the Technical Committee (TC). Their roles are described below:

The Project Steering Committee (SC) will act as a decision-making organ and provide technical and strategic guidance by ensuring that links and appropriate coordination are maintained with relevant programmes/projects of all other United Nations agencies, as well as international environmental agreements, particularly the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CDB) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD). The SC will be chaired by the government (MEF), with FAO as Vice-Chair, and will be composed of representatives from various government entities who will support implementation, strategic development partners, the GCF focal point and the head of the Project Management Unit (Chief Technical Advisor) as well as civil society representatives. The SC will hold meetings at least twice a year to supervise the effective implementation of the Project, ensure sound management and propose relevant recommendations. Decisions of the SC will be based on agreement by the majority of members. Final decision of the SC will require consent by FAO.

The Technical Committee (TC) will ensure the technical soundness of the Project by providing technical advice to the PMU and ensuring coordination of the implementation of the Project with government agencies. The decisions of the TC will be based on agreement by the majority of members. FAO consent will be required for all TC decisions. It will report to the SC on the effective monitoring of procedures, as well as the procurement of products and deliverables essential to the Project. The TC will specifically support the PMU in supervising project activities, and will serve as a communication channel to coordinate the implementation of activities, particularly with government agencies. It will be co-chaired by the government (MEF) and the FAO and will be composed of representatives from government entities who will support implementation. If necessary, representatives of development partners, NGOs, research institutions and civil society will be invited to attend meetings to consolidate the technical soundness of the Project. The TC will meet 4 times a year, once in each quarter.

The composition of these two committees is proposed as follows:

Table 7: Composition of the Project's Steering Committee

STEERING COMMITTEE (SC)	
Category	Entity
Chair	Ministry of Forest Economy
Vice-Chair	FAO
Secretariat	National Project Coordinator
Members	Office of the Prime Minister
	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries
	Ministry of Land Affairs and State Property
	Ministry of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation
	Ministry of Energy and Hydraulics
	Ministry of Tourism and the Environment
	Chief Technical Advisor
	Green Climate Fund Focal Point
	REDD+ National Coordinator
	PRONAR National Coordinator
	SNR Director
Observers	IFAD-PAJE Focal Point
	CAFI Focal Point
	CACO-REDD
	World Food Programme (WFP)
	Private sector representative
	MFI representative
	Representative of agricultural and forestry producers
	GRET
ID	

Table 8: Composition of the Project's Technical Committee

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (TC)	
Category	Entity
Co-Chair	Ministry of Forest Economy
Co-Chair	FAO
Secretariat	National Project Coordinator
Members	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries
	Ministry of Land Affairs and State Property
	Ministry of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation
	Ministry of Energy and Hydraulics
	Ministry of Tourism and the Environment
	Ministry of Finance
	Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Integration of Women in Development
	Chief Technical Advisor
	REDD+ National Coordinator
	PRONAR
Observers	SNR
	IFAD – PAJE Focal Point
	CAFI Focal Point
	National Forestry Research Institute (IRF)
	National Agricultural Research Institute (IRA)
	CACO-REDD
	National Network for Indigenous Populations of the Congo (<i>Réseau National des Populations Autochtones du Congo - RENAPAC</i>).
	Private sector representative
	MFI representative
	Representative of agricultural and forestry producers
	Climate change focal point
	Adaptation Fund focal point
	GRET
ID	

Implementation Arrangements

FAO will serve both as the Accrediting Entity (AE) and the Executing Entity (EE) for this Project, with a structure that encourages a high level of appropriation and implementation by the government and supports capacity building objectives. FAO's AE and EE functions will be well separated internally in order to differentiate the Project supervision and the Project coordination functions. As the Executing Entity, FAO will take responsibility for the effective implementation and coordination of all Project components through a dedicated team. FAO will be in charge of ensuring coordination of the planning and implementation of Project activities financed by GCF proceeds. The PREFOREST will be co-financed by the Government of Congo, FAO through CAFI resources and IFAD. CAFI and IFAD, according to their rules and regulations, entirely compatible with FAO's, preselect the EEs based on the EE capacity and comparative advantage in executing the co-financed activities. The Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Congo will act as co-Executing Entity of the PREFOREST and will execute activities cofinanced by IFAD (Activity 3.1.2; Activity 3.2.1; Activity 3.2.3; Activity 3.3.2; and Activity 3.4.2). FAO will execute Activity 2.1.1 co-financed by FAO through CAFI resources. For CAFI and IFAD resources, CAFI's and IFAD's governance arrangements and intervention rules will also apply, in alignment with FAO's obligations under the AMA and with FAO regulations, rules and policies.

Implementation of GCF funded activities will also be via letters of agreement (in compliance with FAO policies) between FAO and national entities (such as MEF engaged in capacity of a procured party), which will implement specific project activities, in accordance with FAO's procurement rules (Manual 507). FAO will select these partners (procured parties) to perform services against a set of general and technical criteria that would include, inter alia, expertise in the technical field and past successful engagement with FAO. Along the same lines, the framework for collaboration will be

developed at the beginning of each annual exercise through the development of complementary/combined annual workplans and approved budgets (AWPB). The FAO Country Office's relationships with the government, technical and financial partners (TFPs) and civil society organizations may be used in the implementation of this Project to ensure continuity and sustainability of the activities beyond GCF financing. FAO will establish a Project Management Unit (PMU) for the Project within the MEF premises to handle the coordination and implementation of the Project (day-to-day management). One technical expert per region will be based locally in order to ensure presence in the field. These specialists will provide expertise and material related to the Project's themes if necessary (agriculture, forestry, gender, resource mobilization, etc.).

The PMU will handle coordination and implementation of the entire Project. The role of the PMU is to ensure that work on the three components is conducted as consistently as possible. The PMU will be responsible for awarding contracts, supervising the activities implemented by the various procured Parties (government, NGOs, private actors) and monitoring and evaluating compliance with safeguards. The PMU will work in close collaboration with various ministries and government agencies, which have a key role to play in supporting implementation of certain Project activities. It will receive technical assistance from FAO and will report to the Technical Committee (TC) and the Steering Committee (SC). All decisions by the PMU will require consent by FAO. The PMU will be headed by an international Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), an FAO staff member, who will have an overview of the Project. The CTA will work together with the National Coordinator for the Project who will be appointed by the MEF thereby ensuring strong ownership of the Project by MEF and a smooth hand over at Project completion. Each government entity (PRONAR, SNR, MAEP, MAFDP, and MTE) will designate a focal point for PREFOREST to monitor aspects of Project implemented by the government and report to the CTA. The PMU will meet every week or more often if necessary, to monitor Project activities. PMU personnel will include recruited experts who will work in close collaboration with the government personnel made available to the Project.

Regular dialogue with the CAFI governance bodies (Interministerial Committee, Steering Committee) and IFAD PAJE will be established, facilitated by the PMU. This is to ensure that expected results and objectives, activities and workplans of all co-executing entities take into account contributions from parallel initiatives and are complementary rather than overlapping. FAO has specialists in REDD+ and forest monitoring based in the Headquarters in Rome and in the Regional Office for Africa (RAF), as well as experts on innovation issues related to agroforestry, funding and value chains. These individuals will strengthen the technical pool at the Project's disposal by providing experience, knowledge and expertise from other regions in Africa, particularly west Africa where FAO is currently working with its member states to develop understanding of the climate change mitigation options in forests and land use.

The figure below shows the composition of the PMU and the national coordination planned to support its implementation:

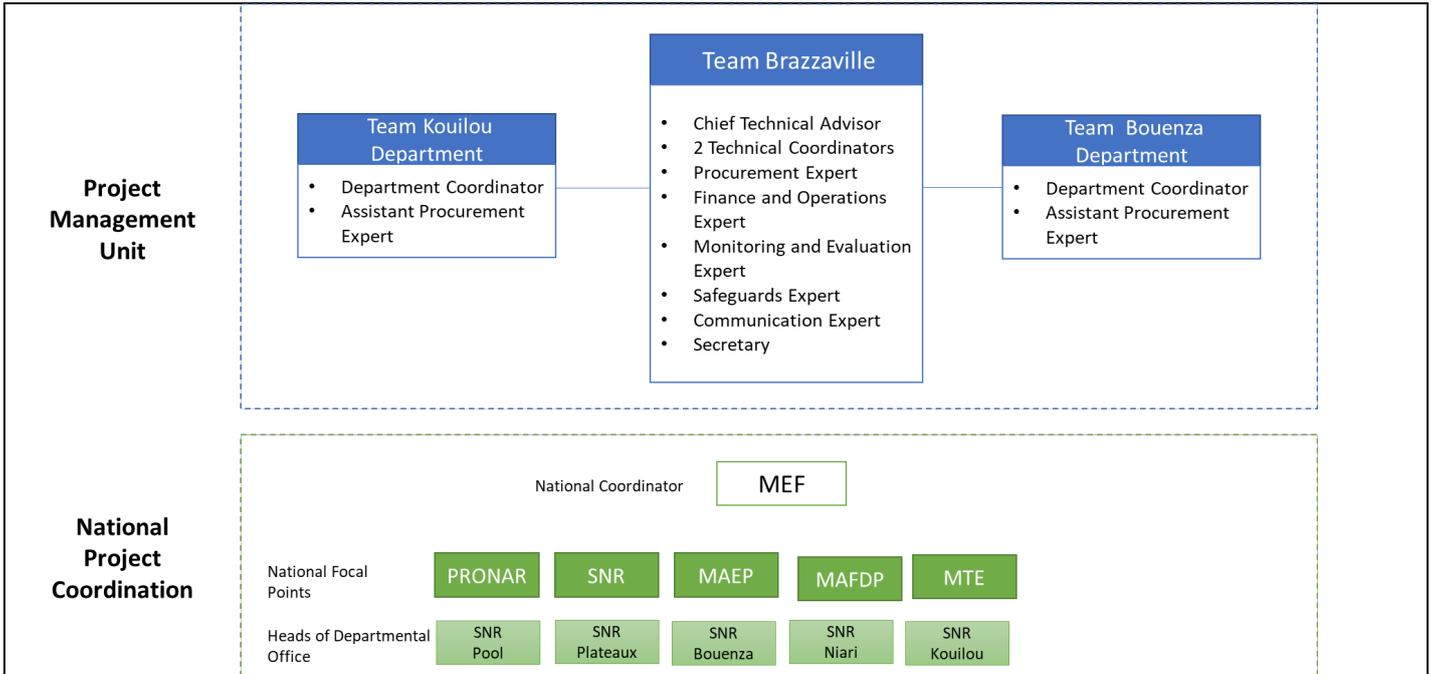


Figure 7: Composition of the PMU and National Project Coordination

The implementation of the Project will be divided as follows:

Table 9: Project’s possible procured parties and partners by component

Funding	Executing entity	Components / Activities	Possible procured parties and partners
GCF	FAO	Component 1: Activity 1.1.1; Activity 1.2.1; Activity 1.2.2; Component 2: Activity 2.2.1; Activity 2.2.3; Activity 2.2.4; Activity 2.2.5; Activity 2.3.2; Activity 2.4.1. Component 3: Activity 3.1.1; Activity 3.2.2; Activity 3.3.1; Activity 3.3.3; Activity 3.4.1..	MAFDP, MEF, MEH, MRSIT MEF, MAEP, IRF, IRA, NGOs and private partners to be confirmed. Private partners and international organizations (e.g. MUCODEC, HOPE, CAPPED, COFCOA, Eco-Oil, WFP, etc.).
IFAD	MAEP	Component 3: Activity 3.1.2; Activity 3.2.1; Activity 3.2.3; Activity 3.3.2 and Activity 3.4.2	To be confirmed
FAO (CAFI) ⁸⁰	FAO	Component 2: Activity 2.1.1.	GRET, ID

Component 3 will be implemented in collaboration with microfinance institutions (MFIs) and private financial institutions in Congo, as well as private and para-public buyers of agricultural and forestry products. In order to offer a credit programme suitable to the needs of the beneficiaries, the Project will collaborate with the network of MUCODECs, CAPPED or HOPE Congo and others. The capacities of these collaborating financial institutions will be strengthened by technical assistance to improve risk management related to loan portfolios in the agricultural and forestry sectors. The Project will work together with financial institutions to develop financial products (e.g. credit) under favorable conditions (low interest rates, long maturity periods) for Project beneficiaries, so that they are able to invest in long-

⁸⁰ CAFI resources will be channelled through FAO

term, climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry activities. To ensure the viability and profitability of the initiatives that will be funded, beneficiaries will be supported to put together robust projects with technical assistance and financial expertise, as well as a coaching service. Finally, purchasing agreements will be concluded with some buyers of agricultural products in Congo, in order to establish guaranteed purchase contracts with interested beneficiaries. Partnership agreements have already been established with Eco-Oil and COFCAO, Hani Transformation Company, SCDIE, Agrideck, EPPAPVA, Tolona, as well as the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and many others (see Annex 23 for the Letter of Intent).

The structure of the Steering Committee is summarized below to clarify the governance and Project implementation arrangements:

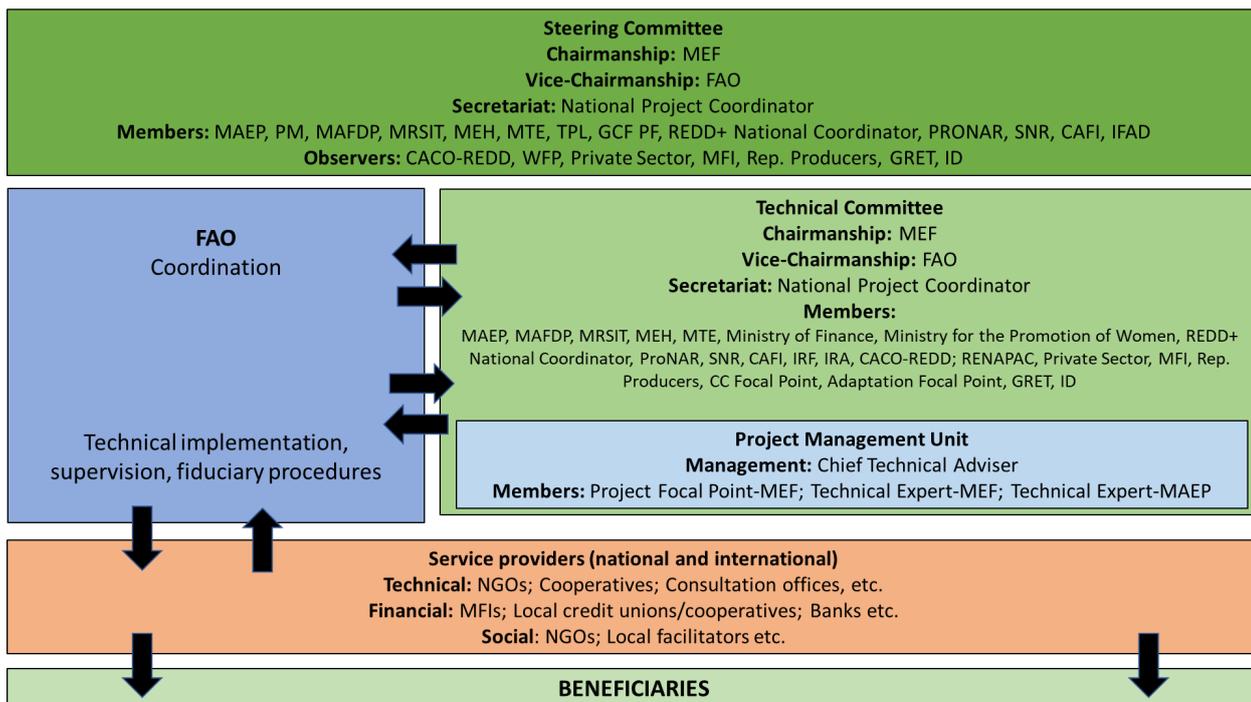


Figure 8: Structure of the Project's Steering Committee

Table 10: Main functions of the Project's entities

	Main function	Project Unit
Project governance and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides political decision-makers and relevant stakeholders with the most advanced information on the project's progress, results and impacts Provides political and strategic guidelines Approves the Work Plan and Annual Budget (WPAB) Ensures good inter-institutional coordination Ensures transparency, accountability and participation 	Steering Committee (SC)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews the Work Plan and Annual Budget (WPAB) prepared with the support of the PMU and makes recommendations Provides a technical contribution to the implementation of activities, the screening criteria for initiatives, as well as the monitoring and evaluation process, including safeguards Monitors implementation performance and ensures respect of the Terms of Reference and the technical competency of each agency. Handles liaison with co-financing entities (technical and financial reports) Takes part in technical subcommittees for monitoring and evaluation of safeguards 	Technical Committee (TC)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages project funds allocated by the GCF Ensures implementation of activities relating to the Annual Work Plan (AWP) and supported by the PMU Provides technical assistance to the Steering Committee and to the Technical Committee Secretariat. 	FAO
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administers funds exclusively to achieve the project results Executes payments Sends technical and financial reports to the GCF 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares WPABs for review by the Steering Committee and approval by the FAO Manages and implements the project on a daily basis Pursuant to the FAO rules and procedures, prepares procurement documents (pre-screening lists, terms of reference, draft contracts) for consultants and service providers (national and international, if applicable) Provides reports to the FAO on execution (physical and financial) 	Project Management Unit (PMU)
	Provide goods and services in line with contracts signed with the FAO	Service providers: Technical: NGOs; Cooperatives; Consultation offices, etc. Financial: MFIs; Local credit unions/cooperatives; Banks etc. Social: NGOs; Local facilitators etc.

During the project inception phase a grievance mechanism will be established at field level for the filing of complaints. Contact information and information on the process for filing a complaint will be disclosed at all meetings, workshops and other related events throughout the project lifetime. This information will also be included with all awareness raising material. The Project will also be responsible for documenting and reporting on any grievances received and how they were addressed as part of the monitoring of safeguards performance.

Financial Flows:

FAO as the accredited entity (AE) will receive the funds from the GCF at HQ level. The funds will then be transferred to the FAO Representation in Congo, who will hire technical expertise for the PMU in charge of executing the Project. The funds will be managed by FAO Congo office, who will establish the PMU.

FAO in its role of EE will manage project financial expenditures against budgets, execute payments, and provide technical assistance. The GCF and FAO will enter into a Funded Activity Agreement (FAA), under which FAO shall administer the relevant GCF proceeds to be used for financing the project, in accordance with the FAA and AMA. Accountability on the use of financial resources will be assured through the review of annual and bi-annual project reports, as well as through monitoring reports.

Partners expected to receive GCF proceeds through funds transfer in accordance with FAO's procurement rules are organizations involved in the Project implementation as procured parties (MEF, MAEP, etc., see procurement plan for more details). The technical and financial management capacity of procured partners will be assessed during their identification and before confirmation of the letters of agreement, as stated by the FAO procurement rules Manual Section 507. Some of the procured partners have already had a LoA with FAO, meaning that no additional capacity assessment will be needed. Funds transfers to the various partners involved in implementation of the Project will be in line with FAO procedures, and pursuant to the AMA signed with the GCF. More specifically, FAO will transfer funds to the various procured partners via LoAs, which will specify the procedures (activities, deliverables, schedule, payments, monitoring and evaluation) to be followed. Procurement will be done through a competitive process in line with FAO rules and procedures.

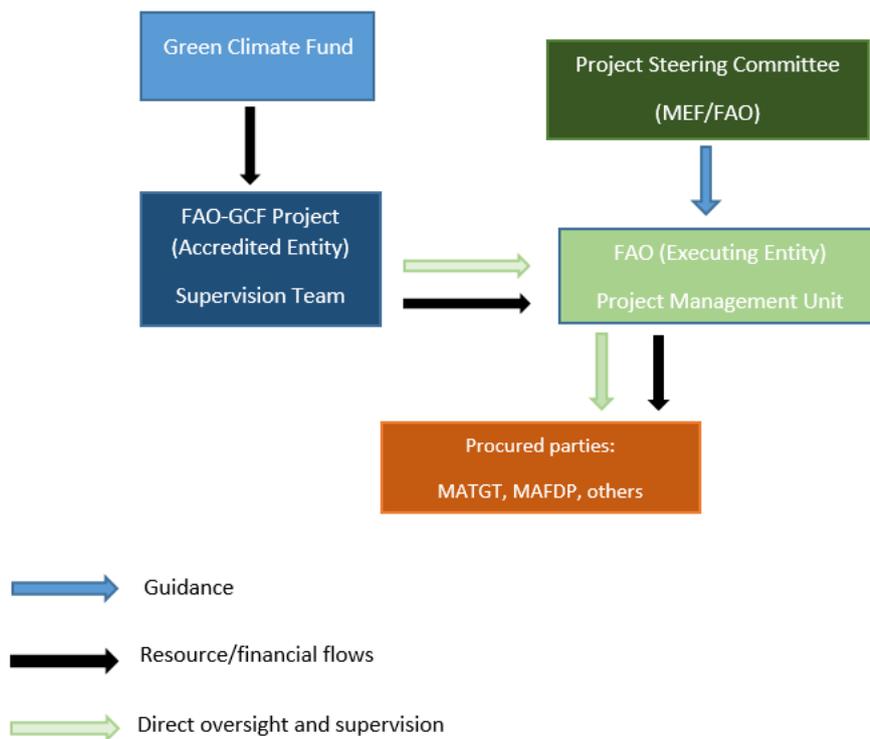


Figure 9: Financial flows of the GCF proceeds

MAEP will receive funds directly from IFAD to execute the activities of PREFOREST cofinanced by IFAD⁸¹. A capacity assessment of MAEP has been carried out by IFAD and the following mitigation measures will be implemented during project implementation: (i) providing Technical Assistance at inception phase and during project implementation (capacity building and coaching); (ii) all steps of the recruitment process of staff executing the project for IFAD co-financing (publication of the call for candidates, TOR, Preselection, written test, interviews and final selection) will need the no objection of IFAD; (iii) close monitoring by IFAD; (iv) internal audit of PAJE; (v) annual external audits and (vi) monitoring and control of public finances provided by the authorities within the framework of their prerogatives, and according to the annual planning of their activities.

⁸¹ IFAD will sign a Financial Agreement with the Government of Congo represented by the Ministry of Finance as recipient of the loan. The funds are then transferred to a Project designated account directly from IFAD through periodic instalments, previous justification of the expenses provided by the PMU (which is under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture as Executing Entity) for the execution of the IFAD co-financed activities. This account will be directly accessed by the PMU, and project withdrawal applications are approved by the Ministry of Finance and by IFAD Country Director. As such, the funds will not flow from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Agriculture. The repayments of the IFAD loan will not be flowing from the PAJE project funds but directly from the Ministry of Finance as this is a sovereign debt which the Government of Congo contracts with IFAD (independently of the kind of activities that are executed, which will not generate cash flow to repay a loan).

B.5. Justification for GCF funding request (max. 1000 words, approximately 2 pages)

The GCF's financial support in the form of a grant is indispensable to effectively overcome obstacles to Congo's transition to a low-emission climate resilient development, specifically, the reduction of carbon emissions from slash-and-burn agriculture. Congo's financial needs to initiate this transition are significant, whereas the resources available are very limited. According to its NDC (2015), the funds needed to implement the low-carbon scenario are USD 5.77 billion for the period 2014-2025. International community support has been solicited for USD 5.76 billion. The Investment Plan of the REDD+ National Strategy of the Republic of Congo, 2018-2025 estimates that approximately USD 261 M are required for its implementation.

Congo is going through a very challenging period characterized by persistently weak macroeconomic fundamentals. The Congolese economy is mainly based on oil production, whose revenue represents 90% of GDP and 85% of public revenue. The prolonged drop in oil prices since 2014 has heavily affected its economy and led to a regression in economic growth. The country's debt increased substantially over the past eight years to reach 180% of GDP in 2018. Budget deficits decreased significantly by almost 12% of GDP between 2016 and 2017 as a result of reductions in public expenditure. Highly indebted, the country has started negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and different donors to restructure its external debt. Since the start of these negotiations, developed countries have generally stopped and/or substantially reduced their development aid, including for climate change and environmental related issues. Negotiations ended in July 2019 with a restructuring of Congo's external debt for an amount of USD 448.6 million over a three-year period, in order to assist Congo to restore its macroeconomic stability and to lay the foundations for sustainable and inclusive growth. This situation has reduced the country's ability to finance its climate change priority interventions. Private national investment in climate finance is almost non-existent, particularly because of the state's tight control over the economy, which is essentially focused on oil exploitation and which does not promote growth of the private sector.

The PREFOREST project targets poor smallholder farmers and producers, earning less than 2 USD a day and will introduce activities that will generate enough profit to incentivise the farmers and be sustainable in the long term, thereby achieving the mitigation objectives. However, the cash flow generated will not be enough to repay a commercial loan in the first instance, although it is anticipated that this situation will change once farmers have established the initial plantations.

This project represents the first forestry GCF project in the Congo Basin and the first collaboration between the GCF, FAO, CAFI and IFAD and has the potential of having a significant impact on forestry and land use in the Congo Basin. The model proposed by the project has therefore the potential of being scaled up and replicated in other areas of the Congo Basin by these key players.

For Component 1, the GCF's financial support will strengthen land access and security rights. In fact, the unplanned and limited land access and security rights are major obstacles for informed decision-making and sustainable management of natural resources in general, and forest resources in particular. This translates into uncontrolled deforestation activities by the local people.

For Component 2, the financial analyses of the various production systems under consideration by the Project clearly show that, without an external contribution in the form of a grant to cover the investment costs and certain initial operational costs, the adoption of the bulk of climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry practices is unprofitable for Congolese producers. With regard to climate-resilient agroforestry systems, the results of the financial analysis show, for example, that both agroforestry systems based on acacia need a non-reimbursable grant (estimated at USD 814-918/ha the first year) in order to be viable. Although the NPV is positive, providing a grant to cover part of the investment costs is also necessary for a positive incremental net income for the cocoa-based system during the first year and to reduce the investment costs of orange and avocado-based systems. This is also because project beneficiaries are not bankable, so MFI and commercial banks will not fund agro-forestry models. The financial grant from the GCF will remove these barriers to investment on the supply side, allowing producers to adopt production practices that will stabilize slash-and-burn agriculture in the Project areas, by supporting the establishment of productive systems with multiple benefits in terms of mitigation and adaptation. Overall, in the Republic of the Congo production costs are among the highest in Africa. This is because the country is an oil economy, which inflates prices and production cost. As an example, the official minimum wage in the Rep of the Congo is 90,000 FCFA (approx. 149 USD), in Cote d'Ivoire is 60,000 FCFA (approx. 99 USD), in Cameroon is 36,270 FCFA (approx. 60 USD), in Gabon (another oil economy) is 80,000 FCFA (approx. 132 USD), in Sudan is 3,000 Sudanese Pounds (approx. 54 USD).

The unit costs for the establishment of the agroforestry systems have been assessed directly on the ground during the project preparation phase (details are in the Annex 3). Assumptions are conservative especially with respect to labour,

which is fully costed, while family labour of these smallholder farmers may be provided for free or below commercial rates. The costs adopted by PREFOREST are very similar to those used for the REDD+ Investment plan of the country.

For Component 3, the informal and embryonic nature of the agricultural and fuelwood sector value chains is a major obstacle to access to bank credit by local populations. For example, agricultural production is over 90% controlled by small producers.⁸² As a result, the agricultural sector represented only 6% of the Congolese bank sector portfolio in 2018.⁸³ The majority of credit applications from small producers does not respect the minimum requirements for solvency and profitability required by local financial institutions. In the current context, a grant from the GCF is almost the only financial mechanism available to the agriculture sector capable of promoting an effective transition to a low-emission climate resilient development. Financial support in the form of grants will establish an enabling environment conducive to capacity building of the beneficiaries on business, and the establishment of partnerships with the country's microfinance institutions, as well as purchasing partnerships.

FAO has a strong reputation in sustainable forestry, agriculture and food security with a long history of knowledge generation and innovation in the context of climate change, critical to the fundamental objectives and strategic intervention areas of the GCF. FAO has been established in Congo since 1977 and its current assistance is defined by the Country Programming Framework (CPF), which is aligned with the Congolese National Development Plan (NDP 2018-2022). With more than 40 years of successful cooperation between FAO and the Government of Congo, FAO has been entrusted as a privileged partner to support various initiatives to shift Congo's development trajectory to low-emission and climate-resilient pathways and designated the GCF accredited entity to support the development and implementation of the GCF funding proposal in Congo.

B.6. Exit strategy and sustainability (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The Project's financial sustainability is based on the eventual financial profitability of the supported initiatives, appropriation of funding by the local financial sector, and Congo's approach to payment for ecosystem services in general and REDD+ results-based payments in particular. The PREFOREST will provide the initial investment needed in order to kick start the process, as the project targets smallholder farmers earning less than 2 USD per day that cannot currently invest in low carbon activities. After the initial phase, the Project will follow a performance-based financial support approach, meaning that beneficiaries must demonstrate the financial profitability of their initiative's business plan in order to receive further financial support from the Project. This financial viability of initiatives will allow beneficiaries to maintain, if not expand, the initial investments over the long-term. The continuity of the funding relies on a linkage between the beneficiaries and Congolese financial institutions, as well as an increased supply of credit. To achieve this, in partnership with financial institutions, the Project will promote a credit supply that is fair and well-suited to agricultural and forestry production cycles, which will allow beneficiaries to obtain the necessary credit to ensure the sustainability of their operations. The 10% collateral deposited by beneficiaries in their savings account at the start of their activities, which will be refunded to them (if the beneficiary so desires) at the end of the Project, will allow them to reinvest in other production cycles or build savings for future activities after the GCF Project. PREFOREST has already received letters of intent from WFP, ECO OIL, COFCAO, EPPAVPA, SCDIE, Agrideck, Tolona, Cluster Union pour une Agriculture Competitive, Hani Transformation company and others and five Micro finance institutions (Hope, Mucodec, Codec, FCECM and Cofina)⁸⁴ who confirm their willingness to engage and partner with the project to ensure the sustainability of the interventions.

Institutional sustainability is based on **the Project's iterative approach anchoring the Project's new structures onto the pre-existing government institutional framework**. The project is aligned with the framework of the REDD+ National Strategy for Congo, which aims to obtain results-based payments for activities that reduce GHG emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. PREFOREST will generate results and support the strengthening of enabling

⁸² FAO and Republic of Congo (2013). Country Programming Framework 2013-2016

⁸³ Horus Development Finance. 2018. Feasibility study. Funding component. Provisional Report.

⁸⁴ ECOIL: develop purchase agreements with the project beneficiaries for the purchase of PREFOREST products and support post-harvest activities

-COFINA and MUCODEC: support the development and availability of adapted credit lines

-WFP: develop purchase agreements with the project beneficiaries for the purchase of PREFOREST products

-COFCAO: support for an estimated amount of 2 million USD with marketing activities

-EPPAVPA, SCDIE, Agrideck, Tolona, Hani Transformation company: develop purchase agreements with the beneficiaries for the purchase of PREFOREST products

conditions but will not support the country to request REDD+ RBPs.⁸⁵ Congo will explore the future GCF REDD+ RBP program amongst other options. Congo's monitoring period started in January 2013, and all emission reductions (except those from the implementation of entire PREFOREST funded activities which will be retired) could apply if the country considers submitting a REDD+ RBP proposal to GCF under the GCF RBPs pilot programme.

Another fundamental element related to institutional sustainability is **institutional capacity building and appropriation of the Project interventions by local stakeholders**. This specifically refers to building the capacities of several key ministries, including MEF, MAEP, MTE, MAFDP and MRSIT for the implementation of certain Project interventions. The Project will strengthen the capacities of PRONAR and SNR (at central level and at the level of the decentralized nurseries in the districts), MAEP agricultural sector chiefs (in each district), community management and development committees (CMDs), as well as departmental directorates of land affairs. It also consists of building the capacities of the private sector, considered as a key stakeholder in the system for the profound transformation of slash-and-burn agriculture, specifically through the development of profitable business plans, strengthening of partnerships between beneficiaries and MFIs and support in organizing and strengthening value chains. These institutional stakeholders will then be better equipped to sustain the Project's benefits and to effectively conduct other parallel initiatives to combat climate change in the medium and long-term.

Finally, **PREFOREST together with its partners (CAFI and IFAD mainly) will be catalytic for the development of a programmatic approach for long-term investments on climate change mitigation and adaptation actions at national level, but also in the Congo Basin region**. For example, IFAD-PAJE will relay and strengthen PREFOREST agroforestry post-harvesting activities with interventions that include among others, strengthening of market access through the development of infrastructure (e.g. construction and rehabilitation of wholesale and semi-wholesale markets) and facilitation of long-term, inclusive off-taker partnerships between small-scale producers (and their organizations) and agro-industries. PREFOREST will serve to trigger additional future funds from other technical and financial partners, as well as from other new actors mainly from the private sector (including micro-finance institutions) in the country and in the region. Given the importance of addressing deforestation in the Congo Basin in a systematic manner, the PREFOREST project is set to be the first project of a yet to be developed programmatic approach and could lead the way in identifying a sustainable model.

⁸⁵ The project does not propose implementation of a results-based payment system during its lifespan. If, however, the government decided to make such a payment request along the way, any sharing of benefits of REDD+ actions would be in line with the procedures for benefit sharing established by the country, in consultation with the relevant stakeholders and in accordance with its REDD+ National Strategy and the resulting benefit sharing procedures.

B. FINANCING INFORMATION							
C.1. Total financing							
(a) Requested GCF funding (i + ii + iii + iv + v + vi + vii)		Total amount			Currency		
		28,988,852			million USD (\$)		
GCF financial instrument		Amount	Tenor	Grace period	Pricing		
(i)	Senior loans	Enter amount	Enter years	Enter years	Enter %		
(ii)	Subordinated loans	Enter amount	Enter years	Enter years	Enter %		
(iii)	Equity	Enter amount	Enter years		Enter % equity return		
(iv)	Guarantees	Enter amount					
(v)	Reimbursable grants	Enter amount					
(vi)	Grants	28,988,852					
(vii)	Results-based payments	Enter amount					
(b) Co-financing information		Total amount			Currency		
		17,578,286			million USD (\$)		
Name of institution		Financial instrument	Amount	Currency	Tenor & grace	Pricing	Seniority
MEF ⁸⁶		In kind	9,015,286	million USD (\$)	Enter years Enter years	Enter%	Options
IFAD ⁸⁷		Senior Loans	1,563,000	million USD (\$)	Enter years Enter years	Enter%	Options
FAO (CAFI) ⁸⁸		Grant	7,000,000	million USD (\$)	Enter years Enter years	Enter%	Options
Click here to enter text.		Options	Enter amount	Options	Enter years Enter years	Enter%	Options
(c) Total financing (c) = (a)+(b)		Amount			Currency		
		46,567,138			million USD (\$)		
(d) Other financing arrangements and contributions (max. 250 words, approximately 0.5 page)		MEF in-kind contribution is estimated based on the relative costs for the establishment of nurseries and the equivalent of the cost for land-rental provided for the implementation of agroforestry and forestry related activities.					
C.2. Financing by component							
Component	Output	Indicative cost Options	GCF financing		Co-financing		
			Amount Options	Financial Instrument	Amount Options	Financial Instrument	Name of Institutions
Component 1	Output 1.1.	275,000	275,000	Grants	0	N/A	N/A
	Output 1.2.	774,827	774,827	Grants	0	N/A	N/A

⁸⁶ Government in-kind co-financing consists of the costs for the establishment of nurseries and the equivalent of the cost for land-rental provided to the project

⁸⁷IFAD will sign a Financial Agreement with the Government of Congo represented by the Ministry of Finance as recipient of the loan. The funds are then transferred to a Project designated account directly from IFAD through periodic instalments, previous justification of the expenses provided by the PMU (which is under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture as Executing Entity) for the execution of the IFAD co-financed activities. This account will be directly accessed by the PMU, and project withdrawal applications are approved by the Ministry of Finance and by IFAD Country Director. As such, the funds will not flow from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Agriculture. The repayments of the IFAD loan will not be flowing from the PAJE project funds but directly from the Ministry of Finance as this is a sovereign debt which the Government of Congo contracts with IFAD (independently of the kind of activities that are executed, which will not generate cash flow to repay a loan).

⁸⁸ CAFI resources will be channelled through FAO



Component 2	Output 2.1.	6,510,000	0	N/A	6,510,000	Grants	FAO (CAFI)
	Output 2.2.	31,166,006	23,447,573	Grants	7,718,433	Grants	MEF
	Output 2.3.	2,945,184	1,648,331	Grants	1,296,853	Grants	MEF
	Output 2.4.	131,000	131,000	Grants	0	N/A	N/A
Component 3	Output 3.1	1,670,302	712,302	Grants	958,000	Senior loans	IFAD
	Output 3.2	380,600	102,600	Grants	278,000	Senior loans	IFAD
	Output 3.3.	739,610	668,610	Grants	71,000	Senior loans	IFAD
	Output 3.4	681,328	425,328	Grants	256,000	Senior loans	IFAD
PMC		1,293,281	803,281		490,000		FAO (CAFI)
Indicative total cost (USD)		46,567,138	28,988,852		17,578,286		

C.3 Capacity building and technology development/transfer (max. 250 words, approximately 0.5 page)

C.3.1 Does GCF funding finance capacity building activities?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
C.3.2. Does GCF funding finance technology development/transfer?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Capacity building at **individual and institutional levels** and technology development/transfer are strategic interventions to achieve the Project's objectives.

In Component 1 there will be training in participatory mapping and beneficiaries will first be informed of the administrative process for securing access to land and then assisted to obtain the land for agroforestry and forestry activities. Officials will receive equipment and be trained in its use. Approximately 30,000 beneficiaries will be targeted by awareness raising activities under Component 1.

For Component 2, the Project will provide significant institutional support in terms of building the capacities of government structures such as MEF (e.g. PRONAR, SNR), MAEP, MAFDP, and MTE. This institutional support will specifically take the form of the provision of equipment (e.g.: for the rehabilitation of infrastructure and acquisition of information technology tools) and training in its use. Beneficiaries will be trained in all aspects of the climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry production system value chains promoted by the Project as well as the development of village nurseries, mainly through farmer field schools with technical assistance from SNR officials and MAEP sector chiefs.

Under Component 3, the Capacities of national financial institutions with respect to green investments suitable for the forestry and agricultural sectors at national and local levels will be strengthened, specifically to develop responsible and specific investment criteria for these sectors and to improve understanding and management of risks with the aim of significantly increasing credit supply. Beneficiaries will be trained to develop robust and bankable business models. The capacities of the loan officers who will support the beneficiaries in developing and evaluating their business models will also be improved. In total, approximately 50 service providers (microfinance institutions and banks, but also buyers and off-takers) are targeted by these interventions.

With regard to the development and transfer of technologies, innovative and locally relevant climate-resilient agroforestry, forestry and agricultural systems will be developed to stabilize slash-and-burn agriculture and to provide a sustainable source of fuelwood supply. Accordingly, demonstration and trial plots will be set up in order to improve yields and sustainability of the promoted production systems. The IRF and IRA will play a central role here, particularly in terms of monitoring and development of new production systems, use of farmer field schools, more accurate estimation of implementation costs and associated revenue. Support for technology transfer will target beneficiaries wishing to adopt innovative systems like the *Acacia auriculiformis* agroforestry system developed in Mampu, DRC.

C. EXPECTED PERFORMANCE AGAINST INVESTMENT CRITERIA

This section refers to the performance of the project/programme against the investment criteria as set out in the GCF's [Initial Investment Framework](#).

D.1. Impact potential (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The main objective of the Project is mitigation in the form of reduced carbon emissions from land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF). The Project activities funded by the GCF will contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions specifically through: (a) The deployment of agroforestry and forestry systems to stabilize slash-and-burn agriculture and reduce pressure on forests and (b) Assisted natural regeneration and protection of forests. These interventions will result in a **direct reduction in emissions of approximately 0.84 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (t CO₂ eq) per year which is a total of 6.72 million t CO₂ eq over an 8-year period.**⁸⁹

The Project will assist in establishing low carbon agroforestry and forestry systems over an area of 10,000 ha, as well as assisted natural regeneration and protection in savanna-forest transition areas and more specifically on community land which is subject to severe anthropic pressure from slash-and-burn agriculture.

GHG reductions were estimated in accordance with the guidelines of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) using a combination of models and tools to take into account the carbon sequestration/absorption potential of the different Project interventions.

For the planned climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry models, estimations were made using the Ex-Ante Carbon-balance Tool (EX-ACT) developed by the FAO, as well as an independent model developed to take into account harvesting and elimination of biomass to be used as charcoal and firewood. The model was developed according to the area planted each year, as defined in the economic and financial analysis.⁹⁰ Biomass accumulation was estimated by area planted each year, and any accumulated/removed growth from previous years was taken into account.

ADAPTATION CO-BENEFITS

The Project will also contribute significantly to the reduction of vulnerability and the strengthening of the climate change adaptation capacities of at least **41,773 direct beneficiaries (14,480 women) and 870,649 indirect beneficiaries (304,727 women)**, who belong to the most vulnerable segments of Congolese society (i.e., individual smallholder farmers and smallholder farmer groups composed of women, young people and indigenous populations). The Project will contribute to the reduction of the sector's exposure to climate change by the dissemination of climate-resilient agroforestry practices, as well as the use of improved varieties of species that are more tolerant of the anticipated variations in climate conditions (e.g. increased temperatures, variations in rainfall patterns). The Project will encourage the dissemination and adoption of several climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry models, allowing the local people to diversify their livelihoods and income, thereby contributing to the reduction of their vulnerability and the strengthening of their resilience to climate change. Improved soil fertility through the integration of nitrogen fixing trees (e.g. *Acacia* sp.) in the production systems promoted by the Project will not only increase agricultural productivity, but also stabilize soils and revive degraded ecosystems and biodiversity.

D.2. Paradigm shift potential (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The Project will drive a transformative change in the forestry and forest-related sectors by establishing the necessary enabling conditions to effectively shift the course of high carbon footprint agricultural and fuelwood production practices in southern Congo, towards low-emission climate resilient development.

With regards to the development and adoption of **innovative technologies** for agriculture production and fuelwood production, the Project will support the transfer and large scale adoption of low carbon agroforestry and forestry systems (14,500 ha, ~ 11,331 direct and indirect beneficiaries), such as the *Acacia auriculiformis* agroforestry system and Taungya Technique, used successfully in neighbouring countries but **not** in the Congo, to shift away from current high carbon footprint slash and burn practices. To further incentivize producers, the Project will facilitate closer ties between them and the market (for example, certain agro-industrial enterprises such as Eco-Oil but also other categories of off-takers⁹¹) through long-term purchase agreements at competitive prices. The Project will support the creation of an

⁸⁹ Carbon reduction estimates take into account both avoided emissions (i.e. owing to the improved energy efficiency of households and protection of forests resulting from the establishment of the agroforestry plantation in degraded plots) and sequestered emissions (i.e. establishment of agroforestry plantations), resulting from implementation of components 2. GHG analyses are performed over a period of 30 years in order to align with the production cycle proposed for the reforestation of indigenous species, in keeping with IPCC recommendations. Emission reduction is accounted for from the second year of the project.

⁹⁰ The planted areas are respectively 0 ha (year 1), 650 ha (year 2), 1,760 ha (year 3), 2,201 ha (year 4), 2,591 ha (year 5), 2,282 ha (year 6), 2,672 ha (year 7) and 2,343 ha in year 8.

⁹¹ The project has received Letters of intent from different potential off-takers such as Eco-Oil, World Food Programme, COFCOA, SCIDE (*Société Continentale de Développement des Initiatives Economiques*), EPPAVPA (*Entreprise de Production, Protection, d'Achat et Vente des Produits Agricoles*), Zando Markets, Hani Transformation company and Cluster Union pour une Agriculture Competitive (see Annex 23). Other Letters of intent will be received by the project.

enabling environment and sustainable funding mechanisms for an effective reduction in carbon emissions in the agricultural and fuelwood sectors. A key element in this regard is the establishment of an enabling framework that will contribute to the stimulation of an affordable and appropriate credit supply in the forestry and agricultural sectors in order to motivate expansion of Congolese rural entrepreneurship and mobilize the private national capital of micro and small size producers for significant investments in sustainable practices in these sectors. This enabling framework is specifically characterized by partnership agreements between beneficiaries and national microfinance and financial institutions in order to issue agricultural credit at low interest rates and with longer repayment periods, in line with harvest cycles for climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry products. It is also characterized by capacity building of beneficiaries in developing robust and profitable business plans, as well as capacity building of national financial partners, particularly for the development of responsible investment criteria that are specific to the agroforestry and forestry sectors, and an improved understanding of risk management.

The Project has a **good replication or scaling-up potential**, both at national and sub-regional levels, given the strong similarities of ecosystems and deforestation and forest degradation factors in the region. For example, the Project will focus its interventions on the three major ecosystem types (savanna, tropical rain forest and savanna-forest transition areas) that are found throughout Congo and the Congo Basin region. To maximize its impact, the Project's approach consists of initially concentrating its investment on the three major agricultural product and fuelwood supply basins represented by the 13 targeted districts, providing the basis for replication of the model and the lessons learned in other parts of the country. Given that the Project represents one of the very first REDD+ "field" investments resulting from the REDD+ Investment Plan (REDD+ IP) and the NDC, there will be significant attention paid to any lessons learned with a view to their application elsewhere. PREFOREST also represents the first partnership between FAO, CAFI and the GCF, which can be replicated in order countries in the Congo Basin and in Africa in order to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in a coordinated and impactful manner.

Knowledge sharing and learning are also essential crosscutting Project interventions. In terms of knowledge sharing, the Project will establish a knowledge sharing and learning platform through the organization of training and experience exchange workshops, bringing together beneficiaries, as well as national and international experts. With regard to learning, the Project will develop demonstration and trial plots in order to prove the viability of the promoted production systems with technical support from the IRF and IRA and other relevant institutions such as CIRAD. The Project will also establish farmer field schools to train beneficiaries in agroforestry practices with the technical assistance of the SNR and MAEP.

The Project will decisively support **Congo on the path to climate-resilient development that is compatible with the relevant national adaptation plans and strategies**. To this end, the Project will support the deployment of climate-resilient agroforestry systems that will improve productivity and diversify revenue sources and livelihoods, thus contributing to adaptation capacity building for the most vulnerable communities in line with the NDC's adaptation objectives.⁹² The promoted production systems, particularly climate-resilient agroforestry systems based on nitrogen fixing trees (acacias) in savanna areas, will enable soil fertility to be increased, promoting the restoration of degraded soils and the strengthening of ecosystem resilience.⁹³

D.3. Sustainable development (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The Project will make a significant contribution to the achievement of Congo's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) through major environmental, economic and social co-benefits. The main targeted SDGs are the following: No poverty (SDG 1); Zero hunger (SDG 2); Good health and well-being (SDG 3); Quality education (SDG 4); Gender equality (SDG 5); Reduced inequalities (SDG 10); Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12); Climate action (SDG 13); and Life on land (SDG 15).

The Project will generate significant **environmental co-benefits**, as well as co-benefits for biodiversity, soil and air quality. The deployment of climate-resilient agroforestry systems and increased energy efficiency in the vicinity of areas of strategic importance for biodiversity conservation, such as the Léfini Fauna Reserve and the border of Mayombe, known as a very rich and important ecosystem, will significantly reduce pressure on forests and consequent fragmentation of the fauna habitats of these ecosystems, thus contributing to the conservation of biodiversity (**SDG 15**). Moreover, most of the production systems promoted by the project will include nitrogen fixing trees (e.g. *Acacia sp.*), which will significantly increase soil fertility,⁹⁴ particularly in savanna areas where most of the plantations will be established (**SDG 15**). In addition, the assisted natural regeneration promoted by the Project in savanna-forest transition

⁹² The Republic of Congo is committed to protecting climate-sensitive production systems such as agriculture, restoring ecosystems and strengthening their resilience, fighting against soil and forest degradation and preventing floods (NDC 2015, Page 13).

⁹³ In the Pointe-Noire region, 60% of the oxygen present in the biomass of *Acacia mangium* comes from the atmosphere. This fixation capacity is notably expressed in soils that are initially low in nitrogen (Tchichelle et al. 2017a).

⁹⁴ The total amount of nitrogen mineralized in the soil (horizon 0 to 20 cm) under acacia populations is as much as 340 kg of nitrogen per hectare two years after they are planted (Tchichelle et al., 2017b).

areas affected by slash-and-burn agriculture and fuelwood operations, will contribute significantly to the restoration of degraded soils and the maintenance of essential ecological services (**SDG 15**).

The **economic co-benefits** generated by the Project will specifically resolve around the creation of green jobs and alternative sources of income. The COVID-19 pandemic and associated collapse of the price of oil, which represents 90% of government revenue, have deprived the government of important financial resources needed to create or maintain existing jobs. Government response to slow down the spread of the COVID-19, such as economic lock down, budget reduction and reallocation to more pressing issues, has also induced important hardship on the private sector and communities. Overall, the unemployment rate has skyrocketed, especially in sectors such as forestry and agriculture. GCF investment under the PREFOREST offers a unique opportunity to reverse this situation through the creation of green jobs. At least 11,300 decent direct and indirect green jobs (**SDG 8**) are anticipated in the areas agroforestry and forestry from the implementation of the PREFOREST. An important number of these green jobs are expected to persist even after the end of the Project, specifically those associated with the value chains needed to ensure the sustainable growth of the abovementioned sectors. Furthermore, the deployment of climate-resilient agroforestry systems combining various varieties of timber and non-timber crops (e.g. village agroforestry plantations of acacia-cassava-maize or cocoa-plantains-peanuts) will provide beneficiaries with alternative sources of more or less permanent income needed in the context of COVID-19 post recovery and reconstruction (**SDG 1**).⁹⁵

The Project will generate various **social co-benefits**, particularly in terms of strengthening food security, improving quality of life and strengthening land access and security rights and access to markets by local communities and indigenous populations. The deployment of climate-resilient agroforestry systems and structuring of value chains will contribute to an increase in the production and productivity of forestry systems, significantly mitigating the food production deficit in the targeted districts (**SDG 2**).⁹⁶ The Project will contribute to securing the land tenure rights of indigenous populations and will facilitate their access to various market segments of the promoted production system value chains (**SDG 10**).

To ensure a **positive gender impact**, a gender assessment was carried out and a gender action plan developed (see Annex 6), which provide gender disaggregated data and describe in details activities related to gender, performance indicators and anticipated results in order to promote active participation by women in all Project activities. The Project will promote women's empowerment (**SDG 5**) by building their capacities for effective management of the value chains of the climate-resilient agroforestry production systems that will be promoted. This specifically refers to strengthening access to land ownership⁹⁷ and bank credit, the adoption of new production and processing technologies and the development of new market segments to sell forestry and climate-resilient agroforestry products. Women will be heavily involved in the selection of crop varieties to be used for the production systems. The Project will work in close collaboration with the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Integration of Women in Development to strengthen ownership of interventions related to gender, as well as Project sustainability. **The Project expects to directly (indirectly) benefit approximately 14,480 women (304,727 women).**

D.4. Needs of recipient (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The Human Development Index (HDI), which translates progress made by the country in terms of revenue per inhabitant, education and health, deteriorated between 2016 and 2017, decreasing from 0.612 to 0.606. Annual demographic growth remains very high at +3.68% per year on average, between 2010 and 2015. The national poverty level decreased from 50.7% in 2005 to 40.9% in 2011 as a result of solid macroeconomic performance during this period, but remains substantially higher than that of other comparable middle-income countries. The World Bank Group forecasts suggest that the poverty rate will remain high and reach around 15% in 2030. Spatial and gender inequalities persist. For example, the poverty rate in urban centers decreased by 43% to 40%, while rural poverty increased from 65% to 74.8% over the same period.⁹⁸ Poverty essentially continues to be a rural phenomenon. In rural areas, poor people are either unemployed or dependent on subsistence farming as their main source of income. Young people are seriously affected by unemployment. In 2011, the unemployment rate for 15 to 29 years old was 32.7%. This crisis is even worse for women (28%) than men (25%). Indigenous peoples, who represent almost 1% of the population, are the most marginalized group. This high rate of rural poverty is a major obstacle for these disadvantaged strata of the population who generally do not have the necessary financial, technical, or logistic means to invest in low-carbon resilience activities. This is particularly the case in south Congo, and more specifically in the Project sites which, in addition to a high level of poverty, have received no consistent support to date. The CGF's technical and financial

⁹⁵ In the case of acacia-cassava-maize plantations, the farmer harvests maize every year, cassava every 18 months and acacia every year as of the seventh year. In Pool, the monthly TRI is estimated at 37.3 ± 7.2 % (CIRAD 2019. Technical and Economic Analysis Report, page 123).

⁹⁶ 75% of food needs, representing almost USD 1.2 billion were covered by imports in 2016 (National Food Security and Nutrition Policy, 2017).

⁹⁷ In 2002, the government indicated that women represented 70% of agricultural labor, but owned only 25% of agricultural land - generally in small farms (WFP 2018).

⁹⁸ Rapport d'étude de faisabilité opérationnelle et financière, CIRAD, 2019.

support will therefore allow the various and specific needs of these populations to be met in terms of low-carbon resilient development.

The results of the Project's feasibility study revealed important needs for institutional capacity building and implementation. These needs generally concern institutions that are key to the effective implementation of the Project activities. For example, the MAEP is supposed to facilitate access by smallholder framers and smallholders farmers groups to agricultural credit at preferred rates through the Agricultural Support Fund (*Fonds de Soutien à l'Agriculture* - FSA) created in 2005. Unfortunately, the FSA only received an average investment budget of approximately USD 2 million from 2008 to 2017, which did not allow it to carry out its mission effectively.⁹⁹ This is also the case with the SNR created in 1989, which is responsible for monitoring, coordination and implementation of the national reforestation policy. An institutional analysis of this structure revealed, *inter alia*, the lack of an extension structure, the existence of dilapidated infrastructure and a total mismatch between the current staff numbers and the mandates assigned to this organization. There were similar findings from the institutional analysis of PRONAR, whose results are poor in comparison with the objectives owing to budgetary constraints. Like most research institutions, annual budget allocations to the IRF are very low and essentially intended to pay salaries and bonuses (72%) and to cover the ongoing operations of the institution, to the detriment of its assigned research activities.¹⁰⁰ For example, several research projects/programmes of major importance for this Project are awaiting funding, particularly the Support Programme to Improve Soil Fertility through Agroforestry and Fallow Land (*Programme d'Appui à l'Amélioration de la Fertilité des Sols par l'Agroforesterie et les Jachères* - PAFSAJ), as well as some ongoing programmes that need to be consolidated. It should also be noted that the IRF is severely understaffed. Researchers, engineers and research technicians represent only half of the total permanent personnel, which is very low for a research Institute.

D.5. Country ownership (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The Project will contribute to the effective implementation of the NDC in Congo, particularly the GHG emission mitigation policy structured around two major axes, notably: (1) the fight against unplanned deforestation (REDD+) and (2) the building of the carbon sequestration potential of forests through better management of the sector and reforestation.¹⁰¹ With respect to adaptation, the measures include: (i) the protection of productive systems sensitive to climate change, such as agriculture by restoring ecosystems and strengthening their resilience, combating land and forest degradation, and preventing flooding; and (ii) the transfer of climate technologies adapted to national development priorities through training and support.

The Project will also contribute to the effective implementation of the REDD+ National Strategy (REDD+ NS) for Congo and its associated Investment Plan (REDD+ IP), particularly strengthening of governance and sustainable finance (strategic option #1); improvement of agricultural systems (strategic option #3); rationalization of fuelwood production (strategic option #4)¹⁰² which are an integral part of this Project's interventions. The REDD+ IP clearly identifies the GCF as a potential financial partner for implementation of the REDD+ over the period 2018-2025 in the form of channeling funding to this Project.¹⁰³ The Project has also been developed in close cooperation with several technical and financial partners, who are heavily involved in issues related to climate change, REDD+ and adaptation, particularly the French Development Agency, the World Bank, the WFP as well as CAFI.

The Project is **in line with the Congo's priorities in terms of low-emission climate resilient development as indicated by the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2022**, which revolves around six fundamental pillars including economic diversification (pillar #2) and the promotion of sustainable and balanced development (pillar #6). In the agricultural subsector, pillar #2 specifically makes provision for the dissemination of high-performance production systems and support by the funding mechanism for agricultural projects.¹⁰⁴ The strategic objectives of pillar #6 make provision for the sustainable management of forest resources in the fight against climate change in the forestry subsector. To achieve this, in the medium term the NDP 2018-2022 prescribes continued implementation of the Investment Plan of the REDD+ National Strategy, specifically focusing on improving agricultural systems and rationalizing the fuelwood sector.¹⁰⁵

The GCF Focal Point for Congo was heavily involved in the Project formulation process, from the concept note to the funding proposal. Several scoping meetings took place throughout the process with the expert panel providing strategic guidelines on the Project scope and interventions along the way. Observations and comments from the expert panel were incorporated in the final version of the funding proposal. Furthermore, the expert panel will be closely

⁹⁹ Rapport d'étude de faisabilité opérationnelle et financière. CIRAD 2019. Page 13

¹⁰⁰ The number of senior personnel is greater than the number of technicians, and there is a patent lack of senior technical personnel in operation. Moreover, the permanent personnel are aging and there should be massive recruitment of young people to ensure sustainability of the structure.

¹⁰¹ Nationally Determined Contribution 2015. Page 5.

¹⁰² REDD+ National Strategy for the Republic of Congo, 2016. Page 58.

¹⁰³ REDD+ National Strategy Plan - Version 6 (2018). Page 187.

¹⁰⁴ NDP 2018-2022, page 37

¹⁰⁵ NDP 2018-2022, pages 191-192

involved in implementing Project activities, particularly in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the Project in terms of GHG emission reduction and building the adaptation capacities of populations and ecosystems.

The Project consulted very widely with various stakeholders (public sector, private sector, civil society, development partners) at national, departmental and district levels, from the initial stage of its formulation phase. An inter-ministerial panel to monitor preparation of the Project was established, and met almost every month to evaluate progress. Close consultations with various local stakeholders took place in the 13 districts targeted, as well as numerous consultations with government stakeholders and NGOs in the cities of Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. The objectives of these consultations included identifying activities, current practices and difficulties experienced by the populations, and presenting the content of the Project document in order to collect their concerns and suggestions with regard to the context and specificities of their districts. Specific arrangements were made to guarantee effective participation by women and indigenous populations. In total, approximately 415 individuals, including 62 women, were consulted (see Annex 7). These consultations led to the development of a public consultations report containing a **Participation Plan** which identifies the key stakeholders, their interests and relevant interventions, in order to maximize their participation during Project implementation. In addition, a **Framework plan for Indigenous Populations and a Gender Action Plan** were elaborated to take account of the specific interests of these stakeholders and to outline steps for their effective participation in Project implementation.

D.6. Efficiency and effectiveness (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

An economic and financial analysis (EFA) of the Project's interventions was conducted in order to assess its economic viability and its impact on the beneficiaries. The financial analysis took into account the estimated benefits from the viewpoint of individual entrepreneurs and farmers, while the economic analysis took into account the incremental benefits and costs of the Project's interventions from the perspective of society as a whole. Details of the assumptions of the analysis are given in Annex 3.

The quantified benefits taken into account in the EFA are the incremental net benefits of the establishment of climate-resilient agroforestry systems over 14,500 ha taking account of the enhanced value chains supported by marketing partnerships and improved availability of credit. Models were developed for different climate-resilient agroforestry systems proposed by the Project.

Two different time horizons were used for the EFA: 20 years and 25 years. Discount rates of 10% and 6% were used for the financial and economic analyses respectively (a detailed explanation on the way these rates were selected is included in Annex 3).

For climate-resilient agroforestry systems, the results of the financial analysis are included in the table below. The two models that are expected to be most popular are the so called Mampu systems, which are based on a fast growing species (e.g. *Acacia auriculiformis*, *Senna siamea*), to be used as firewood or charcoal, combined with annual crops. The table shows that the two Mampu models (based on acacia) require a grant in order to be viable. Without a grant, the NPV is negative for these two models. However, once the project covers part of the investment costs (through non-refundable grants) returns are sufficiently high to cover costs and still yield a valuable profit margin.

The analysis conducted (see Annex 3) shows that a small price increase will make the NPV positive even without grants. More precisely, for the Acacia/cassava/groundnut a 5% price of charcoal makes the NPV positive. For the Acacia/cassava/maize model the increase in the price of charcoal needed to make the NPV positive is 22%. It is expected that the price of charcoal will increase during next years as a consequence of reduced deforestation practices. In this way, the Mampu systems would become viable and replicable even without non-refundable grants.

Although the NPV is positive for the other models, a grant to cover part of the investment cost is necessary as credit is not currently available. Smallholders are not bankable in the Rep. of the Congo. Currently, even for large landowners only a tiny fraction of loans provided by banks and MFI are for agricultural purposes. There are no agricultural banks in the Rep. of the Congo, which is a clear indicator of how underdeveloped the banking sector is with respect to the promotion of agricultural or forestry activities in the country.

These considerations are at the basis of the chosen support, which consists in non-reimbursable grants to cover part of the investment costs (80% for smallholders, 50% for companies and 100% for indigenous people), The use of non-reimbursable grant to cover part of the investment cost is also intended to reduce risks and possibly to motivate financial institutions to provide loans to cover the part of the investment cost that is not covered by the project. The activities conducted under Component 3 are expected to relax credit constraints, thus facilitating replicability after the project is over.

Table 11: Financial performance (USD) of the proposed models for 1 ha

	Initial investment for 1 ha	Incremental net benefit			20-year time horizon		25-year time horizon	
		Year 1 with no grant	Year 1 with grant	Year 10	NPV without grant	NPV with grant	NPV without grant	NPV with grant
Mampu 1 (Acacia - maize - cassava)	1,057	-420	395	21	-860	1,635	-819	1,676
Mampu 2 (Acacia - peanuts - cassava)	1,192	-345	574	114	-175	2,579	-111	2,643
Cocoa - plantain - butter fruit - peanuts	4,028	-100	1,518	987	2,503	5,299	3,379	6,175
Avocado - okra - aubergine	3,778	1,062	3,975	2,660	17,790	20,438	19,459	22,107
Orange - maize - peanuts - peas - cassava	2,973	1,181	3,473	173	4,010	6,093	4,107	6,191

The sensitivity analysis included in the EFA (see Annex 3) shows that these two Mampu systems models are not without risk (while all other models are much less sensitive to changes in costs and revenues). A fairly substantial reduction of revenues of 15.3% for the acacia/groundnut/cassava system would make the NPV negative even with the grant (this would also happen in case of a cost increase of 18.1% for the acacia/groundnut/cassava system or of a 16.8% for the acacia/maize/cassava system). The financial analysis was conducted using very conservative assumptions to properly assess the worthiness of models in a robust way. These assumptions include the exclusive use of paid labor to conduct agricultural operations. However, it is likely that part of agricultural operations will be conducted using unpaid family labor (especially for smallholders), which will increase the NPV of proposed investments (making the investment less sensitive to changes in revenues and costs). The five agro-forestry models are here included as a reference. The project will fund agro-forestry investments requested by applicants on the basis of business plans (developed by consultants to reflect the investments proposed by beneficiaries), which will have to include a sensitive analysis. The business plans showing high risks will not be funded.

These analyses show that the results of the planned interventions (with grant) are sufficiently high to justify the Project investment from a financial point of view. The Project is particularly important from an economic point of view when GHG emission reduction is taken into account. Even without considering this, with a 25-year time horizon the economic net present value (ENPV) amounts to USD 26.6 million and the economic internal rate of return (EIRR) is 14.4% under the assumption that 75% of the 14,500 ha of targeted agroforestry systems include Mampu systems (based on acacia or other fast growing species and annual crops), 13% include cocoa based systems (with plantain and groundnut) and the remaining areas are planted with avocados and vegetables (6%) and oranges mixed with annual staple food crops (6%). These figures improve significantly when the related climate benefits, are taken into account. Through interventions in climate-resilient agroforestry, the Project will reduce GHG emissions by 0.84 million t CO₂ per year. Consistent with the suggestions by the GCF for pilot programmes for REDD+ results-based payments, the economic analysis assumes a price of USD 5 per t CO₂ eq.¹⁰⁶ With this price level, the results of the economic analysis are included in the table below.

Table 12: Results of the economic analysis

	Without accounting for reduced GHG emissions		Accounting for reduced GHG emissions	
	20-year time horizon	25-year time horizon	20-year time horizon	25-year time horizon
ENPV (million USD)	15.0	26.6	59.1	76.3
EIRR	12.1%	14.0%	63.4%	63.4%

The sensitivity analysis shows that the Project is not sensitive to moderate cost increases, reduced profits, delays in the accrual of profits and changes to the planned planted areas (see Annex 3).

¹⁰⁶ This price is used indicatively and only for the purposes of the economic and financial analysis. This price is deemed conservative and is based on the price per t CO₂ eq offered by the Green Climate Fund within the context of its pilot program for REDD+ results-based payments, as indicated here: https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/1203466/Terms_of_reference_for_the_pilot_programme_for_REDD_results-based_payments.pdf/e26651fc-e216-c8b0-55a1-8eea16a90f39

D. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This section refers to the project/programme's logical framework in accordance with the GCF's [Performance Measurement Frameworks](#) under the [Results Management Framework](#) to which the project/programme contributes as a whole, including in respect of any co-financing.

E.1. Paradigm shift objectives

Please select the appropriated expected result. For cross-cutting proposals, tick both.

- Shift to low-emission sustainable development pathways
 Increased climate resilient sustainable development

E.2. Core indicator targets

Provide specific numerical values for the GCF core indicators to be achieved by the project/programme. Methodologies for the calculations should be provided. This should be consistent with the information provided in section A.

E.2.1. Expected tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (t CO ₂ eq) to be reduced or avoided (mitigation and cross-cutting only)	Annual	0.84 M t CO ₂ eq
	Lifetime	16.77 M t CO ₂ eq
E.2.2. Estimated cost per t CO ₂ eq, defined as total investment cost / expected lifetime emission reductions (mitigation and cross-cutting only)	(a) Total project financing	46,567,138 USD
	(b) Requested GCF amount	28,988,852 USD
	(c) Expected lifetime emission reductions	<u>16.77 M</u> t CO ₂ eq
	(d) Estimated cost per t CO₂eq (d = a / c)	<u>2.77</u> USD / t CO ₂ eq
	(e) Estimated GCF cost per t CO₂eq removed (e = b / c)	<u>1.72</u> USD / t CO ₂ eq
E.2.3. Expected volume of finance to be leveraged by the proposed project/programme as a result of the Fund's financing, disaggregated by public and private sources (mitigation and cross-cutting only)	(f) Total finance leveraged	17,578,286 USD
	(g) Public source co-financed ¹⁰⁷	17,578,286 USD
	(h) Private source finance leveraged ¹⁰⁸	___ Choose an item.
	(i) Total Leverage ratio (i = f / b)	<u>0.60</u>
	(j) Public source co-financing ratio (j = g / b)	<u>0.60</u>
	(k) Private source leverage ratio (k = h / b)	___
E.2.4. Expected total number of direct and indirect beneficiaries, (disaggregated by sex)	Direct	41,373 35% of female
	Indirect	870,649 35% of female
	<i>For a multi-country proposal, indicate the aggregate amount here and provide the data per country in annex 17.</i>	
E.2.5. Number of beneficiaries relative to total population (disaggregated by sex)	Direct	0.78% (Expressed as %) of country(ies)
	Indirect	16.49% (Expressed as %) of country(ies)
	<i>For a multi-country proposal, leave blank and provide the data per country in annex 17.</i>	

¹⁰⁷ The amount of IFAD co-financing may vary as the discussion is on-going and the PAJE project is still under adjustment also.

¹⁰⁸ FAO is liaising with the private sector entities that will sign purchase agreement to estimate an amount of leveraged private sector finance. Up to now, COFCAO could invest 2 million USD for mainly cocoa production, and following the agroforestry system developed by the project. Additionally, MIFs and beneficiaries would contribute for additional 3 million USD. Estimations of additional leverage resources from ECOIL and WFP are ongoing. The total amount will be added in the FP as leveraged financing.

E.3. Fund-level impacts						
Expected Results	Indicator	Means of Verification (MoV)	Baseline	Target		Assumptions
				Mid-term	Final	
M4.0 Reduced emissions from land use, reforestation, reduced deforestation, and through sustainable forest management and conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks	M4.1 Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (t CO ₂ eq) reduced or avoided (including increased removals) - forest and land use	Biennial Update Reports (BUR) submitted to UNFCCC and available in UNFCCC platform	0 tCO ₂ eq	3.36 million t CO ₂ eq	6.72 million t CO ₂ eq	<p>CO₂ emission reductions are estimated with FAO Ex-ACT tool;</p> <p>Project lifetime: 20 years</p> <p>Annual emission reductions: 0.84 million tCO₂ eq</p> <p>Lifetime emission reductions: 16.77 million tCO₂ eq</p> <p>Total forest area covers by the Project is 5% of total forest area within the 13 districts</p> <p>For more information on assumptions see GHG estimation report</p>

E.4. Fund-level outcomes						
Expected Outcomes	Indicator	Means of Verification (MoV)	Baseline	Target		Assumptions
				Mid-term	Final	
M9.0 Improved management of land or forest areas contributing to emissions reductions	M9.1 Hectares of land or forests under improved and effective management that contributes to CO ₂ emission reductions	CNIAF biennial report on forest cover change	<p># ha of agroforestry systems established¹⁰⁹</p> <p># ha of degraded land</p>	<p>+6,000 ha</p> <p>+ 2,000 ha</p>	<p>+14,500 ha</p> <p>+ 5,000 ha</p>	<p>Land-use planning is based on local development plans/territorial land-use plans</p> <p>Beneficiaries have secured land access and/or tenure rights</p> <p>Each individual or group of 2,325 targeted beneficiaries establishes between 5-50 ha</p>

¹⁰⁹ To be determined at project inception

			restored 110			of agroforestry systemes
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E.5. Project/programme performance indicators							
	Expected Results	Indicator	Means of Verification (MoV)	Base-line	Target		Assumptions
					Mid-term	Final	
					Component 1: Land-use and resources planning and strengthening of land access and security rights	New areas of land have a secured access and tenure rights	

Component 2: Deployment of	New area of low-emission and climate resilient agroforestry and forestry systems are established to reduce slash-and-burn agriculture and provide a	Number of farmers (% women) trained in low-emission climate resilient agroforestry and forestry practices	Project monitoring report	0 (0) farmers	800 (35%)	2,635 (35%)	Consistent technical support is provided to beneficiaries
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sustainable fuelwood supply source by farmers	Number of hectares of agroforestry and forestry systems established (managed by women or marginalized groups)		0 ha	4,600 ha (1,600 ha)	14,500 ha (5,000 ha)	Agroforestry and forestry systems generate timely, consistent and increased socio-economic benefits to beneficiaries
New area of degraded forest/land are restored through assisted natural regeneration	Number of hectares of land and/or degraded forest restored by means of assisted natural regeneration or protected	CNIAF biennial report on forest cover change Project monitoring report	0 ha	2,000 ha	5,000 ha	Local communities are equipped to lead assisted natural regeneration activities and to safeguard restored forest/land areas.
	% of women participating in assisted natural regeneration activities		0% women	15% women	35% women	
New models of locally relevant agroforestry systems are developed and adopted	Number of new agroforestry models adopted	Published research papers Local research institutions (e.g. IRF, IRA) research report Project monitoring report	0	1	3	Scientifically sounds research protocols for agroforestry are in place

Component 3: Strengthening national agricultural financing structures. business capacities	Access to micro-finance for agroforestry and forestry sectors is increased	Number of beneficiaries (% women) trained/mentored to develop and implement bankable business plans	MFI's registry	0 (0%)	1000 (35%)	2,635 (35%)	Beneficiaries have the ability and capacity to assimilate and apply new skills and knowledge
		Number of bankable business plans approved for micro-financing	Procured party(ies) monitoring report	0	At least 100	At least 400	MFIs apply context specific and climate-friendly credit granting requirements
		Total amount of micro-credit provided to beneficiaries by MFI	Project monitoring report	0 USD	200,000 USD	At least 500,000 USD	

	New micro-finance products/services for agroforestry and forestry sectors are created and deployed	Number of new micro-finance products/services created and deployed for agroforestry and forestry sectors ¹¹¹	MFI registry	0	2	5	A conducive regulatory framework is in place for climate finance mainstreaming into MFI operations
	A market for agroforestry and forestry products is created and strengthened	Number of purchase agreements signed between off-takers and beneficiaries	Project monitoring report	0	At least 50	At least 100	There is a market equilibrium for the supply and demand of different agroforestry and forestry products
		Quantity (tons) of agroforestry and forestry products marketed		0	400,000	>=1,000,000	The productivity of agroforestry and forestry systems established and quality of products meet standards and buyers demand

E.6. Activities			
Activity	Description	Sub-activities	Deliverables
1.1.1 Development of Participatory mapping	Develop maps for land-use for a better location of the agroforestry and forestry systems to be established by the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory meeting for the land-use delimitation Ground truthing monitoring 	22 participatory mapping available
1.2.1. Identification and selection of potential beneficiaries and land owners partners	Select potential beneficiaries interested in establishing climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine selection criteria Launch calls of expression of interest for potential beneficiaries Select and notify potential beneficiaries 	List of potential beneficiaries
1.2.2. Establishment of formal agreements with beneficiaries and landowners and provision of support to strengthen tenure security rights	Support the selected beneficiaries in the land access and security rights procedure	Organize meetings with PRONAR and land owners on land access procedures Produce and logistical support for obtention of land title <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sign protocols / agreements between the 	Land titles issued for beneficiaries which including women and indigenous households (number to be determined)

¹¹¹ For example new credit lines specific to project beneficiaries and smallholder farmers in the area.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beneficiaries and PRONAR/land owners • Sign protocols / agreements between the beneficiaries and projects Sign protocols/agreements between the beneficiaries and the Project 	
2.1.1. Provision of assistance for the establishment of fast start forestry systems for energy purpose	Strengthen and scale up successful forestry systems for energy local initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select beneficiaries • Define modalities for support and sign agreement • Provide support and monitoring <p>Document and disseminate lessons learned</p>	Assistance provided for the establishment of 2,700 ha fast start tree plantation
2.2.1. Awareness raising on climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems	Develop various information/education tools and organize information and awareness raising campaigns for populations on the climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems to be developed by the project (issues of concern to women such as GBV and women's empowerment to be integrated in these campaigns).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement the information and awareness raising strategy • Establish monitoring structures and support mainstreaming activities • Organize the information and awareness raising campaigns • Report on the information and awareness raising campaigns results 	01 information and awareness raising strategy developed; Awareness raising tools produced (e.g. brochure etc.); 01 Campaign report
2.2.2. Transfer of access and use rights on government land to smallholder farmers / producers	Transfer of land access and security rights to beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish monitoring structures and support mainstreaming activities 	Number of ha transferred
2.2.3. Organization of practical training on climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems	Train beneficiaries on the practical aspects of the climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems promoted through farmer field schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the training manual • Organize training groups • Developed the training calendar and make field visits • Organize training 	01 training manual developed; training reports developed (number to be determined)
2.2.4. Provision of technical assistance for the establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems	Provide personalized and close technical support to the different beneficiaries on production systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify procured parties • Develop and formalize letters of agreement with procured parties • Organize the deployment of the systems with procured parties • Provide incentives for the establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems to beneficiaries 	11,800 ha of agroforestry and forestry systems
2.2.5. Monitoring and evaluation of overall Project interventions	Monitor and evaluate the project implementation interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and produce mandatory reporting • Organize project performance evaluation • 	Annual reports (8) Interim and final evaluation

<p>2.3.1. Rehabilitation of nurseries</p>	<p>Restore nursery plots to supply seedlings and saplings to beneficiaries for agroforestry and forestry systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select species and collect seed • Manage and maintain nurseries • Development of seedlings and saplings 	<p>Nursery plots (number to be determined)</p>
<p>2.3.2. Deployment of Assisted natural regeneration</p>	<p>Provide personalized and close technical support to the different beneficiaries on the establishment of ANR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ANR target areas • Define and implement specific ANR approaches • Monitor forest growth and associated CO₂ sequestration 	<p>5,000 ha of ANR established</p>
<p>2.4.1. Support for the upscaling of climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry models</p>	<p>Establish and disseminate innovative locally adapted climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry models</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop concepts • Develop trial methodological approaches • Conduct trial experiment • Monitor, analyze and disseminate results 	<p>Innovative models developed (number to be determined)</p>
<p>3.1.1. Development, implementation and monitoring of business plans in forest areas</p>	<p>Development of robust and bankable business plans and implementation by beneficiaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop business plans • Develop training tools/manual for implementation and monitoring of the business plans • Monitor application of knowledge 	<p>Business plans approved (number to be determined)</p> <p>01 training manual on business plan implementation</p>
<p>3.1.2. Development and implementation of business plans for beneficiaries in savanna areas</p>	<p>Context specific training on the development and implementation of robust business plans for beneficiaries in savanna ecosystems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop training tools/manual • Select the participants • Organize the training workshop • Monitor application of knowledge 	<p>01 training manual on business plan development and implementation;</p> <p>Training reports (number to be determined)</p>
<p>3.2.1. Capacity building of national financial institutions on rural finance for agriculture</p>	<p>Identify needs and train national financial institutions in developing relevant products and services for rural agriculture finance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an evaluation of training needs/capacity building • Identify and select beneficiary financial institutions • Define and implement a capacity building programme 	<p>Financial institution trained (number to be determined)</p>
<p>3.2.2. Capacity building of national financial institutions on green investment in agroforestry and forestry sectors</p>	<p>Develop strategic partnerships with micro and meso-credit institutions in order to increase national credit supply for climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry initiatives conducted by beneficiaries.</p> <p>Identify needs and train national financial institutions in developing responsible investment criteria specific to the climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry sectors and improve their capacity to understand and manage the risks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select the credit institutions • Develop partnership agreements • Organize meetings for the official signing of agreements • Conduct an evaluation of training needs/capacity building • Define and implement a capacity building programme 	<p>Partnership agreements documents (number to be determined)</p> <p>Training reports (number to be determined);</p> <p>Financial institutions trained (number to be determined)</p>

<p>3.2.3. Development of a national financial inclusion strategy and formalization of MFI's</p>	<p>Elaborate a national financial inclusion strategy with specific focus on rural financing for agroforestry and forestry sectors</p> <p>Support process for official recognition of MFI as micro-financial institution by the Ministry of Finance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the methodology, and validate it the strategy • Select CMECs to be formalized, as part of MFIs • Prepare and submit formalization applications • Follow up on approval process 	<p>01 national financial inclusion strategy</p>
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<p>3.3.1. Identification and development of suitable credit lines for forestry and agricultural sectors</p>	<p>Support micro-finance institution in developing financial products and service relevant to beneficiary and women's needs (low interest rate, longer maturity periods and alignment with production cycles, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a diagnostic analysis of micro-finance product and service • Identify and develop innovative micro-finance product and service • Support mainstreaming of new microfinance products and services into micro-finance partner operations 	<p>Micro-financing operational manual and procedures (number to be determined)</p>
<p>3.3.2. Development of inclusive financial products and services for agri-food value chain</p>	<p>Support financial institutions in developing and implementing inclusive financial products and services for agrifood value chain</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a mapping analysis to identify relevant products and services • Select/design new products and services • Mainstream new products and service into financial institutions operations 	<p>Financial products and services developed and operationalized (number to be determined)</p>
<p>3.3.3. Facilitation of interactions between beneficiaries and national financial institutions for the use of created suitable financial products and services</p>	<p>Support beneficiaries in developing business plans, opening savings accounts, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the facilitation procedures • Define and implement an individualized support programme 	<p>01 individualized support programme established</p>
<p>3.4.1. Facilitation of the establishment of purchase agreements</p>	<p>Conduct a prospective market study to identify potential institutions interested in purchase agreements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of off-takers • Select potential institutions based on the study results • Support the beneficiaries for the negotiation and establishment of purchase agreements • Sign purchasing agreements 	<p>Purchase agreements (10 purchasing agreements targeted)</p>
<p>3.4.2. Support of local market platform and operationalization of purchase agreements with buyers</p>	<p>Support the operationalization of purchase agreements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish market platforms • Operationalize market platform 	<p>Market platform established and operationalized (number to be determined)</p>

E.7. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation arrangements (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The FAO will serve as the Accredited Entity (AE) for the Project. As such, the FAO will be responsible for overall management of the Project, including: i) All project evaluation aspects; ii) Administrative, financial and technical supervision throughout implementation of the Project; iii) Supervision of effective management of funds to achieve the

results and objectives; iv) Quality control of Project monitoring and reporting to the GCF; v) Project closure and evaluation. The FAO will assume these responsibilities in line with the detailed provisions listed in the Accreditation Master Agreement (AMA) between FAO and the GCF. Accountability on the use of financial resources will be facilitated by review of annual and six-monthly Project reports, as well as monitoring reports. A Project Performance Monitoring System (PPMS) will be developed based on the target indicators and objectives defined in the logical framework. In particular, the PPMS will enable monitoring of: (i) Progress made in implementing the planned activities; (ii) Progress made in terms of the Project's products and results; and (iii) Potential risks that could have adverse effects on achievement of the Project's objectives. The PPMS will be established approximately 6 months after the start of the project and will be managed by the PMU in collaboration with the implementing entities and in line with the performance monitoring standards for FAO projects.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Project activities will be in line with the relevant FAO standards and procedures, and in accordance with the GCF Performance Measurement Framework. As the Accredited Entity and primary Executing Entity, the FAO will be responsible for general coordination of the monitoring and evaluation activities of the various Project implementing entities, and will report to the GCF as required.

Preliminary review. The FAO will conduct a preliminary review in order to evaluate preparedness for effective implementation of the Project and associated procedures, particularly the establishment of the PMU, opening of an account, signature of Letters of Agreement with the procured parties, signature of purchase agreements, etc. This review will serve as a basis for the establishment of the PPMS.

A monitoring and evaluation expert will be recruited as part of the PMU to supervise monitoring activities on a continuous basis, and compile monthly activity progress reports for the attention of the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), the National Coordinator and the Lead Technical Officer (LTO). These monthly reports will be used by the LTO to conduct biannual monitoring and evaluation missions, which will be used to: (i) Evaluate progress made in activity implementation, implementation procedures and results obtained; (ii) Verify the conformity of the activities with the FAO and GCF environmental and social safeguard measures; (ii) Ensure respect of the terms of the grant agreement and related issues; (iii) Monitor implementation of decisions from previous monitoring missions; (iv) Resolve any other problem related to implementation of the project.

Evaluation

To provide an external viewpoint on the progress of the Project and the achievement of its objectives, the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) will conduct two project evaluations, a preliminary review (interim) and a final review.

Interim evaluation. An interim evaluation will be conducted by an FAO multidisciplinary team. This review will provide a complete evaluation of performance in terms of the targets and indicators of the logical framework, as well as the implementation procedures. It will identify weaknesses, if applicable, and recommend any changes needed to strengthen the implementation provisions or amend the Project design. During this review, there will be specific emphasis on the impact of the Project's activities on women and the most disadvantaged.

Final evaluation. A final Project evaluation will be conducted by an FAO multidisciplinary team approximately 6 months after the end of activities in order to produce the final Project report for submission to the GCF. This final review will: (i) Evaluate project performance in terms of the objectives, targets and indicators (including any revisions from the interim review); (ii) Evaluate the benefits and impacts of the project for all products; and (iii) Identify incomplete activities and agree on necessary actions to confirm compliance with the FAO and GCF requirements.

In line with the AMA, the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) will be in charge of the interim and final evaluation of the project. The evaluations will be conducted using an issue-based approach and may include evaluations using general criteria of relevance, efficacy and sustainability, as applicable. Through operational and strategic recommendations, the interim evaluation will contribute towards improved implementation by identifying any corrective measures needed for the remaining Project period. The final evaluations will assess the relevance of the intervention, its overall performance, as well as the sustainability and scaling up of the results obtained and the lessons learned. The evaluations will be based on a detailed evaluation methodology including the use of different evaluation methods and tools. In addition to the primary data collected by evaluators and the secondary national data available, the interim and final evaluations will be based on monitoring activities and reports prepared by project staff, including surveys to be implemented at baseline, interim and project completion. **Reporting:** The PMU will produce for the Steering Committee and, more specifically, the FAO: (i) Monthly progress reports in a format compatible with the GCF's Performance Measurement Framework; (ii) Consolidated biennial and annual reports including: a) Progress made per product, measured using performance indicators, b) The main implementation problems and solutions, c) An updated purchase

plan, d) An updated plan for the next 12 months; and (iii) A Project completion report in the six months following physical completion of the Project activities.

Monitoring of forest carbon stocks. Monitoring of reductions in forest carbon emissions will be carried out by the CNIAF as procured party in close collaboration with the PMU and FAO forest monitoring experts. Use will be made of the country's National Forest Monitoring System: Monitoring and Measurement, Reporting and Verification (NFMS - M & MRV), developed in recent years with support from the UN-REDD programme and the FCPF. Emissions will be monitored based on historic emissions analyzed for the 13 districts during the Project preparatory phase, established over the period 2000-2016. Through the NFMS - M & MRV, Congo will monitor national forest cover every two years by producing maps and evaluating activity data. The Project monitoring and evaluation system, particularly in terms of quantities of carbon reduced/avoided, will be anchored to the NFMS - M & MRV. At the beginning of the Project, during the development of the baseline, the CNIAF and PMU will establish a forest reference level (FREL) for the Project area, using updated forest cover loss statistics. This FREL, on top of the use of the EX-ACT tool, will be used to monitor reductions in GHG emissions in the Project area.

Monitoring of gender. The procured parties will support the implementation and monitoring of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) with the support of the PMU. The Project Gender Specialist, who will act as an occasional expert to support the PMU, will be responsible for supervising and monitoring all Project activities related to gender, particularly updating of the GAP and coordinating its implementation by all procured parties. The Project will work in close collaboration with the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Integration of Women in Development for the appropriation of project activities related to gender, monitoring and sustainability.

Data disaggregated by gender will be collected whenever relevant and gender-specific and gender-sensitive indicators will be integrated in the PPMS. Data disaggregated by gender will specifically focus on activities related to the specific objectives of the GAP, for which reliable data sources for monitoring are available at the level of the retained districts.

Monitoring of environmental and social safeguards. On the basis of the GCF checklist for rapid evaluation of environmental and social impact, the Project is globally classified in the category "Moderate" using the FAO risk classification, or category "B" using the GCF environmental and social policy. It was therefore necessary to develop a Framework Plan for Environmental and Social Management for the Project (ESF). The ESF describes the necessary measures to guarantee that potential environmental impacts are identified, avoided, reduced and mitigated in line with the requirements of the FAO and GCF as well as the national laws and regulations. It consists of mitigation, monitoring and reporting measures and communication with stakeholders before, during and after implementation of the Project. Ultimately, this framework, will be used as an anchor for beneficiaries, who will need to develop an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) in order to obtain Project support.

The PMU will be responsible for monitoring implementation of the ESF and ESMPs, but ultimately, responsibility will be shared with the beneficiaries, who will need to ensure compliance with the ESF environmental and social safeguards during implementation and reporting. The PMU will monitor the beneficiaries. The Environmental and Social Safeguard Specialist (ESSS) contracted by the PMU, will analyze and classify beneficiary initiatives using FAO categories (low, moderate, high) and the corresponding GCF categories (C, B and A). He or she will then develop a corresponding environmental and social management plan. For initiatives in category "low" or "C", he or she will produce a summary of environmental implications. Initiatives with "high" risks will not be supported by the Project. At district level, the PMU will ensure that: (i) the ESMP results are communicated locally; (ii) the ESMP reports are submitted to the Technical Committee and Steering Committee for review and authorization, unless exempted; (iii) the ESF measures are incorporated into contracts with beneficiaries and that the service providers provide the required environmental monitoring, compile reports, and play their assigned roles in the grievance settlement mechanism.

In order to support the work of the ESSS, the Technical Committee will establish subcommittees with a support mandate in order to validate methodologies and provide advice on the different environmental and social issues to be taken into account. Furthermore, the Project may retain specialized procured parties to conduct periodic field verifications in order to validate compliance with the environmental and social management plans developed by the initiators.

FAO's Financial Regulations provide that the External Auditor shall be the Auditor-General (or person exercising an equivalent function) of a Member Nation, selected through a transparent bidding process by FAO's Governing Bodies. The Funding Proposal will be managed by FAO as an AE and co-EE in compliance with FAO financial rules and regulations (shared with GCF during the accreditation process).

**Monitoring of CAFI Letter of Intent (LoI) objectives, milestones.**

PREFOREST project will support reaching objectives and milestones of the LoI signed with CAFI. Therefore PREFOREST will report to CAFI on its results contributing to these objectives. A specific methodology for monitoring and reporting on the LoI will be defined in the framework of the governance programme supported by CAFI that will be discussed with PREFOREST PMU to ensure its feasibility

E. RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

F.1. Risk factors and mitigations measures (max. 3 pages)

Several risk factors have been identified and mitigation measures developed to allow an effective implementation of PREFOREST activities. In order to effectively mitigate and manage these risks, FAO will establish a specific governance structure under PREFOREST as indicated in Annex 6 ‘Environmental and Social Management Framework - ESMF’. FAO will recruit a full-time expert who will be responsible for implementation of the ESMF and the Planning Framework for Indigenous Peoples. Technical subcommittees (e.g. Indigenous peoples; Land security; Equity and good governance; Biodiversity; and Pest and pesticides) will be created within the Technical Committee to provide technical advice on the PMU’s work, particularly regarding monitoring of environmental and social impact, evaluating risk management plans submitted by the Project beneficiaries and periodically analyzing the efficacy of mitigation measures implemented. The TC and its subcommittees, supported by the Safeguard Specialist and other PMU supervisors, must ensure that mitigation measures and environmental and social standards are integrated into implementation of the Project.

PLEASE NOTE THAT CONGO IS NOT LISTED IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL SANCTIONS (SEE <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/sanctions-and-other-committees#cat5>).

Selected Risk Factor 1 Difficulties relating to land access and security risk compromising the large-scale adoption of climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry practices

Category	Probability	Impact
Governance	Medium	Medium

Description

According to the traditional standards of appropriation and land access control in Congo, only families who are “land owners” have the right to plant trees on their land. Non-land owners, who generally practice subsistence agriculture on land belonging to land owners that is either rented, or for which no rent is paid, almost never have the right to plant trees. Clan or lineage related to land is the most common method of land right acquisition. The status of “land owner” on a given piece of land is therefore recognized for members of the family line who hold these rights. Many of such “land owners” have no land title. The cost of services provided by uncertified surveyors, working informally, often impedes fulfillment of land owners’ wishes to secure their land. Social conflicts may also give rise to speculation with respect to the monetary value of rural land. Conversations with land owners and agricultural producers with no land access right to the land they were cultivating revealed pessimism about the possibility of planting trees. Also, the establishment of medium to long-term land lease contracts, which could allow for the integration of trees, is still not current practice in Congo, but certain examples show that this type of arrangement is possible. Although land systems are strongly anchored in tradition, they are not frozen – they develop with time. Traditionally, land is not sold, but there are exceptions, particularly near urban areas. Some tenants have established emphyteutic leases¹¹² with the land owners. Sometimes, the person who has cleared the forest for the first time retains certain rights on fallow fields.

Mitigation Measure(s)

An important element in effective implementation of the Project is the issue of land security. After in-depth analyses, the Project retained three options to remedy the issue of land access and security, notably: (A) ensuring that project beneficiaries have access to land already secured by PRONAR or land available on former State farms. To date, almost 6,000 ha have been secured by PRONAR and blocks of land are currently being secured in certain departments covered by the project. (B) Support of families interested in registering their land and transferring a part to climate-resilient agroforestry activities by non-land owners; and (C) the system of shared remuneration (contracts), which consists of the land owner interested in the Project agreeing to make his land available to climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry activities by beneficiaries through long-term contracts to be negotiated jointly in exchange for shared remuneration. Unfortunately, PRONAR and state lands are only available in a minority of villages.

Strengthening of land access and security rights is a cornerstone of Components 1 and 2. Land access and security rights will be strengthened for land owners and non-land owners. The adoption of climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry production systems will specifically target non-land owners. In order for land owners to agree to transfer a part of their land, provide access to non-land owners, or even agree to conclude long-

¹¹² A type of real estate contract specifying that the lessee must improve the property with construction.

term shared remuneration contracts with non-land owners with the right to plant trees, the land rights of the land owners themselves must be secured with land titles. During community surveys conducted by the risk assessment mission, and particularly during the educational activities conducted by the NGO ID in all 13 districts, there was a declaration of agreement in principal on Option C) by land owners. However, the land owners also insisted that their families (specifically their family line) would also need to be informed – otherwise, the land owners would risk being accused by their families of having sold family land.

The Technical Committee will have a subcommittee for land security rights. As the three options are innovative, amendments will need to be made, particularly during the initial years of Project implementation. Management of land arrangements and conflicts will be based on two main elements: 1) creation of a specific indicator to quantify the availability of functional options in villages that are part of the Project area. Monitoring of this indicator will be on an annual basis. 2) Analysis of land securing options will be one of the key subjects in adaptive land-use planning at the end of each year.¹¹³ A participatory analysis will be conducted in a sample of villages in each district at the end of the year. In each village, the strengths and weaknesses of each option will be identified. In the event of weaknesses or failures, a participatory analysis will be conducted on the causes leading to identification solutions for implementation the following year.

Selected Risk Factor 2 Marginalized groups do not benefit equitably from Project activities

Category	Probability	Impact
Governance	Medium	Medium

Description

Traditional land systems grant more powers and rights to men than women, despite the matrilineal nature of the society. Moreover, appropriation rights are only recognized for Bantu people, even on land worked by two, three, or even several generations of indigenous populations. Nearly all land owners are Bantu men. Women typically have access to land through their husbands or men from their family line. In case of divorce or death of a husband, the woman loses her land access rights. Indigenous populations have even less access to land and they are never land owners in the Project area. Within this context, without implementing concrete initiatives, it is unlikely that women, young people and indigenous populations will be able to negotiate directly with land owners for medium to long-term contracts with the right to plant trees. Development of management and farming capacities will be very difficult, particularly for women and indigenous peoples. The level of quality required by the Project for the selection of beneficiaries of climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry initiatives could prove to be a barrier to participation. Business plans and other management concepts are unknown to them. Women and indigenous peoples are the least capable of meeting requirements.

Mitigation Measure(s)

After broad consultation, the Project developed a Framework Plan for Environmental and Social Management, a Gender Action Plan and a Planning Framework for Indigenous Peoples, which precisely define the targeted objectives, the monitoring and evaluation indicators, as well as the approach towards mitigating the risks of marginalization. In this sense, equitable sharing of the Project benefits involves not only activities requiring access to land (deployment of climate-resilient agroforestry systems under Component 2), but also activities related to building business capacities and value chains (Component 3). For example, in the specific case of Component 2, special efforts will be made to ensure equitable access to the three land access options retained by the Project for men, women, young people and indigenous populations.

The Project will favor the most vulnerable beneficiaries in land access negotiations with land owners and will ensure that they benefit from access to state land (such as PRONAR land), where such land is available. Moreover, the most vulnerable beneficiaries, particularly women and indigenous peoples, will benefit from targeted capacity building, as well as technical and financial support specific to their requirements and appropriate to the local context in order to guarantee their effective participation. Two targets were set: a) 35% of groups benefiting from Component 2 should be women’s groups; and b) the percentage of indigenous peoples benefiting should be proportional to the percentage of indigenous peoples in the affected villages.

With regard to the difficulty faced by marginal groups in meeting Project requirements for funding of climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry initiatives, the Project plans to support interested beneficiaries in

¹¹³ See the subchapter on adaptive land-use planning in the environmental and social study report.

developing their applications, and implementing their business plans in accordance with the requirements. To this end, the Project will establish an incubation structure. Special emphasis will be placed on effective farm management. Specific training and support will be organized in favor of women and indigenous peoples.		
Selected Risk Factor 3 The initial investments risk becoming highly financially attractive and could increase the pressures and risks of deforestation and forest degradation		
Category	Probability	Impact
Other	Low	Select
Description		
One of the consequences of increasing the profitability of agricultural and climate-resilient agroforestry systems throughout the world is an increased rate of conversion of natural ecosystems into agricultural land ¹¹⁴ . Congo has not remained on the fringes of this reality, and the deployment of the climate-resilient agroforestry systems considered under this Project involves a potential risk of increasing the rate of deforestation and forest degradation owing to their financial profitability. This risk is particularly relevant in the case of production systems for the cocoa considered as a priority by the Congolese government, with profitability analyses indicating that it is by far the most promising production system. Deforestation in favor of cocoa crops was the main direct cause of rain forest loss in West Africa ¹¹⁵ and there is a strong chance that such a phenomenon may be replicated in Congo if appropriate mitigation measures are not implemented.		
Mitigation Measure(s)		
Agroforestry systems within the context of this Project will only be deployed within a context of local development plans. As such, these interventions in forest areas will be implemented in geographical spaces solely intended for these purposes. In forest areas, funding of cocoa plantations will only be for already cultivated sites. In addition, the size of the funded initiatives will be limited to 5 ha in forest areas, and each initiative must strictly respect the environmental and social safeguards, specifically demonstrating that they are not causing, and will not cause, deforestation or forest degradation. These restrictions do not apply to savanna areas where cocoa production systems pose no direct danger to the forest. Furthermore, the Project will conduct widespread training and educational campaigns on sustainable practices and standards for agricultural production and climate-resilient agroforestry.		
Selected Risk Factor 4. The counterpart requirements, in terms of minimum plantation size and formal groups, risk limiting the participation of certain qualified candidates.		
Category	Probability	Impact
Other	Low	Low
Description		
The Project plans to support production systems varying from a minimum of 10 ha in savanna areas and 5 ha in forest areas to a maximum area of 50 ha. Furthermore, the Project plans to use initial investment funds only to support initiatives that are able to contribute at least 10% of the investment cost. The Project plans to support only established and recognized groups, or groups that will start the procedure to become recognized. All these preconditions will limit the participation of a large part of the population, including marginal groups, whose current cropping practices are on areas of land that are smaller than 5 ha (generally 1-2 hectares), with groups very often not being registered and without substantial savings to cover the cost of their contribution, which is deemed prohibitive.		
Mitigation Measure(s)		
To achieve the targets set for the participation of women and indigenous peoples, the Project will, if necessary, amend the minimum size requirements or the contribution payment conditions for groups of women or indigenous peoples. For example, in non-mechanized sites, the Project may support production systems of approximately 2 ha or even exceeding 5 ha in mechanized areas. The Project may also open up to informal groups and groups of individuals capable of creating common interest groups, as the important thing is to bring together people motivated by learning about climate-resilient agroforestry, not to be of service to groups established just for the Project. With regard to contribution costs, for women, the Project may agree to the		

¹¹⁴ TetraTech. 2015. Working Paper on Sustainable Intensification without Extensification. USAID

¹¹⁵ Website of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture

payment of a part in advance, and a part when the first income is generated, and free of charge support or no contribution for indigenous peoples. The Project must monitor the proportion of initiatives put forward by women and indigenous peoples and lower the eligibility conditions where necessary in order to ensure full participation of all these strata of the population.

Selected Risk Factor 5. Development of the management capacities of members of beneficiary groups will be difficult, particularly for women's and indigenous groups.

Category	Probability	Impact
Technical and operational	Medium	Low

Description

The level of quality required by the Project for selected beneficiaries of agroforestry and forestry initiatives could prove to be a barrier to participation if application development techniques are poorly mastered by the beneficiaries. In fact, the preparation of business plans and other management concepts are unknown to them. Women and indigenous peoples are the least capable of meeting these requirements. Management capacity limitations may also affect other areas of the project, including planning activities and development of national financial institutions.

Mitigation Measure(s)

The Project will aim to accurately match capacity building needs with training and other technical assistance through capacity needs assessments tailored to different stakeholder groups. The Project will assign mentors with established experience to each group of beneficiaries for mentoring support in respect to the development and implementation of their respective business plans over the course of their activities. To this end, technical support in place will emphasize effective farm management. Specific training and support will be organized for women and indigenous peoples.

Selected Risk Factor 6. Indigenous peoples risk not benefiting sufficiently from the Project

Category	Probability	Impact
Technical and operational	Medium	Low

Description

Indigenous peoples (IP) are victims of much discrimination by the Bantu populations. IP are never landowners. Their products and work are poorly developed compared with that of the Bantu. During conflicts in villages, they are never successful with the village chiefs and they are not integrated into decision-making structures. Indigenous peoples in existing groups rarely benefit from equitable sharing of benefits. It would be particularly difficult for indigenous peoples to negotiate medium/long-term land access contracts. They would find it even more difficult to meet the minimum eligibility conditions for funding of initiatives and their greatest difficulty would be in building business management capacities. With no specific measures, there is very little chance that they could benefit from the support offered by the Project.

Mitigation Measure(s)

A Planning Framework for Indigenous Peoples in line with the GCF and FAO safeguards was developed within the context of feasibility studies for the Project. This plan accurately identifies the obstacles to effective participation by indigenous peoples and proposes ways and means to address their marginalization and guarantee their active participation in the Project activities. The Project will pay particular attention to ensuring the participation of IP, particularly by using positive discrimination when selecting initiatives. It is particularly important for the percentage of indigenous peoples benefiting from the Project to be proportional to the percentage of indigenous peoples in the populations of villages with indigenous peoples. Moreover, the Project will implement specific measures for IP, particularly through training and support in securing their land access rights, as well as the establishment of a complaints and monitoring management system. Contrary to other beneficiaries, who will have to cover part of the initial investment costs for their initiatives, the Project will cover 100% of the initial investment cost for indigenous peoples. Also, a dedicated full-time Environmental and Social Specialist will be hired to take into account and address specific issues faced by indigenous peoples.

<p>FAO and its partners (CAFI and IFAD) will address together the potential issue of IPs and conflicts in a consistent way, which will be defined during project inception phase. The project will also communicate transparently on all IP-related information.</p>		
<p>Selected Risk Factor 7. The level of governance of the technical and administrative government departments hinders effective implementation of the Project.</p>		
Category	Probability	Impact
Technical and operational	Medium	Low
<p>Description</p>		
<p>Good governance is a major concern in Congo, which is classified 165th out of 180 countries on the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index. This governance issue is particularly evident in the implementation of development projects such as this one. In fact, during feasibility surveys, the consulted stakeholders emphasized the lack of transparency during similar recent initiatives and explicitly expressed their doubts about impartiality in analyzing and selecting applications for the climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry initiatives that will be supported. The low level of governance could hinder the effective implementation of the Project.</p>		
<p>Mitigation Measure(s)</p>		
<p>The Project will strengthen transparency in reviewing and screening applications by initiators, through dissemination of the selection criteria, publication of the selection results and reasons for selection/rejection, as well as support to tenderers in reviewing rejected applications. The Project will strengthen transparency in the analysis and selection of applications. Education of local populations, dissemination of the selection criteria, and training and support in compiling funding request applications for climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry initiatives will be offered by procured parties, particularly NGOs. A local committee will conduct an initial analysis of the submitted applications to ensure that each one is complete and to give their opinion. The primary analysis and selection of applications to be funded will be conducted by a mixed committee in the PMU. There will be members from ministries, the FAO and independent experts. The Safeguard Specialist recruited by the Project will determine whether specific safeguards require an opinion from the specialized subcommittees or recourse to other expertise. The selection committee will prepare a written justification on the selection or non-selection of each application. The selection results and the reasons for selection/rejection will be sent to the applicants and support will be given to applicants in reviewing rejected applications.</p>		
<p>Selected Risk Factor 8. The use of pesticides and other chemical agricultural inputs could have adverse effects on the health of populations and the environment.</p>		
Category	Probability	Impact
Governance	Low	Low
<p>Description</p>		
<p>Pesticide and chemical fertilizer use in Congo is relatively low owing to its unavailability and high cost, but it is increasing with agricultural intensification. Climate-resilient agroforestry techniques increase the efficacy of fertilizers, but do not eliminate the need for their use. Agricultural producers have very little information on the effective use of agricultural chemical inputs. Integrated pest and pesticide management is underdeveloped in Congo.</p>		
<p>Mitigation Measure(s)</p>		
<p>The Project has developed an Environment and Social Risk Management Plan that covers the approach to pesticide use in line with the FAO safeguard measures on pests and pesticides. This plan makes specific provision for the training of beneficiaries, as well as agricultural sector chiefs on the environmental and technical safeguards for integrated pest management.</p> <p>The applicable standard is FAO Environmental and Social Standard 5 (ESS 5). The objectives of ESS 5 are the following: 1) to promote integrated pest management; 2) to reduce dependence on pesticides; and 3) to minimize the negative impact of pesticide use. In line with the explanation of the scope of ESS 5, this standard applies to the Project because agricultural intensification through the promotion of climate-resilient agroforestry (particularly) and forestry production systems could indirectly contribute to an increase in the use of certain pesticides. The FAO must promote integrated pest management as a basic principle for sustainable</p>		

agricultural intensification. A pesticide management plan is not required, because the quantities of pesticides used will remain moderate. However, if there is a need to use pesticides, after analyzing the options for integrated pest management, the choice of pesticides must be closely studied. The factors to be taken into account when selecting pesticides are: 1) their selectivity; 2) the risks to non-target species; 3) their persistence in the environment; 4) their efficacy; and 5) the probability of resistance development.

At minimum, an environmental and social analysis is necessary before selecting pesticides for approval. The following criteria must be met before a pesticide is approved for use in an FAO project: 1) the pesticide must be registered in the country or it must be specifically permitted by the competent authority and all conditions specified for registered products must be followed; 2) users must be capable of managing the product within acceptable risk margins; 3) preference is given to less dangerous, more selective, less persistent pesticides with less dangerous methods of application that are the best targeted and that require the least pesticide; 4) any procurement of pesticides on the international market must meet the conditions specified by the site <http://www.pic.int/Implementation/Pesticides>. Some production systems will also require the use of moderate quantities of chemical fertilizers. Climate-resilient agroforestry techniques minimize the need to use fertilizers/soil conditioners but they do not eliminate it. The quantities of chemical fertilizers used are expected to be very modest.

Selected Risk Factor 9. Labor issues including child labor, discrimination in selection processes, and abusive working conditions may be linked to some project activities.		
Category	Probability	Impact
Prohibited practices	Medium	Low
Description		
Some labor abuses could be associated with the Project activities. Such instances could include for example, employment of children in the agroforestry or assisted natural regeneration (ANR) activities and in the establishment of tree nurseries and plantations. While Congolese laws forbid children under 16 years of age to work, the Project may face challenges in enforcing the appropriate involvement of children in activities, particularly in poorer remote locations where school attendance may not be regular and where families depend on labor provided by their children. There is also the possibility of discrimination in hiring processes, particularly by subcontractors or project partners. For instance, women or indigenous peoples may face prejudice in recruitment and even lack of information about work opportunities, thereby limiting their access to benefits. Sexual harassment in the workplace or during implementation of project activities may also occur.		
Mitigation Measure(s)		
The Project will comply with FAO Environmental and Social Management Guidelines (Standard 7) and FAO's Compliance Reviews (2015) describing the process and procedures related to alleged non-compliance with FAO's environmental and social policy standards, the FAO framework on ending child labour in agriculture . Incidence of child labor in Project supported activities will lead to the immediate suspension of support to the implementing partner. Non-compliance on child labor issues in accordance with the above policy frameworks will also be highlighted specifically in the design of the Project-level grievance mechanism. FAO reconfirms and will monitor closely during the project implementation that beneficiaries that could potentially employ children below the nationally-defined minimum employment age (16) will not be eligible as recipients of project technical and financial support.		
Selected Risk Factor 10. Some minor and localized pollution may be produced due to emissions and wastewater discharges from storage and processing equipment/facilities of agroforestry products.		
Category	Probability	Impact
Prohibited practices	Medium	Low
Description		
There could be some minor pollution related to the processing of agroforestry products such as cocoa and cashew nuts.		
Mitigation Measure(s)		

Through the support to the value chain, the Project will monitor activities and raise awareness on proper options for disposal.		
Selected Risk Factor 11. The range of measures developed to reduce pressure on natural forests is restricted by the legal framework.		
Category	Probability	Impact
Technical and operational	Low	Low
Description		
<p>The Project will educate stakeholders in the four departments and 13 districts on the importance of and their interests in natural forest conservation. Under Component 1 of the Project land owner families will be supported in securing land rights over their forests. Component 2 of the Project focuses on the development of measures to reduce the need to clear or overlog natural forest - The Project aims to stabilize agriculture and increase the supply of sustainable fuelwood.</p> <p>However, these measures do not increase the value of the forest and they do not create direct motivation for rational forest use by local populations. Current legal trends are increasingly oriented towards the effective involvement of local populations in forest resource management. Law 16-2000 of November 20, 2000 relating to the Forest Code makes provisions for the involvement of local communities and indigenous populations in sustainable forest management, but it has never been made operational through implementing legislation. The new Forest Code is still under construction. Article 37 of Law no. 43-2014 of October 10, 2014 on land-use planning requires a specific land management plan agreed in consultation with all concerned stakeholders for any use of natural resources, including forests. The REDD+ National Strategy recommends the development of such a legal framework to increase the responsibility of local populations for their forests, but this option is not available at this time. Currently, there is no framework with specific laws and implementing legislation to increase the responsibility of communities or land owners in controlling forest access and use.</p>		
Mitigation Measure(s)		
<p>An indicator has been created to monitor deforestation and forest degradation. The Project will raise awareness of all authorities on elements in the legal framework supporting increased responsibility by local populations for their forests, and will negotiate amendments with the MEF for increased local community responsibility. Specific emphasis will be placed on villages occupied by indigenous peoples, which are generally mixed and made up of Bantu and indigenous populations. The Project will raise awareness of the local people on the future possibility of participatory natural forest management as an incentive to conserve the forest. For land owner families who already have <i>de facto</i> control over their forests, the Project will encourage them to develop their own rules to control access and use of their local forests. The Project will advise on the simple rules they could apply.</p>		
Selected Risk Factor 12. Limited collaterals from beneficiaries may prevent access to micro-credit or may lead to delinquency		
Category	Probability	Impact
Other	Low	Low
Description		
<p>Besides indigenous people, whose investment cost will be covered at 100%, the Project will only cover part of the investment cost (50-80%) for other beneficiaries. This approach may limit access to micro-credit by some categories of beneficiaries without collateral, regardless of their potential to successfully adopt agroforestry and forestry systems promoted by the Project. For beneficiaries who get access to micro-credit, there is also a risk of delinquency where revenue from production doesn't generate the benefit margin needed to reimburse the loan.</p>		
Mitigation Measure(s)		
<p>To mitigate the risk associated with limited collateral, the Project will exclusively target smallholder groups. Targeting smallholder groups will help by pooling necessary resources from individual group members to build consistent collateral thereby easing access to micro-credit. Approval of business plans to be developed with Project support will be subject, among other things, to the relevance of the financing strategy, including the</p>		

availability of collateral. In respect of delinquency risks, the Project will work with MFI to develop appropriate risk mitigation measures, including payment derogation in the context of limited production. The Project will also support diversification in agroforestry and forestry systems promoted in order to provide a buffer to beneficiaries and reduce production risks.

Selected Risk Factor 13. Institutional instability (political risks) may prevent timely implementation of Project activities		
Category	Probability	Impact
Other	Low	Low
Description		

Several sectoral ministries will play an important role in the implementation of the Project as potential procured parties. Congo's administration is very centralized with the decision-making power mostly concentrated in the hand of the minister or his deputy. Given the political nature of these positions, and considering the long duration of this Project (8 years), it is possible that political instability could prevent timely implementation of some Project's activities.

Mitigation Measure(s)
Building on more than 40 years of presence in Congo, FAO has established and maintained different platforms for political dialogue with the Government of Congo at the highest decision making level. FAO has consistently relied on dialogue platforms to manage and address issues, and also to mitigate risks associated with the implementation of its activities. In addition, the Project is cross-cutting by nature with decision-making power distributed within different sectoral ministries at various levels. Such a design is likely to permit timely implementation of overall Project activities without significant interference even in a context of political instability within one or more sectoral ministries.

F. GCF POLICIES AND STANDARDS

G.1. Environmental and social risk assessment (max. 750 words, approximately 1.5 pages)

A mission to identify and analyze environmental and social risks was conducted between May 21 and June 6, 2019 in the main districts and villages targeted by the Project, as a supplement to the previously conducted documentary review, particularly the report on surveys conducted by the NGO Initiative Developpement in 12 districts, as well as CERPAC in the three Project area districts. The visited districts extended from the extreme north of the Project area (district of Ngo, Plateaux department) to Hinda (Kouilou department), 30 km from the sea in the southwest.

The risk category assigned to this Project is Category B – corresponding to activities with limited adverse environmental and social impacts. This categorization is also consistent with the internal categorization conducted by the FAO during compilation of the Project concept note (already presented to the GCF). This categorization is based on the following factors: a) the Project area is dominated by savanna with a relatively low biodiversity value – anthropic savanna maintained through human use of fire; b) the Project is designed to reduce pressure on natural ecosystems and conserve natural forests with a high biodiversity value; c) the Project is designed to overcome non-equitable aspects in terms of land access and security rights, with well-defined pathways for non-land owners to gain secure access to land in the medium and long-term. However, there is a risk that certain strata of non-land owners, in particular women, young people and indigenous peoples, will not be able to benefit from land access in the same way as men.

An environmental and social risk analysis was conducted and a Framework Plan for Environmental and Social Management was developed for implementation. During the risk analysis, eight main risks were identified (as presented in the previous section). In particular, there is a risk that the current land system in Congo could limit the large-scale adoption of the climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry production systems proposed by the Project and that they will specifically benefit men and, to a lesser extent, women, young people and indigenous populations (medium impact). Among the production systems under consideration, the cocoa-based system risks becoming too profitable to the extent that too many beneficiaries will want to adopt it, which would lead to a risk of increased clearing of intact forest to create cocoa plantations (major impact). To minimize this risk, the Project will require, in return, that the promoted activities, including cocoa growing by beneficiaries, will not exceed 5-10 hectares and that the selected land will not be cleared in advance (for the number of hectares required for agro-industrial crops in forest areas, as per order 9450-MAEP/MAFDDRPRP). The minimum plantation size for formal groups risks minimizing access for the best qualified applicants (medium impact). There is a risk that development of management and farming capacities will be very difficult, particularly for women, young people and indigenous people (medium impact). The quality of governance by government administrative and technical departments is a risk to Project implementation. Although pesticide use is modest, there is a certain degree of risk related to its use in climate-resilient agroforestry or forestry production systems (small impact). A complete analysis of the environmental and social risks is presented as an annex to this document. A complete analysis of the environmental and social risks is given in an annex to this document.

The Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) is built on the environmental and social safeguard measures of the Accredited Entity (FAO) in line with the GCF Environmental and Social Policy. The ESMS is also linked to the REDD+ environmental and social safeguards that are based on three tools: a) The REDD+ Principles, Criteria, Indicators and Verifiers (namely PCIV-REDD+ 14) which breaks down, at national level, the Cancun guarantees of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; b) The Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA); and c) The Safeguard Information System (SIS). The ESMS includes sections on the management of invasive species, pesticide management and complaint management, as well as a REDD+ framework for communication and participation. Furthermore, the Project has developed a Planning Framework for Indigenous Peoples. During implementation of the Project, each Component and activity will be subject to an ESMS analysis in line with the GCF requirements for Category B projects. The impact of each activity will be analyzed and mitigation and monitoring methods will be identified. No resettlement of populations is planned. A complaints management system will operate at district, project and GCF levels. All stakeholders will be educated on the good governance standards targeted by the project and on the different procedures for submitting their complaints at district, project and GCF level.

Some indigenous populations were identified in the district of Ngo during the feasibility study mission. The Project formulation team immediately initiated application of the GCF policy on indigenous populations and formulated an analysis and specific management framework for indigenous populations. The team conducted surveys among these populations, particularly their reference situation in each village: history, number of households, lifestyle, difficulties in life, relations with the Bantu populations, internal hierarchy, land access methods, experiences with agricultural producer groups. They were informed about the Project interventions as well as their participation and specific concerns

(risks). The interviewed indigenous populations generally felt incapable of negotiating usage contracts with land owners to plant trees, but believed that this would be possible with the support of the Project and the government. They all declared their interest in taking part in the Project, and a workshop to confirm this wish was held during the Project development phase. Documents relating to this meeting are also given in an annex.

The team found that indigenous populations are victims of much discrimination by Bantu populations. Without the Project applying specific measures, these populations risk becoming even more marginalized. Measures to improve respect of their civil rights and increase their ability to fully benefit from the Project's support were defined. A report of each meeting was prepared and signed by all adults present. A second mission was scheduled to provide further education on the Project, to present the findings of the first mission and the related preliminary recommendations and to raise their awareness of Law no. 5-2011 of February 25, 2011 relating to the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous populations in the Republic of the Congo and of the National Network for Indigenous Populations of Congo (RENAPAC). During this mission, a consultative meeting was organized during which the chiefs of 13 villages were invited to discuss the Project and give their go-ahead to its submission to the GCF.

Finally, a road map was prepared containing the steps needed to prepare a Planning Framework for Indigenous Peoples and to obtain free, informed and prior consent. One of the key measures would be the requirement that all opportunities offered to the Bantu should also be offered to the indigenous populations.

G.2. Gender assessment and action plan (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The socio-legal status of women in Congo remains a major concern. Although the 2015 Constitution enshrines the principle of gender equality in all sectors of national life, some legislative instruments continue to convey disparities.

In order to identify any gender disparities that could prevent women from taking part in and fully enjoying the benefits of the Project, a gender assessment was conducted at all target sites. The general objective of this assessment was to conduct a situational analysis in order to guarantee incorporation of the practical needs and strategic interests of beneficiaries during formulation of the Project. To this effect, discussion groups were held in the departments of Kouilou, Niari, Bouenza, Pool and Plateaux. A total of approximately 20 discussion groups were organized with women's groups, as well as about 30 individual interviews. The situational analysis was conducted following the guidelines of Appendix 8 provided by the GCF and its scope was extended beyond the basic questions required by the GCF. In time, the assessment allowed the disparities and social constraints faced by women within the context of agricultural and forestry activities to be highlighted.

In terms of cultural barriers, the following can be noted: the inequality of land access and security rights under customary law, the weak decision-making power of women, which does not always allow them to enforce their rights and express their viewpoints in the community as well as within mixed agricultural groups; poor access to information, coupled with low representativity of women in public meetings and consultations, thus limiting their full participation in public life management at community level.

Obstacles related to education were also raised, characterized by high levels of illiteracy in women within agricultural groups in the districts covered by the Project. This is a major obstacle that prevents women from benefiting from training opportunities on agricultural techniques and other capacity building sessions that may be offered to them.

In terms of socioeconomic obstacles or disparities, the assessment highlighted the financial vulnerability of women from certain agricultural groups in the districts targeted by the Project. Financial insecurity, with many causes including the size of their crop yields and the fact that they devote nearly all the resources from their production to family expenses, making it difficult to save. In addition, access to credit is not easy for them.

The assessment also highlighted unmet needs for training and technical support related to agriculture and forestry activities for women in groups, with consequences negatively impacting their productivity. There are major obstacles which increase the social vulnerability of women producers and prevent them from investing in order to adopt more sustainable and profitable practices.

Discussions with various potential beneficiaries showed that access by women to information in villages is largely dependent on the channel whereby this information is distributed. For this reason, the Project is placing specific emphasis on the channels to be used to relay information at community level in its Gender Action Plan. This is to ensure that women not only have timely access to information, but also that they can take part in meetings and public consultations. To this end, the agricultural sector chiefs will be deployed as intermediaries in the villages.

Within the context of consultations prior to the development of local development plans, the Project will ensure the involvement of and effective participation by women in public encounters and meetings. Capacity building programmes on female leadership and citizenship provided for in the Action Plan will allow women to make their voices heard during public consultations as holders of rights and full citizens.

In order to resolve customary discrimination against women in terms of land access, the Project will tackle securing of land rights for women within the context of Component 1. In terms of incentives, the Project will encourage the establishment of emphyteutic leases with female land owners. It will also prioritize women's groups in land allocation. At least 35% of the Project's land beneficiaries will be women. The objective is to deconstruct the cultural norms that tend to exclude women from land management. In the same vein, community leaders will be educated in terms of behavioral changes (mindsets) related to women's access to and control of land within the customary framework. Also, so as not to increase the existing land-related discrepancies between men and women, the project will endeavor not to buy land from women land owners.

In terms of the bottlenecks (family obligations, illiteracy rates) observed during the assessment, which are obstacles for women and prevent them from benefiting from potential training opportunities, strategies were defined in order to adapt the training to be provided within the context of the Project to match the profile of women producers and their family constraints.

Finally, to guarantee the ultimate achievement of gender equality objectives, the Project will strengthen the technical and institutional capacities of the Project team with respect to gender mainstreaming in the implementation of development projects, and more specifically the Project interventions. In order to guarantee the effective inclusion of women, the Project has set a goal of including at least 35% women within the context of each activity (capacity building, participation in meetings, etc.) as well as all forms of allocation and support to be provided by the Project.

The project will hire a full time Environmental, social, gender and indigenous people expert. An additional gender expert will also be recruited when needed for enhanced monitoring of crosscutting gender inclusion in line with the Project components, as well as the performance indicators defined within the logical framework. These indicators contained in the logical framework, disaggregated by gender, will allow the participation of men and women to be measured in all actions planned by the Project. The same applies to planned subactivities. In terms of monitoring and evaluation, the Project will integrate the gender dimension in their evaluation missions, including gender objectives in the terms of reference. The gender expert recruited within the context of the project will also ensure that all data generated during implementation is routinely disaggregated by gender, including the monitoring and evaluation reports.

G.3. Financial management and procurement (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

In terms of purchases/acquisitions, fiduciary responsibility will be assumed by FAO effectively and professionally and in line with its standards and procedures, as well as with the terms of the Accreditation Masters Agreement (AMA) with the GCF.

As indicated above, FAO will serve as the Accrediting Entity (AE) and fiduciary agent with the GCF and will therefore be responsible for the disbursement of Project funds, as well as accounting and production of financial reports on the use of funds. Further to approval of the Project by the GCF, FAO will disseminate its Operations Manual and Procurement Procedure Manual among the members of the Project Management Unit, the Steering Committee, the members of the Technical Committee and other relevant stakeholders prior to the start of the Project's activities. During implementation of the Project, FAO will also build the institutional capacities of the PMU, SC and TC in the areas of strategic planning, technical control, financial management and procurement. Finally, the PMU will be first in line to determine and control effective use of funds. This PMU will be made up of personnel recruited by FAO and personnel assigned by the government (MEF and MAEP), including a gender expert and a certified public accountant.

The procurement and financial management standards will comply with FAO standards and procedures in alignment with Manual Sections 502 and 507. In order to ensure the quality of the results, the FAO will also assign a Lead Technical Officer (LTO) who will conduct a monitoring and evaluation mission twice a year to ensure effective implementation of the Project in compliance with the procurement plans and procedures, as well as budgetary monitoring. This monitoring and evaluation report will be presented to the SC during biannual meetings.

The acquisition of goods or services necessary for Project implementation, training, consultation, as well as financial services, will be governed by the applicable FAO guidelines in accordance with FAO Operations Manual and Procurement Procedure Manual. All procurement will be carried out by the PMU. As previously indicated, FAO will be the main Executing Entity (EE) for the project, and will implement the Project in close collaboration with the MEF and

MAEP. In alignment with Manual Section 507, the PMU will use Letters of Agreement or consultation contracts to purchase services from procured parties, whether they are NGOs, private suppliers or independent consultants. To purchase goods, the PMU will follow a competitive procurement process, in line with FAO procurement procedures.

The PMU will produce quarterly reports on finances and purchases for the Steering Committee for review and revision, if applicable. Monitoring of planning and achievement of the project objectives will be conducted jointly by the FAO and the Steering Committee.

G.4. Disclosure of funding proposal

No confidential information: The accredited entity confirms that the funding proposal, including its annexes, may be disclosed in full by the GCF, as no information is being provided in confidence.

With confidential information: The accredited entity declares that the funding proposal, including its annexes, may not be disclosed in full by the GCF, as certain information is being provided in confidence. Accordingly, the accredited entity is providing to the Secretariat the following two copies of the funding proposal, including all annexes:

- full copy for internal use of the GCF in which the confidential portions are marked accordingly, together with an explanatory note regarding the said portions and the corresponding reason for confidentiality under the accredited entity's disclosure policy, and
- redacted copy for disclosure on the GCF website.

The funding proposal can only be processed upon receipt of the two copies above, if containing confidential information.

G. ANNEXES

H.1. Mandatory annexes

- Annex 1 NDA no-objection letter(s) [\(template provided\)](#)
- Annex 2 Feasibility study - and a market study, if applicable
- Annex 3 Economic and/or financial analyses in spreadsheet format
- Annex 4 Detailed budget plan [\(template provided\)](#)
- Annex 5 Implementation timetable including key project/programme milestones [\(template provided\)](#)
- Annex 6 E&S document corresponding to the E&S category (A, B or C; or I1, I2 or I3):
[\(ESS disclosure form provided\)](#)
 - Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) or
 - Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) or
 - Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS)
 - Others (please specify – e.g. Resettlement Action Plan, Resettlement Policy Framework, Indigenous People’s Plan, Land Acquisition Plan, etc.)
- Annex 7 Summary of consultations and stakeholder engagement plan
- Annex 8 Gender assessment and project/programme-level action plan [\(template provided\)](#)
- Annex 9 Legal due diligence (regulation, taxation and insurance)
- Annex 10 Procurement plan [\(template provided\)](#)
- Annex 11 Monitoring and evaluation plan [\(template provided\)](#)
- Annex 12 AE fee request [\(template provided\)](#)
- Annex 13 Co-financing commitment letter, if applicable [\(template provided\)](#)
- Annex 14 Term sheet including a detailed disbursement schedule and, if applicable, repayment schedule

H.2. Other annexes as applicable

- Annex 15 Evidence of internal approval [\(template provided\)](#)
- Annex 16 Map(s) indicating the location of proposed interventions
- Annex 17 Multi-country project/programme information [\(template provided\)](#)
- Annex 18 Appraisal, due diligence or evaluation report for proposals based on up-scaling or replicating a pilot project
- Annex 19 Procedures for controlling procurement by third parties or executing entities undertaking projects financed by the entity
- Annex 20 First level AML/CFT (KYC) assessment
- Annex 21 Operations manual (Operations and maintenance)
- Annex 22 GHG calculation methodology

** Please note that a funding proposal will be considered complete only upon receipt of all the applicable supporting documents.*

MINISTERE DU TOURISME
ET DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

CABINET

REPUBLIQUE DU CONGO
Unité*Travail*Progrès

N° 1 2 2 4 /MTE-CAB.20

Brazzaville, on 17 JUIL 2020

To: GREEN CLIMATE FUND (GCF)

Object: No-objection to Green Climate Fund financing of the project PREFOREST-Congo of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Dear Sir/Madam

We refer to the PREFOREST Congo project (previously called Implementation of the Congo's determined contribution in the sector of land use and forestry) in the Republic of Congo, as it appears in the financing proposal that FAO submitted to us on January 16, 2020.

The undersigned is the duly authorized Representative **Ms. Arlette SOUDAN-NONAUULT**, designated national authority of the Republic of Congo.

In accordance with decision GCF B.08 / 10, the content of which we acknowledge having reviewed, we hereby communicate our no-objection to the project as it was included in the funding proposal.

By communicating our non-objection, it is understood that:

- (a) The Government of the Republic of Congo has no objection to the project as it appears in the funding proposal.
- b) The project as it appears in the funding proposal is in accordance with the priorities, strategies and national plans of the Republic of Congo;
- c) In accordance with the environmental and social safeguards of the cohesion Fund, the project as described in the funding proposal complies with the applicable national laws and regulations.

We also confirm that our national process for verifying the no-objection to the project as included in the funding proposal has been duly followed.

We also confirm that our no-objection applies to all projects or activities to be implemented under the program.

We recognize that this letter will be published on the Fund's website.

Sincerely,

Arlette SOUDAN NONAUULT
Minister of Tourism and Environment

Email: secretariatministre@ministere-tourisme.gouv.cg

2 sites du Ministère: www.ministere-tourisme.gouv.cg / www.officedutourisme.gouv.cg

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CABINET *le*

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22 JAN 2020

AU FONDS VERT POUR LE CLIMAT («FVC»)

Objet: **Proposition de financement du Fonds Vert pour le Climat par l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'Alimentation et l'Agriculture (FAO) concernant le projet PREFOREST Congo.**

Madame, Monsieur,

Nous nous référons au projet PREFOREST Congo (précédemment appelé Mise en œuvre de la contribution déterminée du Congo dans le secteur de l'utilisation des terres et de la foresterie) en République du Congo, tel qu'il figure dans la proposition de financement que la FAO nous a soumise le 16 janvier 2020.

La soussignée est la représentante dûment autorisée Madame **Arlette SOUDAN-NONAUT**, autorité nationale désignée de la République du Congo.

Conformément à la décision GCF B.08 / 10, dont nous reconnaissons avoir révisé le contenu, nous communiquons par la présente notre non-objection au projet tel qu'il était inclus dans la proposition de financement.

En communiquant notre non-objection, il est sous-entendu que:

- (a) Le gouvernement de la République du Congo n'a pas d'objection à faire vis-à-vis du projet tel qu'il figure dans la proposition de financement.
- b) Le projet tel qu'il figure dans la proposition de financement est conforme aux priorités, stratégies et plans nationaux de la République du Congo;
- c) Conformément aux garanties environnementales et sociales du Fonds de cohésion, le projet tel qu'il est inclus dans la proposition de financement est conforme aux lois et réglementations nationales applicables.

Nous confirmons également que notre processus national de vérification de la non-objection au projet tel qu'il est inclus dans la proposition de financement a été dûment suivi.

Nous confirmons également que notre non-objection s'applique à tous les projets ou activités à mettre en œuvre dans le cadre du programme.

Nous reconnaissons que cette lettre sera publiée sur le site Web du Fonds.

Sincères amitiés,



Arlette SOUDAN-NONAUT. –

Ministre du Tourisme et de l'Environnement

Environmental and social safeguards report form pursuant to para. 17 of the IDP

Basic project or programme information	
Project or programme title	PREFOREST CONGO - Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments in the Republic of Congo
Existence of subproject(s) to be identified after GCF Board approval	No
Sector (public or private)	Public
Accredited entity	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Environmental and social safeguards (ESS) category	Category B
Location – specific location(s) of project or target country or location(s) of programme	Republic of the Congo: Departments of Plateaux, Pool, Bouenza, Niari and Kouilou.
Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) (if applicable)	
Date of disclosure on accredited entity's website	Thursday, February 4, 2021
Language(s) of disclosure	English and French
Explanation on language	French is the official language of Congo and the language understandable to affected peoples/stakeholders.
Link to disclosure	English: http://www.fao.org/3/cb1351en/cb1351en.pdf French: http://www.fao.org/3/cb1351fr/cb1351fr.pdf
Other link(s)	FAO disclosure portal: http://www.fao.org/environmental-social-standards/disclosure-portal/en/ FAO Congo website: English and French: http://www.fao.org/congo/ressources/fr/
Remarks	An ESIA consistent with the requirements for a Category B project is contained in the "Environmental and Social Risk Management Framework".
Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) (if applicable)	
Date of disclosure on accredited entity's website	Thursday, February 4, 2021
Language(s) of disclosure	English and French
Explanation on language	French is the official language of Congo and the language understandable to affected peoples/stakeholders.
Link to disclosure	English: http://www.fao.org/3/cb1351en/cb1351en.pdf French: http://www.fao.org/3/cb1351fr/cb1351fr.pdf
Other link(s)	FAO disclosure portal:

	http://www.fao.org/environmental-social-standards/disclosure-portal/en/ FAO Congo website: English and French: http://www.fao.org/congo/ressources/fr/
Remarks	An ESMP consistent with the requirements for a Category B project is contained in the “Environmental and Social Risk Management Framework”.
Environmental and Social Management (ESMS) (if applicable)	
Date of disclosure on accredited entity’s website	N/A
Language(s) of disclosure	N/A
Explanation on language	N/A
Link to disclosure	N/A
Other link(s)	N/A
Remarks	N/A
Any other relevant ESS reports, e.g. Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF), Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP), IPP Framework (if applicable)	
Description of report/disclosure on accredited entity’s website	An Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF)/ Thursday 4 th February, 2021
Language(s) of disclosure	English and French
Explanation on language	French is the official language of Congo and the language understandable to affected peoples/stakeholders.
Link to disclosure	English: http://www.fao.org/3/cb1351en/cb1351en.pdf French: http://www.fao.org/3/cb1351fr/cb1351fr.pdf
Other link(s)	FAO disclosure portal: http://www.fao.org/environmental-social-standards/disclosure-portal/en/ FAO Congo website: English and French: http://www.fao.org/congo/ressources/fr/
Remarks	The IPPF is contained in the “Environmental and Social Risk Management Framework” (Annex 6).
Disclosure in locations convenient to affected peoples (stakeholders)	
Date	Thursday, February 4, 2021
Place	FAO Congo country office in Brazzaville website, as a location closer to the project stakeholders: English and French: http://www.fao.org/congo/ressources/fr/ FAO Representation in Congo Bureau de la FAO Congo 14 Rue Behagle - Centre Ville BRAZZAVILLE Mailing Address: PO Box 972 - Centre Ville Brazzaville

	Telephone: +242-066606400 Fax: +242-222814513 Courriel: FAO-CG@fao.org
Date of Board meeting in which the FP is intended to be considered	
Date of accredited entity's Board meeting	N/A
Date of GCF's Board meeting	Tuesday, March 16, 2021

Note: This form was prepared by the accredited entity stated above.

Secretariat's assessment of FP159

Proposal name:	PREFOREST CONGO - Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments in the Republic of Congo
Accredited entity:	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Country/(ies):	Republic of Congo
Project/programme size:	Small

I. Overall assessment of the Secretariat

1. The funding proposal is presented to the Board for consideration with the following remarks:

Strengths	Points of caution
The project targets the key food- and fuelwood-producing zones that sustain the major urban centres in the Congo, and has the opportunity to transform these into very sustainable and environmentally friendly production zones.	The sustainability plan needs to be developed to ensure capacities are enhanced.
The various technical and investment platforms provide a unique opportunity to stimulate a long-term transformation and scalability in the targeted zones and beyond, focusing on creating investment opportunities in local communities in the target zones.	Financial institutions, business opportunities and new modalities need to be explored, and incentives for adoption by farmers need to be analysed before a second disbursement.
The proposal focuses on creating an enabling environment to foster entrepreneurship and innovation at the very local level in rural areas, and has the potential to create a strong local network of business opportunities and job creation, as well as to provide a strong platform for scaling up to other regions in the country.	

2. The Board may wish to consider approving this funding proposal with the terms and conditions listed in the respective term sheet and addendum XVII, titled "List of proposed conditions and recommendations."

II. Summary of the Secretariat's assessment

2.1 Project background

3. “PREFOREST Congo – Project to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Forests in Five Departments in the Republic of the Congo” aims to reduce carbon emissions in three deforestation and forest degradation hotspots in the south of the country, where deforestation and forest degradation rates have increased the most.
4. The project will contribute to direct carbon emissions reductions of 838,485 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂eq) per year, resulting in 6.71 MtCO₂eq over the 8-year period of project implementation, or 16.77 MtCO₂eq over the 20 years of the project’s lifespan, through deployment of agroforestry systems, assisted natural regeneration and protection of forests. The project will also bring important adaptation co-benefits by contributing significantly to the reduction in vulnerability and increase in adaptive capacity of about 41,373 direct beneficiaries (35 per cent of them women) and 870,649 indirect beneficiaries (35 per cent of them women) among the most vulnerable segments of Congolese society (i.e. small farmers, including women, young people and indigenous peoples).
5. The project area will cover the five regions (departments) of Bouenza, Kouilou, Niari, Plateaux and Pool. These feed the major urban areas such as Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, as well as the Niari valley. The latest forest cover analysis reveals that the five selected departments accounted for the highest increase in deforestation and forest degradation in 2012–2016. The main drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are slash-and-burn agriculture, and fuelwood production and harvesting. Economic conditions in the country force communities to engage in slash-and-burn and short rotations, preventing long fallow periods and natural regeneration, thus pushing the agricultural frontier forward.
6. The total project financing needed is USD 46,567,138, with a request to GCF for grant financing of USD 28,988,852. The Government, through the Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF), is providing an in-kind contribution of USD 9 million, the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) is supporting with a grant of USD 7 million, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is providing a senior loan of USD 1.6 million. The project is submitted as environmental and social safeguards (ESS) category B.

2.2 Component-by-component analysis

Component 1: Land-use and resources planning and strengthening of land access and security rights (total cost: USD 1.0 million; GCF cost: USD 1.0 million, or 100 per cent)

7. Component 1 will establish the critical enabling environment and prerequisites to achieve mitigation results, namely, participatory mapping, and strengthening land access and security rights for the project beneficiaries. The component will carry out participatory mapping with communities to create maps for landscape zoning. The proposed activity is deemed appropriate to identify and divide different land uses to set the agroforestry systems (component 2). It would be critical to align the mapping with the national forestry monitoring system and the monitoring reporting verification system of the Congo in order to completely align methodologies and indicators with the national forest reference emission level (FREL). This has been confirmed in the proposal.
8. The second part of the component will secure access to a total of 15,000 ha of land for selected beneficiaries through administrative and legal support for formalization of legal agreements. The proposed selection criteria are deemed appropriate, although detailed final criteria should be submitted prior to implementation of activities 1.2.1 and 1.2.2. The greatest strength of this component is the partnership with the National Afforestation and Reforestation Programme (PRONAR), which is key to achieving the outcome of the proposed activities. The proposed three options – transfer of user rights, transfer of part of the land in exchange for the project’s support to secure landowners’ tenure rights, and shared remuneration systems – have been assessed in the feasibility study as being viable.

9. The project prioritizes vulnerable populations of the target areas by aiming to secure at least 30 per cent of the planned land access (i.e. 5,000 ha) for the most marginalized people, including women and indigenous peoples. The project should adhere to equity and ensure equal opportunities are made available to all project participants, both for the remaining lands as well for land access and tenure rights.

10. This component is to be 100 per cent financed by GCF grants. In order to ensure ownership and sustainability of the proposed activities, it is advised to seek co-financing opportunities as a way of increasing country ownership of the project activities.

Component 2: Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems for climate change mitigation (total cost: USD 40.8 million; GCF cost: USD 25.2 million, or 62 per cent)

11. Component 2 will establish agroforestry and forestry systems on a total of 14,500 ha of degraded lands to avoid further deforestation and provide sustainable sources of fuelwood. The project will use fast-growing tree species such as acacia species for sustainable fuelwood supply. The proposal provides indications of the environmental impacts of using such fast-growing species, confirming that they are considered non-invasive and are widely valorised in the Congo. It is expected that beneficiary farmers would be consulted on species selection prior to their adoption and sustainable use.

12. The component will mix fuelwood trees with other staple and cash crops depending on different forest areas. The agroforestry models will be determined based on certain criteria that will ensure that the models are resilient to climate change, and at the same time, are locally suitable for use by smallholder farmers. This component will be in conjunction with the creation of the enabling environment from component 1, and is expected to generate positive synergies to enhance ownership by poor and smallholder farmers to adopt and incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation in their agriculture and forestry activities. The proposal is ambitious in seeking to reduce the prevalent slash-and-burn agriculture, and it should be accompanied with strong government engagement, monitoring and adequate budget allocation for its sustainability.

13. This component requests the largest portion of the GCF funding, at USD 25 million in grants to generate greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reduction and carbon sequestration of about 0.84 MtCO₂eq annually. The estimated impacts are considered significant and entail substantial adaptation benefits as well as support for smallholder farmers' livelihoods. The proposed activities are assessed as being adequate and reasonable to support local communities while contributing to national REDD-plus actions. Specific agroforestry and forestry systems for energy established under this component, including 2,700 ha of fuelwood plantations with co-financing from CAFI, will provide an avenue to strengthen energy access in parallel with the project's interventions under component 3.

Component 3: Strengthening agroforestry financing structures, business capacities and value chains (total cost: USD 3.5 million; GCF cost: USD 1.9 million, or 54 per cent)

14. Component 3 is considered to be the core element to build sustainability of the project. It will develop agroforestry and forestry value chains by supporting both demand and supply sides. The component will provide mentoring, training and technical advisory services for farmers to build their capacity and develop bankable business plans. It will also work with microfinance institutions, banks and the private sector to develop appropriate credit lines to invest in low-carbon and climate-resilient agroforestry initiatives.

15. Project co-financing by the Projet Agriculture, Jeunes et Entreprenariat (PAJE) of IFAD will be part of this component to develop and implement business plans. The proposal lays out potential partners to work together in this component, as well as the expected value chains to be strengthened. Preliminary selection criteria for beneficiaries have been also presented, which are assessed as being appropriate and in line with GCF objectives. This component is

expected to stimulate access to market and financial products by smallholder farmers, strengthening their capacity to self-sustain agroforestry and forestry activities after project completion.

Project management (total cost: USD 1.3 million; GCF cost: USD 0.85 million, or 63 per cent)

16. The GCF portion of the project management cost is about 3 per cent of the total requested GCF funding, and is compliant with GCF policy on fees.

III. Assessment of performance against investment criteria

3.1 Impact potential

Scale: High

17. The project has significant impact potential as a mitigation project. with 6.72 MtCO₂eq over the 8-year period of project implementation, or 16.77 MtCO₂eq over the 20 years of the project's lifespan. These reductions are mainly to be achieved through the sustainable transformation of the production landscapes supplying the urban areas with food and fodder, through dedicated restoration activities and agroforestry implementation, stabilizing ongoing slash-and-burn agriculture, and reducing pressure on forests. These factors are the major drivers of deforestation in the Republic of Congo.

18. These important productive basins will be transformed, and provide a new basis for rural poor communities to diversify their livelihood strategies. The project will have substantial adaptation and livelihood improvement co-benefits with 41,373 direct beneficiaries (35 per cent of them women) and 870,649 indirect beneficiaries through reduced vulnerability and increased resilience to climate change with climate-resilient agroforestry systems and various capacity-building activities from the proposed project.

19. The project's carbon sequestration and avoided emissions have been calculated using the Ex-ante Carbon balance Tool (EX-ACT), and are in line with the 2006 guidelines of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for national GHG inventories as well as the national FREL of the Congo. The estimation provides baseline emissions with counterfactual scenarios without the project, supported by reasonable assumptions. The estimations are expected to be improved and updated as the national forest monitoring systems and FREL continue to be improved and updated.

3.2 Paradigm-shift potential

Scale: High

20. The project will help restore and conserve key producing landscapes in the Congo and, through the innovation of the technical and investment platforms, contribute to long-term transformation and scalability to other regions in the Congo and surrounding countries.

21. The project seeks to solve the key issue of unsustainable charcoal production. It offers a very innovative approach through first restoring landscapes to offer multiple opportunities and livelihood diversification options for the many rural poor communities, and by creating long-term change, with, in particular, the various platforms launched creating and stimulating local entrepreneurship.

22. The project areas are the key producing landscapes in the Congo, supplying millions of residents in the majority of urban areas with food, fodder and fuel. This is important as the transition in urban areas to natural gas for cooking is predicted to be a lengthy process. The project offers a unique opportunity to transform the production of goods and services in rural areas to a more sustainable and green system, while in parallel growing and expanding market opportunities in urban areas. This new transformation of production in rural areas will lead to increased investments and focus on local rural innovation and business ideas, which will not

only continue to feed the urban areas but also help transform the local landscapes in terms of sustainable livelihoods and long-term impact areas.

23. There is potential for the creation of jobs and the transformation of livelihoods, which will continue to grow and expand after the project ends, and to keep populating the rural landscapes with sound solutions and innovative approaches.

3.3 Sustainable development potential

Scale: High

24. The project focuses on communities as its centrepiece and, through the platforms initiated by the project, communities and the environment will be at the centre. The project will create jobs and stimulate growth in rural areas while improving the management of landscapes and ecosystems. Moreover, the economic, social and environmental co-benefits are high and long-term-oriented.

25. The project targets one of the most important challenges at present: that of unsustainable charcoal production and use, and its negative impact on the surrounding landscapes. It also introduces a holistic landscape approach to restore degraded landscapes and seek to boost the investment opportunities in the landscapes, resulting in job creation and transformation of local livelihoods.

26. The project offers the opportunity to help boost investments in the natural resources sectors in very rural areas, promoting sustainable long-term solutions that will foster more investments in the local areas and still feed the growing markets of the urban areas, which are highly dependent on the target regions of the project and their productivity.

3.4 Needs of the recipient

Scale: Medium-high

27. The project targets the departments with the highest rates of deforestation and forest degradation in the country, and those with high poverty levels. It targets a key government priority to improve the high reliance on fuelwood and improve its consumption, while restoring and managing the production landscapes better and providing key opportunities to poor communities to improve their livelihood strategies.

28. The project seeks to transform local livelihood strategies by improving the enabling environment for job creation, local sustainable businesses and entrepreneurship, which will help transform the local rural areas for good. The various platforms to be launched by the project will also play a key role for communities engaged in food production, charcoal and overall business development with long-term support, transformation and job creation.

3.5 Country ownership

Scale: High

29. Country ownership is considered high, with the Government prioritizing energy efficiency and targeting unsustainable fuelwood harvesting, not to mention its national REDD-plus strategy. The project is aligned with key forest, agriculture and energy policies and strategies, including the nationally determined contribution.

30. The project offers a unique opportunity to implement key policies in alignment with one another, such as the agriculture, forestry and energy sectors, offering an innovative approach for combining the various sectors. The project is a key priority for the Government and will allow for replication in many other areas of the country, as well as provide important platforms on which to build new, future, related initiatives.

3.6 Efficiency and effectiveness

Scale: Medium-high

31. The project is assessed to be highly efficient, costing USD 2.83/tCO₂eq with the overall cost, and USD 1.78/tCO₂eq with GCF funding. Financial viability is demonstrated through a financial model with multiple agroforestry models that shows positive net present values (NPVs) (different values depending on the agroforestry models) with GCF grants. The assumptions are deemed to be conservative, and financial returns are expected to be positive enough to sustain project activities after the completion of the project. Economic NPV is also substantially high at USD 26.6 million, with an economic internal rate of return (EIRR) of 14.4 per cent.

32. The requested financial instruments (i.e. GCF grants) are assessed as being adequate. Credit and banking services in the Congo are currently either not available or affordable for smallholder farmers. Agriculture banks are also non-existent in the Congo. GCF grants are deemed to be catalytic in covering initial investment costs to enable climate-resilient agriculture in the target areas for smallholder farmers.

33. The project will leverage co-financing from the Government of the Congo, CAFI and IFAD with a co-financing ratio of 1:0.58 between GCF and co-financiers. The concessional loan from IFAD is expected to remove risks and barriers in accessing markets, and is expected to motivate financial institutions to extend their financial services to the target beneficiaries. The co-financing from CAFI will create sustainable platforms for local entrepreneurship to thrive and grow.

IV. Assessment of consistency with GCF safeguards and policies

4.1 Environmental and social safeguards

34. **Environmental and social risk category and safeguards instruments.** The project aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the rate of deforestation and forest degradation, while also reducing vulnerability and strengthening the adaptation capacities of the local people. It plans to accomplish this by addressing the main drivers of deforestation and degradation, which are slash-and-burn agriculture, and unsustainable production and consumption of fuelwood. The project will have four components: (1) land-use and resources planning, and strengthening of land access and security rights; (2) deployment of low-emission, climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems; (3) fuelwood consumption reduction and sustainable supply; and (4) strengthening national agricultural financing structures, business capacities and value chains. The project will be implemented within the five departments (Bouenza, Kouilou, Niari, Plateaux and Pool) where degradation and deforestation rates are highest. The accredited entity (AE) has designated a risk category of category B for this project. The Secretariat confirms this category given the scale, approach and main objectives of the interventions. The individual activities on the ground are small in scale, community-based and mainly geared towards forest conservation, while addressing the socioeconomic aspects of forest degradation. The approach also puts heavy emphasis on community participation and stakeholder consultations. The AE has developed an environmental and social risk management framework (ESRMF), including an indigenous peoples planning framework.

35. **Key environmental and social risks and impacts and management.** The following are the key risks/impacts relating to GCF ESS standards and how they are addressed in the proposal.

36. **ESS 1 – Assessment and management of social and environmental risks and impacts.** The project proponents have developed an ESRMF that: (i) provides a general assessment of the risks associated with the interventions under the project; (ii) describes the

process for assessing and managing the risks and impacts of individual project activities (subprojects); and (iii) provides a governance structure for the implementation of safeguards during project implementation. All subprojects will be subjected to environmental and social screening and risk categorization under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Depending on the results of the screening, the subprojects will undergo further assessment in accordance with the country's environmental impact assessment system.

37. **ESS 2 – Labour and working conditions.** The project management unit may need to hire staff, aides and labourers to assist in the fieldwork. In addition, the project will support micro- to medium-scale agroforestry/forestry systems, and the purchase and installation of storage and processing facilities for agroforestry/forestry products. These activities would likely involve the hiring of workers. The ESRMF provides that an assessment of labour and working conditions in relation to project activities will be carried out during the project inception. The assessment will review the prevalence of labour issues, such as child labour and the hiring of minors in the project areas, and prepare labour management and occupational, health and safety guidelines for adoption by the various project entities.

38. **ESS 3 – Resource efficiency and pollution prevention.** The project is expected to result in some minor and localized pollution due to emissions and wastewater discharges from storage and processing equipment/facilities of agroforestry products. The ESRMF has identified risks in the use of pesticides in agroforestry farms to be supported by the project, and has incorporated the standard FAO mitigation measures on pesticide use. The potential localized air and water pollution from storage, and from processing facilities of agroforestry products, will be addressed during the due diligence process of individual subprojects.

39. **ESS 4 – Community health, safety and security.** The project agroforestry/forestry initiatives assisted natural regeneration and implementation of the various plans could significantly alter or disturb the local ecologies in the area. There is a risk of emergence of new, or re-emergence of latent, diseases due to changes in the ecosystem. This is being identified in the ESRMF as a low probability based only on the project activities on the ground. However, as there is no existing data as to the presence and prevalence of diseases in the prospective project sites, the project should further assess the probability for project activities to trigger new outbreaks (e.g. vector-borne diseases) as a result of reforestation. . In this regard, there may be a need to adopt a simple disease surveillance and alert system in the project areas during project implementation, as required.

40. **ESS 5 – Land acquisition and involuntary resettlement.** The planning activities in component 1, particularly the local sustainable management plans and land development plans, will involve demarcation of conservation areas and assisted natural regeneration in savannah-forest transition. This demarcation or classification of areas would likely entail land-use/access restrictions and may cause displacement of informal settlers/land occupants, tenants or undocumented claimants on both public and private lands. Component 2 activities, particularly the establishment of individual or group agroforestry or forestry systems, would also have potential involuntary resettlement impacts due to possible displacement of informal settlers/land occupants, tenants and undocumented occupants, as well as potential restriction of access to forest resources, affecting traditional forest users. This risk will be avoided through strict requirements in site selection, such as by strictly screening out lands that have occupants other than the beneficiaries from the programme support. The project can ensure this risk is avoided by reflecting this in the project's environmental and social screening form.

41. **ESS 6 – Biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of living natural resources.** The project is expected to improve biodiversity and is itself a measure for sustainable management of forest resources. However, agroforestry, regeneration and forestation efforts may result in the inadvertent introduction of new and invasive species of flora and fauna and, thus, reduce biodiversity. The ESRMF has adequately assessed these risks,

and mitigation measures have already been incorporated in the project design. For example, to prevent expansion of agroforestry farms into forest areas, agroforestry systems will only be deployed strictly within a context of local development plans and fuelwood supply master plans in accordance with the land-use plans, while the size of the area to be funded will be limited to only five hectares in forest areas. Within the technical committee, the project will create a biodiversity subcommittee to supervise the measures taken to minimize adverse effects on biodiversity. In terms of introduction of invasive species, the subcommittee will screen out species to be used in agroforestry and natural regeneration initiatives.

42. **GCF Indigenous Peoples Policy.** The AE has identified that there could be around ten villages in the project area that may need attention under the indigenous peoples policy and an indigenous peoples planning framework has been prepared that outline the following project risks relating to indigenous peoples:

43. *Risk of indigenous peoples being excluded from the project.* The indigenous peoples are among the poorest and most marginalized sectors of society. The ESRMF has highlighted the risk of continued marginalization of the indigenous peoples, and the high probability that they will be unable to access the benefit of the project. The measures being adopted include funding of 100 per cent of investment costs in agroforestry/forestry initiatives for indigenous groups, as opposed to only 50 per cent for the mainstream population. In general, the project will favour the most vulnerable beneficiaries in land-access negotiations with landowners, and in access to state lands. Indigenous peoples will also benefit from targeted capacity-building, as well as technical and financial support specific to their requirements to guarantee their participation.

44. It is particularly important for the percentage of indigenous peoples benefiting from the project to be proportional to the number of Bantu in the village benefiting from the project. Moreover, the project says it will implement specific measures for indigenous peoples, particularly through training and support in securing their land tenure rights, as well as the establishment of a complaints and monitoring management system.

45. *Risks of rights of indigenous peoples not being respected.* The project may include areas considered traditional homes of indigenous peoples, especially in the departments of Niari and Plateaux. The ESRMF indicates that indigenous peoples are present in some project areas, such as Ngo District. An indigenous peoples planning framework has been prepared.

46. The GCF Independent Redress Mechanism and the Secretariat's indigenous peoples' focal point will be available for assistance at all stages, including before a claim has been made, as required by paragraph 70 of the GCF Indigenous Peoples Policy. There is explicit provision to keep complainants' identities confidential in the complaints procedure, as required by paragraph 67 (b) of the GCF Indigenous Peoples Policy.

47. **ESS 8 – Cultural heritage.** The project is not expected to have impacts on cultural heritage. The ESRMF states that cultural heritage sites such as sacred grounds, religious buildings, and burial sites are to be avoided and excluded from the ground intervention activities. The project can further ensure this impact is avoided by reflecting this in the project's environmental and social screening form.

48. **Stakeholder engagement and grievance redress mechanism (GRM).** The project proposal is the result of extensive stakeholder consultations, which is a standard requirement under the REDD-plus programme. The AE has submitted a stakeholder consultation report that describes this process and records its results. While there is no separate stakeholder engagement plan per se, plans and strategies for continued stakeholder engagement during implementation are embedded in the project's activities as described in the funding proposal. For instance, one of the outputs of the project includes the development and implementation of a communication and education strategy that will target all relevant stakeholders (households, opinion leaders, decision makers, etc.) in the target areas through various platforms. These platforms include media activities in the form of television, radio and press advertisements, the

production of documentaries, interviews with project stakeholders (i.e. policymakers for policy advocacy), radio/television discussion forums, annual workshops, and experience-sharing, among others.

49. As part of the implementation arrangements, the project will establish a GRM at the field level, which would operate throughout the lifetime of the project. The field-level GRM is intended to be aligned with FAO policy on compliance reviews. The ESRMF also provides a concise description of a “Complaints and Appeals Management Mechanism” to be instituted at the launch of the project. As regards labour issues, the project’s monitoring expert will be responsible for tracking labour issues, including those that could emerge through the project’s GRM, which is intended to be aligned with the REDD-plus grievance mechanism. At the project level, the mechanism for the receipt and management of complaints will be published and/or communicated within Brazzaville, the departments, districts and villages. A focal point for the receipt and processing of complaints will also be appointed at the project management unit.

4.2 Gender policy

50. The AE has provided a gender assessment and a gender action plan (GAP), and therefore complied with the requirements of the Gender Policy of GCF.

51. The gender assessment and analysis provide the framework and context demonstrating the level of commitment of the Congo to gender equality. At the international level, the Congo ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1982. The Congo is also a signatory to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, which promotes the rights of women. The Constitution of the Republic of the Congo (2005) assigns women the same rights as men, and prohibits all forms of discrimination against women. It also commits to taking all necessary measures to eliminate violence against women. Congolese law requires women’s representation in all political, elective and administrative offices, with a minimum requirement of 15 per cent in terms of the proportion of women candidates for elected positions. At the national level, the key government agency responsible for promoting women’s empowerment is the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Integration of Women in Development. Validated in November 2016, the National Gender Policy aims to achieve gender equality and the social, economic and political empowerment of women and girls in the Congo.

52. While the formal enabling environment does exist, it is often at odds with the Congo’s traditional law and customs. Traditionally, Congolese society is largely organized in a patriarchal system. Traditional laws, customs and some legislative instruments continue to support discrimination against women. For example, the Family Code, covering the rights of spouses in marriage, leaves decision-making power largely in the hands of men. Violence against girls and women is a recurrent problem, and traditional inheritance and land-tenure rights/processes leave many women without land rights, access to finance and, hence, productive technologies and economic opportunities. This is compounded by women’s lack of awareness of national-level land laws and the guarantees that they could afford women. Poverty levels across the Congo are generally higher for women, and 60 per cent of women-headed households live in poverty. Access to social services is limited for women (especially in rural areas), and women’s participation in the formal economic sector is low. Education and literacy levels of girls and women continue to lag those of boys and men, and continue to contribute to the vulnerability of women to climate impacts.

53. The assessment, which was conducted based on desk reviews and consultations with various stakeholders, highlights gender issues in the forestry and agriculture sectors. In these sectors, the roles of women and men tend to follow a gender-based division of labour. In terms of forest use, women gather non-timber forest products for their food needs, medicinal plants, and fuelwood, as well as engaging in activities related to water collection and energy needs. Men

mainly use the forest for commercial purposes, such as hunting/bushmeat, charcoal and timber. In the geographical areas that are the focus of the project, agriculture is mainly characterized by subsistence food crop production dominated by polyculture. Cropping practices use traditional methods, namely, slash-and-burn agriculture. Men engage in activities such as preparation for planting, stump removal and tree-felling. They have predominant roles in pre-season activities (input provision and soil preparation). In addition, arboriculture is mainly practised by men (of those in the subsector, 70 per cent are men and 30 per cent are women). One of the factors contributing to this low level of involvement by women is their limited access to land rights. Women play a major part throughout the agriculture sector – planting, weeding, harvesting, processing and marketing agricultural products. In addition, women cultivate home gardens that provide food for families and sometimes income, which is used to provide for the household needs of the family (food, school fees, clothing, health costs, etc.). Whether married or single, women farmers re-inject almost all their revenue from the harvest into the overall operations of the family. This makes it difficult for women to save any money to expand agricultural activities or build economic capital to develop activities. Despite their major roles in the agriculture sector and use of forest resources, women continue to have limited access to training, capacity-building and agricultural technologies. This situation is compounded by low literacy rates among women and by the heavy workload and time poverty they face. Women's participation in local government and decision-making in communities is also low. This is also due to both women's low level of literacy and heavy workload along with sociocultural barriers, and the limited resources and institutional commitment allocated to implementing existing laws and policies supporting women's equality.

54. The AE has provided, as per the requirements of the Gender Policy, a GAP that includes activities, targets, indicators, budget, timeline and gender expertise to support implementation. The activities in the GAP are aligned to the findings of the gender assessment, and address some of the key challenges and barriers women face in the sector. The GAP includes associated indicators and achievable targets, estimated timelines and budgets, along with the institution's responsibility for the implementation of GAP activities. The AE will provide gender experts to ensure that gender expertise is incorporated into decision-making, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of project activities. This support will be bolstered through contracted gender experts and support from the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Integration of Women in Development. The associated activities of the GAP include technical capacity-building for women in sustainable agricultural practices, agroforestry, and financial management, as well as targets for women to gain improved land rights. The capacity-building also includes gender training and mainstreaming throughout the project implementation and decision-making teams. The project also intends to strengthen women's groups and provide income-generating activities for women. These activities will be complemented with building awareness of climate change impacts and adaptation strategies. The GAP has identified objectives and associated activities that are linked to: strengthening the adoption of more sustainable agroforestry and forestry practices by women; strengthening the technical and financial capacities of producers; and an activity dedicated to strengthening the technical and institutional capacities of the project team on the gender dimension. Corresponding targets are included with a target of a minimum of 35 per cent for women's participation and engagement across the project, with aspirations for equal participation, including in decision-making and planning as well as other impact indicators. The project has recognized the risk of gender-based violence (GBV), and will take measures to mitigate these risks and ensure women have access to grievance mechanisms. Efforts to address GBV will be made through incorporating messaging in the project's communication strategy, by encouraging couples dialogue, and by including GBV in the project's grievance mechanisms, as well as by collaborating with organizations providing support in addressing GBV. The GAP also includes activities designed to collect lessons learned related to the successes and failures of reaching its objectives.

55. The AE is strongly encouraged to ensure that the minimum 35 per cent target for participation by and engagement of women in the development of entrepreneurship, business plans and value chains is maintained, and to ensure that financial products are designed that address the needs and barriers that women typically face in accessing financing.

4.3 Risks

4.3.1. Overall programme assessment (medium risk)

56. The project aims to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation caused by slash-and-burn agriculture, and by the unsustainable production and consumption of fuelwood through several interventions: (i) land-use planning and strengthening of land access and security rights; (ii) establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems for climate change mitigation; and (iii) strengthening of structures for sustainable financing of the agricultural and forestry sectors. The total project cost is projected to be USD 46.6 million, of which USD 29 million is to be GCF grant financed. Co-financing is to be provided by CAFI (USD 7 million grant), IFAD (USD 1.6 million senior loan), and the MEF (USD 9 million, in-kind).

57. FAO, the AE, will act as the executing entity (EE) for all GCF- and CAFI-funded activities. Co-financed activities by IFAD will be executed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAEP).

4.3.2. Accredited entity/executing entity's capability to execute the current programme (medium risk)

58. FAO is the AE and EE for GCF funds. FAO has a track record in implementing agricultural and climate resilience projects, and has over 40 years' presence in the Congo. FAO has recently carried out activities to mobilize private sector finance in the Congo as part of GCF-readiness and has a track record in cookstove and wood energy projects in Africa. National entities will undertake most of the implementation.

59. The MAEP has experience in implementing similar projects with technical and financial support of development partners. This includes a USD 100 million project for development of commercial agriculture to be implemented from 2018 to 2022. Additional comfort is derived from recruitment of project staff in accordance with IFAD procedures, and the creation of a ringfenced implementation unit.

4.3.3. Project-specific execution risks (medium risk)

60. Strength of implementing parties: National entities will undertake most of the implementation. Such parties will be procured in accordance with FAO procurement rules. The quality of the parties selected, and their continued financial viability and capability, will determine the timely achievement of outputs of the project.

61. Land use: Many landowners do not have a formal land title. The adoption of climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry production systems will specifically target non-landowners. In order for landowners to agree to transfer a part of their land, provide access to non-landowners, or even agree to conclude long-term shared remuneration contracts with non-landowners with the right to plant trees, the land rights of the landowners themselves must be secured with land titles. Social conflicts may also give rise to speculation with respect to the monetary value of rural land.

62. Political and governance risk: The AE has identified political and governance aspects of the technical and administrative governments as risks for project execution. Comfort is derived

from the implementation arrangements via the PMU with involvement of the AE as well as the long-term presence of the AE in the region.

63. Appetite from the private sector: For component 3, the appetite from the private sector is necessary for project success. Feasibility studies addressing supply and demand of private sector entities informed the design of the project. Comfort is derived from the experience of the AE in providing technical support to the private sector, including financing institutions, and the provided letters of intent.

4.3.4. Project viability and concessionality

64. Project EIRRs are high at 63.4 per cent over a period of 20 years, taking into account the value of reduced GHG emissions. The financial NPV of the climate-resilient forestry systems are strong for several crops (e.g. avocado shows a positive NPV of USD 20,438 per acre [USD 8,271 per hectare] over 20 years without grant use), suggesting potential for partial use of reimbursable grants. The AE considers that grant use is appropriate given the country context and negative incremental benefits in the first year for several crops.

4.3.5. GCF portfolio concentration risk (low risk)

65. In the event of approval, the impact of this proposal on the GCF portfolio concentration in terms of results areas and single proposal is not material.

4.3.6. Compliance risk (medium risk)

66. The Republic of the Congo is not subject to United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions.

67. FAO, as the AE, confirms that there is no entity or individual that is the subject of UNSC sanctions that will be involved or engaged as a counterparty, EE, implementer or beneficiary in this project or its activities.

68. FAO confirms that the risk of money-laundering, financing of terrorism, or prohibited practices is unlikely in the context of this project or its activities. GCF-funded activities will be managed following FAO rules and regulations. No private investment in terms of co-financing or parallel financing is considered for this project. Co-financing from CAFI and IFAD will originate from bilateral and multilateral finance.

69. FAO advises that no procurement lines raise potential risks of money-laundering, financing of terrorism, or prohibited practices in the project or its activities. The use of project funds will be closely monitored, with transfers occurring in accordance with FAO procurement rules and guidelines (FAO Manual sections). The PMU and FAO will ensure reporting and close monitoring during project implementation.

70. FAO confirms that the project beneficiaries will be carefully selected based on their capacity and interest to support the project activities. FAO procurement policies will be followed in this context, and relevant additional text has been included in the revised version of the funding proposal.

71. However, FAO has not advised whether there will be any disbursement or distribution of funds, cash, commodities, vouchers or other items of value, directly or indirectly, to beneficiaries as part of any of the activities of the project.

72. FAO advises that the project will establish a grievance mechanism at field level to file complaints during the inception phase. Contact information and information on the process to file a complaint will be disclosed at all meetings, workshops and other related events throughout the life of the project. In addition, knowledge products (e.g. awareness-raising

material) disseminated by the project will include the necessary information regarding the contacts and the process for filing grievances.

73. The PMU will be responsible for addressing incoming grievances regarding environmental and social standards. As part of safeguards performance monitoring, the team leader within the PMU will be responsible for documenting and reporting on any grievances received and how they were addressed.

74. Recommended risk rating: The Office of Risk Management and Compliance (ORMC)/Compliance Team has conducted a review of the project in accordance with relevant Board-approved policies and does not find any material issue or deviation with respect to compliance issues. Based on the information available for this funding proposal, the ORMC/Compliance Team has determined a risk rating of “medium” and has no objection to this request proceeding to the next steps for processing.

75. The ORMC/Compliance would like to remind FAO, as the AE, of its continuing obligations and responsibilities with regard to monitoring and reporting any risks for money-laundering, financing of terrorism, or prohibited practices among the intended counterparties, EEs, beneficiaries, persons involved, or any of the proposed activities.

76. It is recommended that the Board consider the above factors in its decision.

Summary risk assessment and recommendation

Summary risk assessment		Risk assessment
Overall project/programme	Medium	The strength of the implementing parties to be selected by the AE/EE and the continued financial viability and capability of such parties will determine the timely achievement of outputs of the project. Lack of appetite from the private sector parties would reduce the impact of the project. The project is exposed to political and local governance risk. Comfort is derived from the track record and long presences of the AE in the country and from the involvement of local stakeholders.
Accredited entity (AE) / executing entity (EE) capability to implement the project/programme	Medium	
Project-specific execution	Medium	
GCF portfolio concentration	Low	
Compliance	Medium	

4.4 Fiduciary

77. FAO will serve both as the AE and the EE for this project. Its AE and EE functions will be well separated internally in order to differentiate the project supervision and the project coordination functions. As the AE and the primary EE, FAO will also be responsible for general coordination of the monitoring and evaluation activities of the various project-implementing entities, and will report to GCF as required.

78. FAO, as the AE and fiduciary agent, will be responsible for the disbursement of project funds, as well as accounting and the production of financial reports on the use of funds.

79. FAO will be the main EE for the project and implement it in close collaboration with the MEF and MAEP. The MAEP will act as co-EE of the project and will execute activities co-financed by IFAD.

80. As the primary EE, FAO will take responsibility for the effective implementation and coordination of all project components through a dedicated team. In addition, FAO will manage project financial expenditures against budgets, execute payments, and provide technical assistance.
81. IFAD conducted a capacity assessment of the MAEP in 2019, and the mitigation measures will be implemented during project implementation.
82. The procurement and financial management standards will comply with FAO standards and procedures. The acquisition of goods or services necessary for project implementation, training and consultation, as well as financial services, will be governed by the applicable FAO guidelines in accordance with FAO Operations Manual and FAO Procurement Procedure Manual.
83. FAO Financial Regulations provide that the external auditor shall be the Auditor-General (or person exercising an equivalent function) of one of its Members, selected through a transparent bidding process by the FAO Governing Bodies.

4.5 Results monitoring and reporting

84. As a mitigation project, the funding proposal aims to mitigate 0.84 MtCO₂eq of GHG emissions annually and at least 15.95 MtCO₂eq over the lifetime of the project. It is expected to benefit 26,892 males and 14,480 females directly, and 565,822 males and 304,727 females indirectly.
85. Overall, the funding proposal and logframe have been found to adequately apply the results management framework and performance measurement framework indicators. The GCF-level outcomes and impacts, and related indicators, are aligned with GCF requirements. Pertinent information on means of verification, baseline, targets and assumptions have been provided. Similarly, the logframe contains a clear presentation of project-level results, their indicators and other required information in a concise manner. Their diligent application during implementation would facilitate results monitoring, progress-reporting, performance assessment and, finally, their delivery on the ground.
86. **Implementation timetable:** The implementation timetable has been assessed as being consistent with that of the information in the logframe. The outputs, activities, milestones and deliverables in the implementation timetable have been well aligned with the revised logframe. This is expected to facilitate implementation performance monitoring and reporting during implementation.

4.6 Legal assessment

87. The accreditation master agreement was signed with the AE on 8 June 2018, and it became effective on 4 October 2018 (the “AMA”).
88. The AE has provided a certificate confirming that it has obtained all internal approvals and that it has the capacity and authority to implement the project.
89. The proposed project will be implemented in the Republic of the Congo. A privileges and immunities agreement was signed by the GCF and the Government of the Republic of the Congo on 24 February 2020 and became effective on the same date.
90. In order to mitigate risk, it is recommended that any approval by the Board be made subject to the following conditions:
- (a) Signature of the funded activity agreement in a form and substance satisfactory to the Secretariat within 180 days from the date of Board approval; and



- (b) Completion of legal due diligence to the satisfaction of the Secretariat.

Independent Technical Advisory Panel's assessment of FP159

Proposal name:	PREFOREST CONGO - Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments in the Republic of Congo
Accredited entity:	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Country/(ies):	Republic of Congo
Project/programme size:	Small

I. Assessment of the independent Technical Advisory Panel

1.1 Impact potential

Scale: Medium

1. The Republic of the Congo (the Congo), with a population of 5.2 million people and an area of 342,000 km², is located on the west coast of Central Africa. The country is home to a vast forest area estimated at 23 million ha (69.8 per cent of the country's total land area), including 59,000 ha of planted forests. The Congo is estimated to have lost about 145,000 ha of forest in the period 2000–2012, one of the lowest rates in the Congo Basin.

2. The national economy is heavily dependent on the oil sector, as the fourth-largest oil producer in the Gulf of Guinea, providing the country with a degree of prosperity despite political and economic instability. However, economic growth has slowed considerably since the post-2015 drop in oil prices.

3. Slash-and-burn farming and unsustainable production and consumption of fuelwood are the main direct drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in the Congo. About 80 per cent of the Congolese population depend on fuelwood as the main source of energy for cooking. The increase in deforestation and forest degradation is more pronounced in the south of the country, where most of the population live. The PREFOREST Congo project proposes an integrated approach to strengthening land-use planning with: (i) tenure access and tenure rights; (ii) reforestation and adoption of agroforestry systems; and (iii) the provision of market and financial alternatives to support rural livelihoods.

4. The project is to be co-financed by the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); and the Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF) has been mobilized to complement the project activities for wider impact.

5. In line with the above, the project proposes a series of interventions structured around three components.

6. Component 1 will lay the groundwork for other activities by focusing on the securing of land access for small producers, participatory mapping, and research into agroforestry systems. The project will transfer user rights on land secured by the National Afforestation and Reforestation Programme (Programme National d'Afforestation et de Reboisement – PRONAR) or land available on former state farms, free of charge, for beneficiaries wishing to implement climate-resilient agroforestry or forestry activities and will develop a shared remuneration system with landowners.

7. Component 2 will deploy low-emission, climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems, with micro and small initiatives implemented by community stakeholders that aim to stabilize slash-and-burn agriculture, increase resilience, and provide a sustainable fuelwood supply source. These actions are intended to lead to a significant reduction in the pressure on natural forests, and an increase in smallholder farmers' adaptive capacity with agroforestry alternatives. This component will target establishing 2,700 ha of tree plantations specifically for sustainable fuelwood supply with resources from CAFI, and 11,800 ha of micro and small climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems (5–50 ha on average) in 13 target districts.
8. Under this component, the project will support the rehabilitation of nurseries and adjoining infrastructures in order to provide a sustainable source of high-quality plant materials for the establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems. Moreover, it will also support the implementation of 5,000 ha of assisted natural regeneration activities in areas already degraded by slash-and-burn.
9. Component 3 will seek to strengthening national agricultural financing structures, business capacities and value chains. The project will establish partnerships with the IFAD-supported Agriculture, Youth and Entrepreneurship Project (PAJE) to assist existing and emerging micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in: (i) developing comprehensive and sustainable business plans; (ii) providing technical advisory services ranging from production to processing, including mechanization; and (iii) financing approved business plans under a shared cost-financing mechanism. The project will identify suitable credit lines for the forestry and agriculture sectors and support the development of inclusive financial products and services for agrifood value chains. This component will also facilitate access to markets by the beneficiaries with short market circuits, and the development of purchase agreements and sales platforms with partner institutions.
10. The mitigation estimates for the climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry models were made using the Ex-Ante Carbon-balance Tool (EX-ACT) developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The project will contribute to direct carbon emissions reductions of 0.84 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂eq) per year, 6.72 MtCO₂eq over the eight years of project implementation, or 16.77 MtCO₂eq over the 20 years of the project's lifespan.
11. The project will also have adaptation co-benefits, reducing the vulnerability and increasing the adaptive capacity of about 41,773 direct beneficiaries (14,480 of them women) and 870,649 indirect beneficiaries¹ (304,727 of them women), including vulnerable small farmers and indigenous populations. The project claims that, by disseminating climate-resilient agroforestry practices and promoting the use of improved varieties of species, local people will be able to diversify their livelihoods and incomes, thereby reducing their vulnerability to climate change. However, in general, the numbers of direct and indirect beneficiaries seem low in relation to the overall costs of the project.
12. The project does not include a detailed operational plan centred around the ecosystem-based adaptation and landscape approach. The proponents basically name the districts and the overall number of hectares expected to be transformed. They also explain that the project will follow an integrated landscape approach framed around the multifunctionality of the forest ecosystem and driven by participatory and cross-sectoral processes to achieve sustainable agriculture production and higher productivity, but also sustainable wood energy production and consumption. However, the project lacks specificity and details on the way to achieve this goal.

¹ Indirect beneficiaries have been estimated by taking into consideration those who will benefit indirectly from the establishment of the local participatory mapping in 13 districts.

13. The project will start by carrying out a mapping of the current land uses to identify project sites with consideration of a landscape approach, and also the existence of buffer zones for potential expansion of deforestation and forest degradation. However, it seems that this should have been done during project design, and not proposed for project implementation.
14. As the establishment of fast-growing tree species to supply fuelwood as the major energy source for urban dwellers will take at least 7–8 years, the project proponents would like to identify existing models of plantations with the potential to be scaled up by small producers. In the opinion of the independent Technical Advisory Panel (TAP), the project does not have a coherent explanation of the reforestation targets vis-à-vis the fuelwood consumption by beneficiaries, nor does it have a plan to engage the populations of the cities of Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire to reduce their unsustainable consumption of wood. Provision needs to be made for measures to ensure that renewable energy sources for cooking will be promoted in the urban areas. However, planting the wrong trees in the wrong places could have serious effects on biodiversity and climate change targets. The project should be much clearer in terms of the selection of species and functionality at the ecosystem level.
15. The Government of the Congo, together with CAFI, will deliver an energy plan for the country. However, this plan will take some years to be delivered, and the transition to other sources of energy will not happen within the life of the project or in the years immediately following project completion. Nonetheless, it is recommended that the project ensure that both producers and consumers of wood understand the need to have a more sustainable use of forest resources through capacity-building and communications, and that the project's theory of change (TOC) involve this transition. In the coming decade, market preferences may change, and this could affect the whole feasibility of the energy plantations.
16. The project, which plans to invest over USD 46.5 million to achieve the expected reforestation and agroforestry targets, is not ambitious enough compared to other GCF forestry and land use mitigation projects. The project sustainability analysis is weak and therefore the long-term mitigation results are questionable, especially when the transition from wood fuel to other sources of energy will take some years to achieve. The impact potential is therefore medium.

1.2 Paradigm shift potential

Scale: Medium-high

1.2.1 Innovation

17. Developing agroforestry and forestry systems is not a paradigm shift, as they represent common systems in many parts of the world. The project does not present any innovation in the possible approaches to natural or assisted regeneration or regenerative agriculture. It only refers to the development of several technical options, each of which should be based on a combination of different silvicultural and agroforestry treatments.
18. However, the project does present a paradigm shift in the transfer of access and user rights on government land to smallholder farmers / producers with co-financing from the MEF, as this is a crucial aspect to ensure that farmers commit to promote sustainable landscapes. The project and the Government will finalize administrative and legal modalities to transfer land from PRONAR and other land available on former state farms to beneficiaries for the implementation of PREFOREST interventions through formalized agreements. The other two modalities involve transfer of a part of the land to beneficiaries for climate-resilient agroforestry or forestry activities in exchange for the project's support to secure landowners'

tenure rights² and the shared remuneration system. Under this system, landowners commit to making land available to beneficiaries interested in implementing climate-resilient agroforestry or forestry activities for a defined period of time (10 years) in exchange for shared remuneration as a partner or shareholder.

19. To the TAP question as to what will happen, if after the 10 years landowners of farmers do not decide to renew the contracts because there is no money from the project to support their agroforestry systems, FAO responds that it believes that demonstration of proof of concept through improvements in livelihoods driven by sustainable and improved income generation, in comparison to other alternative livelihoods models, will be sufficient to persuade beneficiaries to continue with lease renewal. However, this is a point of caution, as the sustainability of the investments could be at risk.

20. The transfer of user rights will be subject to compliance to a list of specifications. These include the obligation for the beneficiaries to sustainably manage the transferred land following a plan approved by PRONAR. This is crucial for the rural communities, as with the acquisition of land rights the communities will care for their lands. However, this transfer should have strict conditions of non-deforestation with an accurate monitoring system.

21. In component 2, the targets of reforestation, agroforestry systems and natural regeneration seem to have been established without an appropriate landscape ecosystem analysis, but rather just as target numbers to achieve emission reductions. The project proposes five agroforestry systems based on a set of criteria including increased carbon sequestration, improved soil quality and diversification of crops. These systems are: (i) acacia–maize–cassava; (ii) acacia–maize–groundnut; (iii) cacao–plantain–groundnut–safou; (iv) avocado–okra–aubergine; and (v) orange–maize–groundnut–pigeon pea–cassava.

22. The project proponents insist as to the benefits of *Acacia mangium* and *Acacia auriculiformis*, which are well known in the Congo and widely used by local communities in Bouenza Department, as is *Cassia siamea*. They are not considered invasive species in the country as per national legislation and the CABI database.³ *Acacia* is one of the main fast-growing species widely valued and planted by PRONAR as part of the government contribution to the national reforestation objectives and for the production of fuelwood.

23. However, as a recent BBC article citing experts from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, points out, while tree planting is a brilliant solution to tackle climate change and protect biodiversity, the wrong tree in the wrong place can do more harm than good.⁴ In a biodiversity-rich country such as the Congo, the selection of tree species matters.

24. The project states that slash-and-burn farming and the unsustainable production and consumption of fuelwood are intrinsically linked, as fuelwood is collected mostly from clearing more and more land for farming. However, the major threat to deforestation is more related to the very low agricultural productivity with obsolete farming practices.

25. The country is willing to develop an energy master plan. As the country is rich in natural gas and has opportunities to develop alternative energies such as solar, the project's TOC should involve a phasing-out of wood as an energy alternative for cookstoves, and a shift to more sustainable options.

² Law 21-2018 of 13 June 2018, which sets the rules for land acquisition and use, is innovative in that it allows local communities to register land that they are holding under customary rights and to develop this land based on a land-use plan.

³ CABI. 2019. *Invasive Species Compendium*. Available at <<https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/2157>>.

⁴ BBC. 2021. *Scientists address myths over large-scale tree planting*. Available at <<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-55795816>>.

26. In component 3, the beneficiaries of climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems are to be supported in developing and implementing bankable business models and market schemes. The project will establish partnerships with IFAD/PAJE service providers tasked with assisting existing and emerging MSMEs in: (i) developing comprehensive and sustainable business plans; (ii) providing technical advisory services ranging from production to processing, including mechanization; and (iii) financing approved business plans under a shared cost-financing mechanism.

27. One of the main weaknesses of this project is the lack of analysis on the type of businesses that will be incubated and on how the project will aggregate sufficient cash crops produced by the different small farmers such as to develop resilient and marketable value chains. The financial and economic analysis concludes that most of the agroforestry models need to be subsidized, in which case it is very unlikely that strong business models are foreseen.

28. The project proposes to link producers to the market by supporting the development and implementation of long-term, fair-price purchase agreements between groups of beneficiaries and selected off-takers / agro-industrial enterprises in the Congo throughout a more equitable value chain. Four primary avenues to sell and market crop and commodity products from beneficiaries' farms have been identified: (i) company food enterprises; (ii) institutional off-takers; (iii) local farmers' markets; and (iv) urban wholesalers and retailers operating through rural intermediaries. For each group, the feasibility study provides the names of specific companies/markets, the products they deal in, and their location. Letters of intent are provided in annex 23 (Support letters from partners).

29. However, the project needs to match the supply of (proposed agroforestry models) and the demand for the diversity of crops that the market is willing to buy. The project cannot expect to produce everything for any type of market, without a proper analysis to create effective and equitable value chains, with increased profits to the communities. Moreover, the project will not be able to reach fair prices without having quality products and sufficient volumes to have negotiating power.

30. The project proposes to create strategic partnerships with national microcredit institutions in order to increase the national credit supply for the climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry initiatives created by the beneficiaries. Several financial institutions with some interest in leveraging financing for investment in agroforestry and forestry systems promoted by the project were identified during project formulation. The project presents a list of six potential financial partners, with their credit facilities and profiles, and some letters of support. The project expects to mainstream green investment criteria specific to the climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry sectors into the financial services of the microfinance institutions, to develop a financial inclusion strategy, and to develop inclusive financial products. However, in line with the above, it will be difficult to provide financial alternatives to enterprises and farms that have weak market schemes. Moreover, the project does not present any alternatives to blend financial resources so as to ensure better financial conditions (interest rates, guarantees, longer repayments, etc.) to support vulnerable farmers.

31. The TOC is structured on a very elementary linear basis, stating that, if the tenure access and the tenure rights are secured, the low-emission, climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems are adopted, and access to finance and markets for agroforestry and forestry is enhanced, then deforestation and forest degradation and associated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from slash-and-burn agriculture will be reduced and ultimately halted. This TOC has weak assumptions, does not present correlations between the different components, and does not address the long-term vision in terms of energy plans to reduce deforestation.

1.2.2. Potential for knowledge and learning

32. The project will support the transfer and adoption of low-carbon agroforestry and forestry systems to change current slash-and-burn practices. The project expects to establish farmer field schools to train beneficiaries in agroforestry and forestry practices with the technical assistance of the National Reforestation Service (SNR) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. However, the real specificity around the proposed selection of agroforestry systems is not presented. The proponents argue that the technological transfer scheme for PREFOREST will depend mainly on site-specific demand and will be further defined during project implementation. The scheme will be drawn up based on the knowledge/skills of the beneficiaries for the establishment of such agroforestry systems.

33. Regarding learning, the project will develop demonstration and trial plots in order to guarantee the viability of the promoted production systems, with technical support from the Institut National de Recherche Forestière, Institut National de Recherche Agronomique, and other relevant institutions, such as the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development.

1.2.3. **Contribution to the creation of an enabling environment and regulatory framework**

34. As noted above, in order to create an enabling environment, the project will need to have a clearer market strategy – one that links farmers with markets with a stronger economic and climate change analysis. If farmers end up planting any type of product just based on market demand, the purpose of the project to ensure resilient agroforestry systems will not be met, and it could end up not supporting the needed enabling environment.

35. In terms of the financial scheme, besides providing capacity-building of financial partners to improve their understanding of the agroforestry and forestry sectors, the project should revise the financial mechanisms available to enable agricultural credit at low interest rates and with longer repayment periods, and could forge capacity-building.

1.2.4. **Scalability and replicability**

36. The project's major emphasis is on establishing agroforestry production systems, the viability of which is largely dependent on subsidies. Scalability is therefore constrained due to the fact that, once GCF financing has ended, the replication potential will be severely affected by a lack of subsidies. Moreover, the government financing to sustain the agroforestry systems will be difficult to achieve, due to the already low budget allocation to the agriculture and forestry sectors.

37. The lack of proper market schemes and equitable value chains could be a real risk to the project's sustainability and to the possibility of scaling or replicating the project interventions.

1.3 Sustainable development potential *Scale: High*

1.3.5. **Environmental co-benefits**

38. The production systems promoted by the project will include nitrogen-fixing trees (e.g. *Acacia* spp.), which will significantly increase soil fertility, especially in the savannah areas where most of the plantations will be established. However, there is a risk of ending up with only acacia species, which could transform the biodiversity and ecosystems. The project should provide an accurate combination of species in the assisted natural regeneration schemes, especially in savannah–forest transition areas affected by slash-and-burn agriculture and fuelwood operations. The species should be selected to ensure the restoration of degraded soils and maintain essential ecological services. Planting the right trees in the right place must be a top priority for this project, and for every project. Merely planting acacia species as fast-growing

species and nitrogen-fixing trees is not a good strategy to maximize biodiversity recovery, or guard against the impacts of climate change.

39. The project will establish forestry and agroforestry systems that will supply wood and food to selected communities, avoiding the expansion of the agricultural frontier and allowing the conservation of strategic biodiversity areas such as the Léfini Fauna Reserve and the border of Mayombe, known as a very rich and important ecosystem. It will also reduce the pressure on forests and consequent fragmentation of the fauna habitats of these ecosystems, thereby contributing to biodiversity conservation.

40. Some of these ecological services include the retention of water, which will support the evapotranspiration regime, limit the effects of floods, and reduce soil erosion. Moreover, if assisted restoration is done using a variety of species, it could increase biodiversity, support natural habitats to allow forest species to regrow and animal species to increase, and ensure important ecosystem services such as pollination and pest control, as well as the provision of food and non-timber products.

1.3.6. Economic co-benefits

41. The project expects to create at least 11,300 decent direct and indirect green jobs through agroforestry and forestry systems, most of which are expected to persist even after the end of the project.

42. Improved and diversified agricultural production systems will ensure food security and provide opportunities to connect to markets, generating revenues to achieve a better quality of life for the communities. By diversifying crop production, the communities could be able to have more stable income throughout the year.

43. The restored forests could provide non-timber products for alternative medicines, building materials and crafts.

44. Property rights will allow communities to acquire land and to support their livelihoods with forestry and agroforestry systems. Moreover, the contracts with landowners will benefit both them and the farmers involved in the contracts, with better use of the land and possible revenues for both parties. Having legalized contracts will allow them to negotiate better financial services and to pursue greater market opportunities.

45. The project could support banking solutions to allow the economic activities to be more sustainable and prosperous over time. Individuals who have land titles will be able to access credit for their projects. More diversified production will allow households to deal with loans, as they will have other sources of income.

1.3.7. Social co-benefits

46. Households could ensure more food security with the implementation of agroforestry systems, and have a better standard of living from increased income. Property rights will allow communities to have a sense of ownership and to care for their ecosystems, as these will provide benefits to their future livelihoods.

47. Communities will have greater knowledge of climate change, and will be able to decide on their productive systems and on the conservation of natural resources. Once forestry and agroforestry systems have been restored, the effects in terms of microclimates will benefit the community livelihoods around the selected areas.

48. The project will facilitate access to markets and financial schemes, allowing communities to forge sustainable alternatives, with possible increases in their income generation. The project will also support the involvement of woman in developing food systems and in improving their ability to support their households.

1.3.8. Gender-sensitive development

49. In the Congo, women represent 70 per cent of the labour force and are responsible for 60–80 per cent of the country's subsistence crop production. According to the Constitution of the Republic of the Congo (2015), women have the same rights as men. The country has a national gender policy that aims to achieve gender equality and the social, economic and political empowerment of women and girls in the Congo, driven by the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Integration of Women in Development.

50. The project carried out a gender assessment to identify any gender disparities that could hinder full participation by women and their enjoyment of the benefits of the project. Based on a solid analysis, the project presents a gender integration strategy of the project that serves as a basis for the development of the gender action plan.

51. The project includes detailed activities, targets and budget to mainstream gender-sensitive development in all the components of the project. The project will promote women's empowerment by building their capacities for effective management of the value chains of the climate-resilient agroforestry production systems that will be promoted. The project expects to directly benefit about 14,480 women (and indirectly benefit 304,727 women).

52. Women will have access to land ownership, market schemes and bank credit, which, all together, will greatly benefit the woman and their families, improving their quality of life. Moreover, the agroforestry systems will allow the woman to feed their families with more diversified diets, and to acquire surplus revenues to pay for other basic needs such as health and education.

53. The project will work in close collaboration with the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Integration of Women in Development to strengthen ownership of interventions related to gender, as well as project sustainability.

1.4 Needs of the recipient

Scale: High

1.4.1. Vulnerability of the country and vulnerable groups

54. The Congo's economic growth has remained on track despite a weak domestic environment. The growth upturn in 2018 (1.6 per cent) accelerated slightly in 2019 to 2.2 per cent, attributable to the oil sector, which grew 5.5 per cent, and construction and public works, up by 0.8 per cent. The economy remains heavily dependent on the oil sector, which accounts for 55 per cent of gross domestic product, 85 per cent of exports, and 80 per cent of tax revenue.⁵

55. The Congo has major agricultural potential as well as enormous natural resources not yet fully exploited (oil, iron, lead, zinc, potash, copper, uranium, diamonds, phosphates, magnesium and hydropower). Growth has been driven by increased oil production and favourable market conditions, with oil prices holding steady in late 2018 and the resumption of demand from partner emerging countries. Nevertheless, the non-oil sector has continued to decline, contracting by 5.5 per cent as a result of the weakening of activity in construction and public works, transport and telecommunications.⁶

56. More than half of the population is concentrated in the country's two largest cities, Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. The rest of the country is one of the least densely populated areas

⁵ African Development Bank Group. 2021. *Congo Economic Outlook*. Available at <<https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/central-africa/congo/congo-economic-outlook>>.

⁶ World Bank. 2021. *The World Bank in the Republic of Congo*. Available at <<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/congo/overview>>.

in Africa, with just 12.8 people per square kilometre. The proportion of the population living below the poverty line fell from 51 per cent in 2005 to 41 per cent in 2011. However, the extreme poverty rate appears to have increased since 2016, especially in rural areas, as a result of the decline in oil prices. The poorest 65 per cent of Congolese citizens live in the six regions in the south of the country. Fewer than 4.9 per cent of them are covered by the country's social protection programmes.⁷ Poverty essentially continues to be a rural phenomenon. In rural areas, poor people are either unemployed, or they are dependent on subsistence farming as their main source of income.

57. The Congo's human capital index stands at 0.42, which is below the average for middle-income countries. Maternal and infant mortality rates remain high, with 5 per cent of children not reaching their fifth birthday. Moreover, chronic malnutrition affects 21 per cent of children.⁸

58. In terms of institutional capacity, the proposal points out the concern around the budget given by the central government to important institutions. For example, the agricultural support fund of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries received only USD 2 million from 2008 to 2017, not allowing it to carry out its mission. Moreover, the SNR, which is responsible for the monitoring, coordination and implementation of the national reforestation policy, lacks the necessary human and budgetary resources. In the view of the TAP, this represents either a lack of country ownership or a lack of a country priority to support agriculture, forestry and rural livelihoods.

59. In terms of climate change, the country has one of the lowest deforestation rates in the Congo Basin (0.07 per cent, or 211,410 ha/year net, for the period 2000–2014). Nevertheless, GHG emissions from land use, land-use change and forestry have represented the largest share of total emissions for more than a decade, estimated at about 50 MtCO₂eq/year in 2016.

60. According to the Congo's nationally determined contribution (NDC, 2015), GHG emissions could double in the coming years, mainly due to pressure on forests from the mining and agro-industrial sectors. The two main drivers of deforestation and degradation of forest ecosystems in rural areas, and specifically in the project area, are slash-and-burn agriculture and the collection of fuelwood.

61. The Congo is already experiencing climate change variability and extremes. Studies reveal that average temperature increased across the whole country by 0.6 °C in the period 1950–1980, while rainfall decreased by 10–20 per cent during the decade 1980–1990.

62. Climate projections suggest that this trend may continue unabated over the next few decades. Climate projections from the Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) 4.5 emission scenario indicate an increase in temperatures of about 2.5 °C for the period 1960–2090, with important regional variations. Precipitation is projected to remain relatively stable, but with a downward trend between 1980 and 2080. Decreases in precipitation will be more pronounced in the south, where the project will be located, and are estimated to be at least 30 mm by 2030–2050.

63. The Congo's agriculture sector is one of the most vulnerable sectors and directly affected by climate change. The agriculture sector is very underdeveloped and employs about 0.5 million people. Its contribution to the country's gross domestic product is stagnant at about 4 per cent. Agriculture is essentially rain-fed, given the absence of irrigation systems in the Congo, and therefore highly dependent on the climate. Agriculture, including in the project area, is based on very small farms of about 1–2 ha that are not mechanized and that produce 90 per cent of food crops. Subsistence farming represents 80 per cent of cultivated land, estimated at 200,000 ha out of 10 million ha of fertile land. The impacts of climate change will increase the

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

risk of food insecurity risk in a country that is already 75 per cent dependent on food imports to meet the needs of its population.

64. Under the projected climate changes, the climate models of the IFAD Climate Adaptation in Rural Development – Assessment Tool indicate significant production decreases for major crops over the next few years. For example, from the 2000 reference level and considering an emission scenario that leads to global warming of about 4 °C by 2100, cassava production is predicted to decrease by about 20 per cent, peanuts by 16 per cent, and maize by 9.75 per cent by 2050 at the national level.

65. In summary, the country is rich in terms of natural resources but with very poor socioeconomic conditions, especially in the rural sector, and weak institutional capacity to support smallholders' livelihoods and forestry and agroforestry systems.

1.5 Country ownership

Scale: High

1.5.1. Alignment with national climate strategy

66. Since 2008, the Congo has been involved in the REDD-plus process in order to: (i) contribute to combating climate change; (ii) conserve forest ecosystems; (iii) alleviate poverty; and (iv) lay the foundations for a green economy and sustainable development of the country towards emergence in 2025. The REDD-plus national strategy developed within the context of this process was adopted by Decree 2018-23 of 5 June 2018. The Congo's REDD-plus process has been supported by the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and CAFI.

67. The Congo has ratified the Paris Agreement and submitted its NDC to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, reflecting its commitment to a sustainable development policy and support for the global effort to reduce gas emissions. Under the low-carbon scenario, GHG emissions will be reduced by 48 per cent (8 MtCO₂eq) by 2025, and by 54 per cent (19 MtCO₂eq) by 2035. To achieve these emission reductions under the low-carbon scenario, the Congo is seeking, among others, to: (i) reduce unplanned deforestation to 20 per cent of its current level by 2035, by implementing REDD-plus (including in protected areas); (ii) generalize the use of improved cookstoves (20 per cent in 2025, and 50 per cent in 2035); and (iii) improve charcoal-making techniques (e.g. kilns) to increase yield from 15 to 25 per cent by 2025. These targets are fully aligned with the ambitions of PROFOREST.

68. The Congo adopted a forestry law in November 2000 and a forest code with a legal framework to ensure the conservation and sustainable management of forests, based on rational planning and participatory resources management.

69. Furthermore, the project supports the country's land planning efforts, in particular Framework Law no. 43-2014 of 10 October 2014 on land-use planning and development. Decree no. 2013-280 of 25 June 2019, related to the creation of community management and development committees, gives each village and neighbourhood the opportunity to invest in community development based on a community land-use plan. Moreover, Law no. 21-2018 of 13 June 2018 sets the rules for land use and occupation. The law is innovative in that it makes it possible for local communities to register land that they hold by custom and to develop this land through a land-use plan.

70. Both land-use rights and forest management are key components to achieving the country's NDC commitments and the REDD-plus national strategy.

1.5.2. Capacity of accredited entities and executing entities to deliver

71. FAO will serve as the accredited entity (AE) and as executing entity (EE) for the project. As such, FAO will be responsible for the overall management of this project. FAO is the agency in

the United Nations system that is specifically involved in agriculture and forestry issues, and it is also accredited by GCF. The organization has a solid reputation in the fields of forestry, agriculture and food, with a long history of climate change-related knowledge and innovation, in particular in terms of the fundamental objectives of the strategic result areas of GCF.

72. The AE and EE functions of FAO will be well separated internally to differentiate the project coordination and the project supervision functions. As an EE, FAO will take responsibility for the effective implementation and coordination of all project components through a dedicated team. FAO will oversee coordination of planning and implementation of project activities financed by GCF. PREFOREST will be co-financed by the Government of the Congo, CAFI and IFAD. CAFI and IFAD will, according to their rules and regulations (which are fully compatible with those of FAO), preselect the EEs based on their capacity and comparative advantage in executing the co-financed activities. FAO will establish a project management unit (PMU) to handle the coordination and implementation of the project (day-to-day management).

73. However, there is always a concern in having a PMU in regard to the sustainability of the project after project completion, as well as the need to ensure capacity-building of national institutions. This is especially the case when the PMU will be headed by an international chief technical adviser (CTA) – an FAO staff member earning expensive international rates – who will lead the project oversight. Although the CTA will work together with the national coordinator for the project, who will be appointed by the MEF, it is advisable that this arrangement be implemented only during the early years of the project, subsequently transferring the responsibilities to a national coordinator with a stable position within the MEF.

74. The Ministry of Agriculture will act as a co-EE of PREFOREST and will execute activities co-financed by IFAD. The activities co-financed by CAFI will be executed by a partner to be pre-selected by CAFI, also acting as a co-EE of PREFOREST with its specific institutional arrangement for working closely with FAO. For CAFI and IFAD co-financing, the governance arrangements and intervention rules of these two organizations will also apply, in alignment with the obligations of FAO under the accreditation master agreement and with FAO regulations, rules and policies.

75. The project will have a steering committee co-chaired by the Ministry of Forest Economy, with representation from the Ministries of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Land-use Planning and Major Works, Land Affairs and State Property, Scientific Research and Technological Innovation, Energy and Hydraulics, and Tourism and the Environment. It will also involve the CTA, REDD-plus national coordinator, PRONAR national coordinator, SNR director, IFAD/PAJE focal point, and CAFI focal point. Moreover, it will have a technical committee composed of the same entities above plus some external entities.

76. The Congo received support from CAFI to develop its REDD-plus investment plan, which highlights the Government's priority in implementing its REDD-plus national strategy, and aligns available and potential financial resources in order to meet the needs identified by the Government in its REDD-plus national strategy for the period 2018–2025. CAFI supported the preparation of this project, in particular because it directly aligns with the REDD-plus investment plan, and because it will support its deployment in the southern part of the country, which currently receives no funding for the deployment of REDD-plus investments.

77. CAFI was launched during the 2015 United Nations General Assembly in New York as a collaborative partnership between a coalition of willing donors (France, Germany, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the European Union), six Central Africa partner countries (Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon), and Brazil as a South-South partner. The goals of CAFI are to “recognize and preserve the value of the forests in the region to mitigate climate change, reduce poverty, and contribute to sustainable development.”

78. IFAD plans to implement PAJE, the first project to be prepared under its new Country Strategic Opportunities Programme 2019–2024. The development objective of PAJE is to reduce poverty and optimize the economic benefits of agrifood value chains with high potential by facilitating access to tailored (appropriate/adapted and targeted) financial services for the first time to more than 5,000 beneficiaries. Two principal outcomes are sought under PAJE component 1, namely: “Agri-food MSMEs created and launched” (6,240 by the end of the project); and “Access of small-scale producers and their organizations to markets improved through long-term, equitable contract farming arrangements with agro-industries” (4,000 producers by the end of the project). To achieve these two outcomes, the project will finance: (i) quality business development and technical advice for MSMEs; (ii) the establishment and operationalization of contract farming arrangements between small-scale producers and agro-industries; and (iii) the construction and rehabilitation of wholesale and intermediary markets. PAJE activities will increase the impact of PREFOREST under its component 3 by strengthening and scaling up access to finance and markets by smallholder farmers through an estimated co-financing of USD 1.5 million.

79. PREFOREST is trying to coordinate actions with IFAD/PAJE and with CAFI, but there is a need to better fine-tune the activities and outcomes. Moreover, the sustainability of the project will depend on the ability of all the institutions involved to coordinate actions to strengthen the capacity of the national forestry and agriculture institutions.

1.5.3. Engagement with civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders

80. The project has consulted with various stakeholders (public sector, private sector, civil society, and development partners) at national, departmental and district level from the initial stage of its formulation phase. An inter-ministerial panel to monitor appraisal of the project was established, and this has met almost every month to evaluate progress on the formulation of the project.

81. The project presents a report on consultations conducted in 5 departments and 13 districts. The consultations involved: (i) facilitating dialogue and exchanges around the activities of local stakeholders; (ii) reporting on issues related to the pressure exerted on ecosystems and climate change; (iii) identifying aspects concerning the application of laws and local governance relating to agricultural land, and identifying activities to restore and protect forest ecosystems and biodiversity; and (iv) collecting information on the expectations and needs of local communities in respect to local development.

82. Specific arrangements were made to guarantee effective participation by women and indigenous peoples. In total, 415 individuals, including 62 women, were consulted. In addition, a framework plan for indigenous peoples and a gender action plan were elaborated to take into account the specific interests of these stakeholders, and to outline steps for their effective participation for the successful implementation of the project.

83. Some new consultations with local communities were held between November and December 2020 in order to improve the content of the project document. During these consultations, FAO addressed the interests of beneficiaries for the establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems promoted by the project. FAO also identified the systems best adapted to the local context and obtained more confirmations of potential buyers to work with the project and of their interest in purchasing crops from project beneficiaries during and after project implementation.

84. However, during the consultation processes and in the reports presented to the Secretariat, only the above general items were addressed with communities. The project will need to address all the real agreements in consultations at the beginning of the project – understanding who will be involved, as well as the individual and aggregated commitments –

and develop a concrete a project plan including the arrangements with beneficiaries and governance mechanisms to ensure social cohesion among the actual beneficiaries of the project.

1.6 Efficiency and effectiveness

Scale: Medium

1.6.1. Cost-effectiveness and efficiency

85. The total project cost is estimated at USD 46,567,138, of which USD 28,988,852 (59.8 per cent) is being requested from GCF, with USD 17,578,286 to be provided as co-financing by CAFI (USD 7,000,000), the Government of the Congo (USD 9,015,286), and IFAD (USD 1,563,000).

86. The project will result in 16.77 MtCO₂eq of emission reductions over the 20-year project lifetime period. The estimated cost per tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent of the overall project is USD 2.77/tCO₂eq; the estimated GCF cost is USD 1.72/tCO₂eq.

87. The project is to invest USD 31,066,006 of GCF resources to implement 5,000 ha of natural regeneration and 11,800 ha of agroforestry systems, including the organization of practical training and awareness-raising on climate-resilient agroforestry systems, and monitoring and evaluation costs. In response to TAP remarks on the costs of assisted natural regeneration (USD 274/ha) and the costs of the agroforestry systems (average of USD 1,490/ha), the proponents answered that production costs in the Congo are among the highest in Africa because the country is an oil economy, which inflates prices and production costs. FAO states that the cost of agroforestry and forestry system for PREFOREST (USD 1.72/tCO₂eq) is lower than the cost of similar systems established by other international entities in the Congo.

88. Furthermore, the project has already passed three revised funding proposals based on TAP questions, and from the first funding proposal to the last, the proponents have reduced the scope of the project, but have not reduced in the same proportion the overall costs of the project. The budget includes lines for staff that amount to more than USD 2.4 million, aside from the project management costs of USD 1.2 million and the international CTA. The staff costs are mainly associated to FAO international experts that, according to the proponents, are needed to achieve technical results. The project is heavy on travel costs and involves too many contractual arrangements, including a reference to “others,” that do not show value for money.

89. An economic and financial analysis (EFA) of the project was undertaken in order to assess the economic soundness of the project and the likely impact of project interventions. FAO has sent a different version since B.27 of the EFA, with the same models, but resulting in very different numbers around the net present value (NPV) with or without subsidies. Moreover, the assumptions behind the models have not been presented, and therefore it is difficult for the TAP to understand the rationale.

90. In any event, what the EFA does show in terms of the agroforestry systems is that the selected combinations of models (tree species and crops) need subsidies to be feasible (see table 1). Without a subsidy, the NPV of the acacia-based agroforestry systems is negative for two models (20 years and 25 years). In the two acacia models, there is a need to increase the price of charcoal (by 5 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively) to make them viable without a non-refundable grant.

91. Although the NPV is positive for the cacao, avocado and orange models, subsidizing of investment costs would also be necessary to ensure a positive incremental net benefit for the cocoa-based system during the first year of the initial investment, and to reduce the investment costs for the orange and avocado systems. As the largest proportion of the budget allocation is targeted to achieve agroforestry under component 2, the negative NPV clearly suggests that the project is not financially viable.

Table 1: Financial performance (in USD) of proposed models for 1 ha

	Initial investment for 1 ha	Incremental net benefit			20-year horizon		25-year horizon	
		Year 1 without grant	Year 1 with grant	Year 10	NPV without grant	NPV with grant	NPV without grant	NPV with grant
Mampu 1 (acacia-maize-cassava)	1,057	-420	395	21	-860	1,635	-819	1,676
Mampu 2 (acacia-groundnut- cassava)	1,192	-345	574	114	-175	2,579	-111	2,643
Cacao-plantain-safou-groundnut	4,028	-100	1,518	987	2,503	5,299	3,379	6,175
Avocado-okra-aubergine	3,778	1,062	3,975	2,660	17,790	20,438	19,459	22,107
Orange-maize-groundnut-pigeon pea-cassava	2,973	1,181	3,473	173	4,010	6,093	4,107	6,191

92. The lack of clear understanding regarding the markets for each of the five agroforestry systems presents high uncertainties regarding positive outcomes from such activities. Moreover, the combinations of crops for the EFA are different from the ones presented in the funding proposal in relation to the needs of the expected buyers (wholesalers, companies, off-takers, etc).

93. The project will cover 50–80 per cent of the investment cost for smallholders' groups or individuals. For indigenous peoples (typically the poorest part of the Congolese population), the project will cover 100 per cent of the investment. A technical facility platform, to be established under output 2.4, will supervise and oversee the effective deployment of the agroforestry and forestry systems.

94. From B.27 to B.28, the project proponents have provided more letters of support from possible food buyers. The companies include, for example, a cacao company (COFCAO), willing to support the cacao value chain, and the World Food Programme, willing to acquire beans and manioc, among others. However, this is just a list of possible buyers rather than a real market analysis with real arrangements with the companies and institutions.

95. The sustainability of the project depends on the financial viability of initiatives allowing beneficiaries to maintain and expand the initial investments over the long term. The continuity of the funding relies on a linkage between the beneficiaries, off-takers and Congolese financial institutions, as well as an increased supply of credit. However, the proponents know that the sustainability will be based on real project design on the ground and propose to develop a sustainability plan within the first year of implementation, anticipating all actions for project impact sustainability purposes.

96. Finally, the effectiveness and efficiency of the overall project is medium, as the economic and financial soundness of the project need to be better refined, and the value for money to deliver the project outcomes seems low. Moreover, the project needs to ensure the sustainability of the different components with a concrete sustainability and institutional capacity-building plan.

II. Overall remarks from the independent Technical Advisory Panel

97. The independent TAP recommends that the Board approve the project subject to the following condition:
98. Prior to the second disbursement of funds by GCF under the funded activity agreement, the Accredited Entity shall deliver, in a form and substance satisfactory to the GCF Secretariat:
- (a) A landscape restoration and regeneration strategy explaining the rationale of the aggregated project interventions. The strategy shall provide an overview of existing and projected forest and farm areas and detail the approach to implement improved forestry and agroforestry practices for sustainable land use management.
 - (b) A sustainability and market strategy including (i) an updated economic and financial analysis for the implementation, based on agreed interventions, (ii) a supply and demand analysis of key forest and agricultural products, including market access and logistic factors, (iii) an outline of the governance arrangements with farmer associations, (iii) the identification of buyers and details of the long term contract agreements discussed with private sector companies, and (iv) an updated assessment of the financial options, conditions, and resources available from financial institutions and the assessment of demand by communities; and
 - (c) A capacity building plan to engage local institutions and extension agencies to deliver technology transfer to communities, which shall include i) a capacity development plan to build capacity of national institutions for implementation of such Activities; and (ii) a plan detailing the gradual transfer of roles from the PMU to such national institutions.

Response from the accredited entity to the independent Technical Advisory Panel's assessment (FP 159)

Proposal name:	PREFOREST CONGO - Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments in the Republic of Congo
Accredited entity:	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Country/(ies):	Republic of Congo
Project/programme size:	Small

Impact potential

FAO would like to reconfirm that the project is fully aligned with the REDD+ National Investment Framework (2018–2025). The selection of the target areas as well as the species have been carried through a mapping undertaken during project development (2019). This mapping, to be further refined during implementation (activity 1.1.1), considered the multifunctionality of the ecosystem as well as the locations for restoration through agroforestry and/or forest restoration as identified by the Government (PRONAR). The agroforestry and forestry models and species have been identified taking into consideration local use, biodiversity, current diet, climate change impact, safeguards, market demand and capacity of smallholders.

The proposed models and targets have been informed by REDD + technical studies¹ as well as project specific technical studies (including analysis of wood energy demand and supply value chain for the cities of Brazzaville/ Pointe Noire and the project target areas) carried out by the Agricultural Research for Development (CIRAD) during project formulation (2019) (annex of the feasibility study).

The proposed models take into consideration the long term change in energy use by using species that will also be adapted to other use (construction, crafts etc). The project will raise awareness and build capacities on sustainable forestry practices under activities 2.2.1 and 2.2.3.

PREFOREST costs have been calculated in close collaboration with CAFI and the Ministry of Forest Economy and are based on FAO long experience with projects in the Congo Basin. The costs of the agroforestry and forestry systems in PREFOREST are lower compared to similar projects in Congo (World Bank project: Emission Reduction Programme in Northern Congo)² Co-financing from the Central Africa Forest Initiative (CAFI), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Ministry of Forest Economy has been mobilized to complement GCF funding for increased impact. The project will also catalyse private sector investment in order to sustain and scale up interventions beyond the project duration.

Paradigm shift potential

¹ <https://www.unredd.net/documents/un-redd-partner-countries-181/africa-335/republic-of-the-congo-510/national-programme-document-and-related-1437/15788-consommation-du-bois-energie-en-republique-du-congo-1.html?path=un-redd-partner-countries-181/africa-335/republic-of-the-congo-510/national-programme-document-and-related-1437>

² PREFOREST 1.72 USD/t CO2 eq; WB: 10USD/t CO2 Eq.

The innovation of PREFOREST consists in bringing together key actors involved in the agro-forestry sector (CAFI, IFAD, private sector, Government) to increase the impact of the interventions and set up a framework for replication and scaling up in other areas of the country as well as in the Congo Basin. The technical interventions proposed by this project are based on over 40 years of FAO's experience in the country and are the result of close consultation with CAFI and the Ministry of Forest Economy.

As stated above, the agro-forestry and forestry models and species have been identified during field missions by FAO and in consultation with CAFI and the Ministry of Forest Economy and have been selected taking into consideration local use, biodiversity, current diet, climate change impact, safeguards³, market demand and capacity of smallholders. A value chain and market analysis has been carried out as part of the feasibility study which has identified buyers for the crops produced. PREFOREST will support smallholder farmers in increase the quantity and quality of their crops produced under agro-forestry systems and will link them to identified buyers.

Numerous private actors ⁴ have expressed interest in purchasing crops produced by PREFOREST through letters of intent. It is estimated that the demand from these buyers will cover the yearly production of most of the crops produced under the agro-forestry systems established by PREFOREST. MFIs ⁵ have also sent letters of intent to facilitate project beneficiaries' access to credit. The project, in partnership with IFAD, will build capacities and raise awareness of MFIs in order for them to develop financial instruments that are more adapted and better responding to farmer's needs.

The project will provide the first investment for the establishment of the sustainable and profitable agroforestry systems. Scaling up of the interventions is based on strong market schemes and will be ensured by providing access to markets and to MFIs adapted services. The project will not provide long-term subsidies to the farmers.

Sustainable development potential

FAO takes note of the assessment

Needs of the recipient

FAO takes note of the assessment

Country ownership

³ The selection of the species will be done in line with the safeguards rules of FAO – ESS 4 (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4413e.pdf>).

⁴ Eco-Oil Energy S.A, SCDIE, Cluster Union and Zando with respect to groundnut; COFCAO and EPPAPVA for cocoa ; Agrideck, SCDIE, Cluster Union, Zando, Hani transformation company and the World Food Programme (WFP) for cassava; Tolona, SCDIE, Cluster Union for plantains.

⁵ such as MUCODEC, COFINA, CODEC, CAPPED, FCECM and HOPE

FAO would like to reconfirm that during project implementation the capacity of the Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF) will be strengthened, through dedicated capacity development activities and close engagement in the implementation of the PREFOREST activities to ensure smooth transition of responsibilities after the project closure. FAO will also like to reconfirm that CAFI co-financing will be executed by FAO.

Efficiency and effectiveness

Past experience has shown that international technical assistance working with national expertise is necessary for projects to achieve the expected results, ensure appropriate implementation of the project activities and guarantee capacity strengthening in specific technical topics, such as market access and development, development of micro-credit lines, legal expertise for land tenure. The costs of staff covers the eight years duration of the project (average of USD 300 000 per year), and will be mostly utilized in the first half of the project lifetime to ensure strong initial support. They will be gradually reduced over time.

PREFOREST will provide the first investment for the establishment of the agroforestry systems. The project will not provide long-term subsidies to the farmers.

The term “subsidy” refers to “models that need a single non-reimbursable grant to cover part of the investment cost to be adopted”. The experience in DRC shows that after the project promoted innovative agro-forestry models (which are the same the project intends to replicate) through non-reimbursable grants, the same models were replicated on a much larger scale.

The financial analysis of the two variants of the Mampu system models (based on Acacia) yields a negative NPV if a grant is not used. The NPV of the financial analysis becomes positive once the project covers part of the investment cost through a non-reimbursable grant. The overall economic analysis shows that the NPV is positive. FAO understands that this is in line with the GCF Programming Manual⁶.

The assumptions are detailed in the excel spreadsheet. FAO used very conservative assumptions in order to assess models worthiness in a robust way. These include the exclusive use of paid labour. It is likely that part of the agricultural operations, for smallholders and indigenous groups, will be conducted using unpaid family labour, which will increase the NPV of proposed investments. Agro-forestry models will be funded on the basis of business plans, which will be developed to reflect the investments proposed by beneficiaries. The business plans will have to include a sensitive analysis. The business plans showing high risks will not be funded.

The Funding Proposal provides the rationale for the use of non-reimbursable grants for the other models (based on cacao, orange and avocado). The NPV of these three models is positive, confirming their financial viability. The use of non-reimbursable grant to cover part of the investment cost is also intended to reduce risks and to motivate financial institutions to provide loans to cover the part of the investment cost that is not covered by the project.

⁶ “For public sector grant projects, the financial analysis may demonstrate that a project is not financially viable. In this situation, the economic and financial analyses may be used in tandem to assess the overall case for the project. A project that is not financially viable but is economically viable owing to its significant non-monetary benefits may in fact be an excellent target for GCF grants or other concessional funding to enable the provision of those broad economic benefits because the market does not.” (p. 152)

Overall remarks from the independent Technical Advisory Panel:

FAO thanks the iTAP for its review. As reported by iTAP, this project represents the first forestry GCF project in Congo and the Congo Basin and the first collaboration between the GCF, FAO, CAFI and IFAD. It has the potential to significantly transform forestry and land-use practices in the Congo Basin. In addition, the model proposed by this project can be scaled up and replicated in other areas of the Congo Basin – by these key players – through a programmatic approach and in a coordinated manner.

FAO agrees to the proposed conditions prior to the second disbursement:

- a) A landscape restoration and regeneration strategy explaining the rationale of the aggregated project interventions [Output 2.2]. The strategy shall provide an overview of existing and projected forest and farm areas and detail the approach to implement improved forestry and agroforestry practices for sustainable land use management;
- b) A sustainability and market strategy including (i) an updated economic and financial analysis, based on agreed interventions [under activity 3.4.1], (ii) a supply and demand analysis of key forest and agricultural products, including market access and logistic factors [under activity 3.4.1], (iii) an outline of the governance arrangements with farmer associations to undertake the project activities [to be used under output 3.4.]; (iii) the identification of buyers and details of the long term contract agreements discussed with private sector companies [under activity 3.4.1/3.4.2; (iv) an updated assessment of the financial options, conditions, and resources available from financial institutions and the assessment of demand by communities [under activity 3.3.1/3.3.2] ; and
- c) A capacity building plan to engage local institutions and extension agencies to deliver technology transfer to communities (under activity 2.2.1 and 2.2.3), which shall include i) a capacity development plan to build capacity of national institutions for project implementation {under activity 2.2.1 and 2.2.3}; and (ii) a plan detailing the gradual transfer of roles from the PMU.

Annex 8

Gender Assessment Report & Action Plan

PREFOREST CONGO - Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments in the Republic of Congo



December 2020

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

IGA	Income-generating activities
ADB	African Development Bank
WB	World Bank
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEMA	Agricultural Machinery Center (<i>Centre d'Exploitation des Machines Agricoles</i>)
CPF	Country Programming Framework
DGA	Directorate-General for Agriculture (<i>Direction Générale de l'Agriculture</i>)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
DSCERP	Growth, Employment, and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (<i>Document de Stratégie pour la Croissance, l'Emploi et la Réduction de la Pauvreté</i>)
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
ECE	Growth and Employment Survey (<i>Enquête sur la Croissance et l'Emploi</i>)
ECOM	Congolese Household Survey (<i>Enquête Congolaise auprès des Ménages</i>)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
FSA	Agricultural Support Fund (<i>Fonds de Soutien à l'Agriculture</i>)
HDI	Human Development Index
IEC	Information, Education, Communication
INS	National Statistics Institute (<i>Institut National de la Statistique</i>)
MFI	Microfinance Institution
LPA	Agricultural Policy Letter (<i>Lettre de Politique Agricole</i>)
MAEP	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (<i>Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Elevage et de la Pêche</i>)
MPFIFD	Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Women's Integration in Development (<i>Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme et de l'Intégration de la Femme au développement</i>)
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Government Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization

EDSP	Economic Diversification Support Project
ASDSP	Agricultural Sector Development Support Programme
PDARP	Agricultural Development and Agricultural Track Rehabilitation Programme <i>(Programme de Développement Agricole et de Réhabilitation des Pistes Agricoles)</i>
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NPFS	National Programme for Food Security
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
NDP	National Development Programme
NPPW	National Policy for the Promotion of Women
NGP	National Gender Policy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
PRODER	Agricultural Rural Development Project <i>(Projet de Développement Rural Agricole)</i>
PRONAR	National Afforestation and Reforestation Programme <i>(Programme National d’Afforestation et de Reboisement)</i>
GAC	General Agricultural Census

1. Introduction

Today, the importance of analyzing gender related roles and power relationships in the context of development is recognized. In agriculture, men and women do not have the same roles. Although the importance of the role of women in family food security is evident, it can also be agreed that almost everywhere in the world, and particularly in Africa, women enjoy fewer rights than men.

In Congo, women represent 70% of the labor force and are responsible for 60 to 80% of the country's subsistence crop production. According to the National Development Plan, they predominate (making up nearly 70%) throughout subsistence crop production, as well as in the processing and marketing cycle of agricultural and fishery products. Women are particularly involved in the social life of the family (basic education, health, childhood assistance, etc.) and play an essential part in maintaining food security, in rural as well as urban areas. They invest a major part of their income in food security for children and the family.

However, unlike men, women unfortunately face several difficulties in their activities. More than ever, they are confronted with insecurity and vulnerability due to several factors. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), adequate inclusion of women's needs in agricultural production would improve their output by 22%, particularly in terms of maize production (FAO, 1999).

Furthermore, women are the main users of natural resources through different activities, such as fuelwood supply, traditional medicine, mushroom and caterpillar harvesting, gathering of wild leaves and fruit, as well as fishing in water bodies. As a result, they are key stakeholders in human interactions with ecosystems.

More than men, women are directly and immediately affected by the use and conservation of natural resources, because they are involved on a daily basis in ensuring household food security, firewood collection, water supplies, etc.

1.1 Context and justification

The Republic of Congo is engaged in a national Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) process, specifically through its UN-REDD National Programme and support from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI). Moreover, Congo ratified the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement and submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), stressing its commitment to sustainable development and its support to the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In this context, the Congolese Ministry of Forest Economy requested support from FAO to develop a project proposal for submission to the Green Climate Fund to finance priority interventions of its REDD+ Investment Plan. Accordingly, the project proposal 'Project to Reduce GHG Emissions from Forests in Five Departments in Congo (PREFOREST)' is being prepared and makes provision for the development of several activities across various types of ecosystems and with numerous stakeholders.

The project revolves around three components:

- Component 1: Land-use and resources planning and strengthening of land access and security rights

- Component 2: Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems for climate change mitigation;
- Component 3: Strengthening agroforestry financing structures, business capacities and value chains

The activities planned by this Project for submission to the Green Climate Fund could have positive as well as negative effects on ecosystems and stakeholders. To guarantee effective participation by women (who control more than 50% of agricultural assets) in planning and implementation of the Project, and to ensure that the Project activities are sensitive to gender issues and promote equality, specific consultations with women's groups took place in the target departments. For this purpose, FAO recruited a consultant specialized in gender to suggest a management framework to address gender issues, necessary to finalize the Project proposal for submission to the Green Climate Fund.

1.2 Objective of the Assessment

Main Objective

The main objective of this assessment is to conduct a situational analysis in order to identify any gender disparities that could hinder full participation by women and their enjoyment of the benefits of the Project.

Specific Objectives

- To conduct a diagnostic (institutional and operational) in order to identify any gender-based risks and disparities that could limit full participation by women during Project implementation.
- To promote an environment favorable to gender mainstreaming in Project implementation to allow women to have access to the benefits and opportunities offered by the Project.
- A detailed analysis of the needs, interests and stakes related to the participation of women in agriculture, agroforestry and forestry activities in the target departments in respect to the points below:
 - Women's contribution to the work;
 - Land allocation;
 - Access to and use of agricultural and forestry resources (e.g. relating to non-timber forest products and food security);
 - Value chains and financing tools;
 - Land rights and access to land and forests by women (formal and customary);
 - Sharing of benefits related to agricultural and forestry activities;

The main recommendations are to be integrated in the Project with consideration also of a risk monitoring and evaluation management framework.

1.3 Methodology

To guarantee effective participation by women in Project planning and implementation, and to ensure that the Project's activities take into account the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men in the target districts across the various ecosystems, individual and group discussion meetings were organized with women in the districts of Louvakou, Kayes, Madingou, Ngo 1 and 2, Eluna, Mvouti, Hinda and Kinkala from May 20, 2019 to June 1, 2019.

Institutional interviews were also conducted with resource persons from the different sectoral departments (Ministry of Women, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Forest Economy, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Scientific Research), Project stakeholders, civil society organizations, selected United Nations agencies and other development partners.

Moreover, data collection tools were developed to successfully complete fieldwork (checklist and analysis guide). Two approaches were preferred:

- a. The first approach consisted of evaluating women's needs in the target districts covered by the interviews using a checklist.
- b. The second approach was made possible using data collection sheets intended to raise and explore gender issues in agriculture, agroforestry and forestry. This approach allowed the team to determine the type of data to be collected and to facilitate the analysis.

We should stress that these approaches were supported by core elements relating to gender and development in general and those relating to the agricultural sector in particular.

Desk review

A variety of relevant strategic documents available at national level were analyzed and summarized.

Individual interviews

Information was collected in Brazzaville and in the target districts through direct interviews, focus groups, as well as working sessions with representatives from the technical departments of the ministries with a stake in the Project (i.e. Ministry of Forest Economy, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Women's and Integration in Development), United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well as civil society organizations.

The list of interviewed participants is attached to this report.

Focus Groups

These consisted of interactive discussion sessions of two hours per group on average in the target districts listed below:

- Department of Kouilou: districts of Madingo-kayes, Mvouti and Hinda;
- Department of Niari: district of Louvakou;
- Department of Bouenza: districts of Loudima, Kayes and Madingou;
- Department of Pool: district of Kinkala;

- Department of Plateaux: districts of Ngo and Mpouya.

Discussions essentially covered thematic areas related to agriculture, agroforestry and forestry, and were guided by the different points of the terms of reference of the assessment.

1.4 Organization of the report

The report was developed within the context of the Congo GCF Project and is intended as a 'living document' whereby the assessment data and Action Plan may be updated periodically based on new information obtained during the inception and implementation phases. The project's mid-term evaluation will also consider gender and provide feedback to further refine this document. The gender expert assigned to the project will be responsible for a review of this document on an annual basis.

The assessment reveals disparities between men and women in terms of access and control of land, access to resources, sharing of benefits, and representation within the agriculture, agroforestry and forestry contexts. It is organized into three major sections:

- The first section is structured in line with the Green Climate Fund methodology in which the main issues in Annex 8 of the Green Climate Fund are addressed.
- The second section of the report presents a more in-depth gender analysis that goes beyond the points requested by the GCF in order to better understand the conditions of women within the context of the Project.
- Finally, the third section consists of an action plan, which proposes strategies/actions specific to women; and presented as an annex to this document.

2. GCF Appendix 8 Form:

This section was developed in line with the Green Climate Fund methodology and addresses the main issues in Annex 8.

2.1 Presentation of the context of the country of intervention

Maternal mortality rate	In the Republic of Congo, the maternal mortality rate is 436 deaths per 100,000 live births. The most affected are young women between the ages of 20 to 24 years (32%), as well as adolescents under the age of 20 years (or 25%) ¹
Infant mortality	The infant-child mortality rate is 33.81 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2019. This rate is substantially higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Mortality in children under the age of five years was 45.41 per 1,000 in 2019 (World Data Atlas).
Educational status of girls and boys	The net school enrollment rate is 81.3%, which consists of 82.7% for boys and 80.0% for girls. The gross intake rate increased from 78% in 2005. ² Out of 100 pupils entering primary school, a total of only 69 (boys and girls) complete their primary education - 77.39% boys versus 67.65% girls in 2005. From the point of view of access as well as completion, the gender parity index is still in favor of boys. ³
Adult literacy rate (disaggregated by gender)	In terms of literacy, women are less literate than men with a rate of 72.1% for women between the ages of 15 and 24 years, versus 83.2% for men in the same age bracket. The disparity is particularly due to the time women and girls spend on household chores, as well as their vulnerability. ⁴ Another study indicates that the French language literacy rate of persons between 15 to 24 years of age is 87.5%, consisting of 89.1% for men and 86.0% for women and that the illiteracy rate, all languages combined, for the same age group is 6.8%, 5.7% for men and 7.8% for women. ⁵
Poverty rate	A household survey ⁶ revealed that, in Congo, there is more poverty in women-headed households, with a rate of 58.2% compared with 48.8% of households headed by men, and this discrepancy is even greater in urban settings. According to the abovementioned survey, this situation is partially explained by the fact that women are often victims of employment and credit discrimination.
Workforce participation rate (disaggregated by gender)	At least 192,776 women are engaged in formal work compared with 417,643 men. ⁷

¹ UNDP Congo: National Human Development Report 2015.

² Gender Inequality Development Indicators (GEDI) 2015

³ Idem

⁴ Idem

⁵ General Population and Housing Census (GPHC 2014)

⁶ Congolese Household Survey (ECOM, 2009)

⁷ UNDP Congo, National Human Development Report 2015.

<p>Land system</p>	<p>Law no. 21/2018 of June 13, 2018 sets the rules for land use and acquisition in the Republic of Congo. There is also a customary land system based on traditional ancestral rules and practices.</p> <p>Regarding land ownership, Congolese women face cultural obstacles that prevent them from owning and controlling land. According to customary law, women may own land either through matrilineal or patrilineal descent (the family head is generally a man and decides on land allocation), through marriage ties (the family head allocates land to the wife at the request of the husband), lease agreements (by means of a land rent that varies by department and land type) or through purchase (this is a relatively recent procedure and an increasing number of women are using this form of acquisition). If the woman is not the family head, she must refer to a man for land access as, unfortunately, women are disadvantaged in most cases. Various limitations to the ability of women to own land seriously hinder their effective participation in economic activities.</p> <p>In summary, women, particularly in rural areas, face serious obstacles, such as illiteracy, economic weakness, lack of education and others that prevent them from directly exercising control over the land concessions available to them.</p>
<p>Access to inputs, agricultural equipment, training or technical support</p>	<p>In Congo, farmers in general and women in particular face several challenges. The vast majority of rural women use basic and archaic methods of production (hoe, machete), increasing the drudgery of their work. A lack of appropriate technologies that could reduce the time spent on domestic chores, production, processing and storage of agricultural products considerably worsens their state of health, depriving them of rest, leading to early aging, loss of production and increased morbidity and mortality.</p> <p>Small tools are the basic equipment of 71.2% of agricultural households headed by men versus 28% of women-headed households.⁸</p>
<p>Life expectancy (disaggregated by gender)</p>	<p>65.7 years for women; 62.8 years for men (2018)⁹</p>

2.2 Responses to GCF Annex 8 questions

➤ What is the status of women?

While some gaps remain, a legal, policy and institutional framework is in place to address gender issues and empower women in Congo.

International law

At the international level, Congo signed (1980) and ratified (1982) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Congo is also a signatory to the African Charter on

⁸ PROJECT UTF/PRC/014/PRC GENERAL AGRICULTURAL CENSUS AND CountrySTAT

⁹ UN Human Development Report: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/120606>

Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) (or Banjul Charter, adopted in Nairobi in 1981) which promotes the rights of women. This Charter calls for states to "ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of women and the child as stipulated in international declarations and conventions."

National law

According to Congo's Constitution (2005) women shall have the same rights as men. Article 14 supports women's participation and states that: "The public authorities shall ensure the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the protection and promotion of their rights. They shall take all appropriate measures in all fields, in particular in the civil, political, economic, social and cultural fields, to ensure the full development and participation of women in the development of the nation. They shall take measures to combat all forms of violence against women in public and private life. Women shall have the right to equitable representation in national, provincial and local institutions. The State shall guarantee the implementation of gender parity in these institutions".

Congolese law guarantees and ensures women's promotion and representation in all political, elective and administrative offices (Article 8 (3) of the 2002 Constitution). Furthermore, electoral law stipulates that candidate lists must take into account the representation of women in a proportion of at least 15% (Article 61 (3) of the Electoral Code as amended in 2007)

In relation to land rights, Congo has also put in place laws to address the rights of women in relation to land and inheritance. The Constitution declares that private property is sacred and that compensation is required in the case of depriving someone of his/her property (Art. 34). While in practice customary law dominates, [Bakajika](#) law (1966 tenure legislation) recognizes the State's full land rights throughout the national territory, but at the same time respects the holders of prior land and customary rights ([FAOLEX-FAO's legal database](#)). Furthermore, under Article 473 of the Family Code, sons and daughters have equal inheritance rights as long as the marriage is under the 'community of property' marriage type. The Constitution also ensures the elimination of sexual violence (Art.15), the right to information (Art.24), and the right to free education without discrimination (Art.45).

Institutional framework

At the national level, the key government agency responsible for promoting women's empowerment is the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Integration of Women in Development (See [link](#)). This Ministry is a member of the project's Technical Committee. Throughout Congo, a number of NGOs also support women's empowerment and awareness raising on gender issues. These include: Agence Régionale d'Information et Prévention du Sida (ARIPS), Association des Femmes pour le Développement de la Bouenza (AFDB) (both addressing violence against women and girls and education of children), REFADD (Réseau des femmes Africaines pour le développement durable en Afrique centrale, Femmes Energie, et Association des Femmes Juristes du Congo (AFJC).

National Policy / Action Plan on Gender

Validated in November 2016 the National Gender Policy aims to achieve gender equality and the social, economic and political empowerment of women and girls in the Congo. Initiated by the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Integration of Women into Development, the policy has five strategic areas for its implementation. These include 1) the consolidation of gender equality and the empowerment of women; 2) strengthening the role and place of women and girls in the economy and employment; 3) increased access of women and girls in the decision-making spheres; 4) combating forms of sexual violence; and 5) strengthening the institutional mechanism for the implementation of the national gender policy (See [link](#)).

Nevertheless, the sociolegal status of women in Congo remains a major concern. Although Article 17 of the 2015 Constitution enshrines the principle of gender equality in all sectors of national life, some legislative instruments continue to convey disparities between men and women.

For instance, Article 171 of the Family Code covering the rights of spouses in marriage gives predominance for the choice of marital home to the husband, in case of a disagreement between the two spouses. In terms of this code, although the woman has the right to freely perform the activity of her choice, the husband may, in the interest of the household, obtain a prohibition from a judge against her performing that activity.

Violence against girls and women is a recurrent phenomenon despite the existence of the legal framework aligned to international standards. Regarding marital violence, bodily harm constitutes the most common form of violence perpetrated against women¹⁰. Such violence is even more widespread in that it is committed under the seal of intimacy.

In terms of the inclusion of gender-specific needs in politics and public life, power-sharing is unequal at legislative, executive and judiciary levels. There are 8.6% women in Parliament, 13% in Government, 12% in decision-making positions within ministries, 17.3% in departmental councils and 26% in town councils. The proportions are similar in political parties, professional NGOs and unions¹¹.

➤ **What are the current beliefs, perceptions and stereotypes related to gender?**

Congolese society is organized traditionally, following a patriarchal system which favors the gender-based distribution of social roles. Men are prepared to manage power and to enjoy male privileges, which make them the “chiefs” of the family and community; women are more predisposed to occupy themselves with the house, taking care of their families as a spouse and/or mother and to remain far from the spheres of public decision-making.

It is generally accepted that women have less leadership skills than men of an equivalent level and that, depending on whether a man or woman makes a decision, the outcome is different, with an unfavorable prejudice against women.

➤ **What is the gender-based division of labor between men and women?**

Whether in the field of agriculture or forestry, the gender-based division of work is still very present.

¹⁰Ministry for Women's Empowerment and Integration in Development, NATIONAL GENDER POLICY Nov 2015

In terms of forest use, women¹² gather non-timber forest products for their food needs (e.g. *Gnétum africanum*, currently called “coco” in Lingala, “fumbua” in Kituba, mushrooms, caterpillars, wild fruit, vegetables), medicinal plants, leaves from different trees, particularly those of the arrowroot family, which are used to cook cassava. However, men mainly use the forest for commercial gain (i.e. hunting, charcoal making).

Regarding agriculture, whether in groups or as individuals, preparation for planting, stump removal and tree felling are normally performed by men. They have a predominant role in pre-season activities (input provision and soil preparation).

Women play a major part in all the different steps, production, processing and marketing.

We also note that arboriculture is mainly dominated by men, with 70.5% men versus 29.5% women participating.¹³ This low level of involvement by women may be explained by their fairly limited access to land in certain departments.

➤ **What is the level of participation by women and men in the formal and informal economy?**

The economy of the Republic of Congo is mainly based on oil production. Wood, services and an embryonic agriculture make up the rest of the activity. Regarding the participation of women in the formal economy, they represent approximately 53% of the agricultural labor force.¹⁴ They are involved throughout the cycle of subsistence crop production (68%), harvesting, storage, and nearly 100% in the processing and marketing of agricultural and fishing products.

The study on the participation of women in development shows that 38.8% of employed women living in semi-urban areas and 21.1% of those living in urban areas practice secondary activities. It is noted that less than 28% of farms belong to women today.¹⁵

➤ **What is the situation between men and women with regards to access to land, practice of agriculture, agroforestry and forestry?**

In Congo, land is governed both by modern and customary law. Concerning modern law, Law no. 21/2018 of June 13, 2018, sets the rules for land use and acquisition in the Republic of Congo, and is implicitly and explicitly non-discriminatory to women. It contains no legal obstacles based on gender. However, customary law recognizes four methods of access to land, which are:

1. Allocation by descent (matrilineal or patrilineal), where the family head, generally, a man, decides on land allocation;
2. Through marriage, where the family head allocates lands to the wife at the request of the husband;

¹² Ministry of Sustainable Development, Forest Economy and the Environment: Report on the involvement of Congolese women in the effective implementation of the convention on biological diversity.

¹³ FAO, National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods: Country Gender Assessment Series.

¹⁴ European Union, Gender Profile, Republic of Congo: Situational analysis of girls and women in the Republic of Congo. January 2017.

¹⁵ Ministry for Women's Empowerment and Integration in Development, NATIONAL GENDER POLICY Nov 2015

3. Through lease arrangements; and finally,
4. Through purchase.

In all cases, irrespective of a person's family line, the four methods of land allocation are in the hands of men. Land-related decisions are made by the family during family meetings, generally chaired by men. As a result, the various limitations to the ability of women to own land seriously hinder their effective participation in economic activities. For women, this creates chronic land insecurity which also limits their opportunities to plant perennial crops on land, which may be taken away at any time.

In terms of agriculture, the districts covered by the Project are mainly characterized by subsistence food crop production (mainly practiced by women) dominated by polyculture, as well as market gardening (essentially a man activity). In this system, producers combine various crops, which may include cassava, maize, bananas, yams, market gardens and peanuts. A slash-and-burn agricultural system is practiced mainly by women in forest or savanna areas (supported by male labor, particularly in forests).

A lack of appropriate technologies means a lower production for women. The equipment in village machinery centers is not only aging, but also insufficient.¹⁶ Services for individuals are expensive.

Unlike men, who are spared from paid labor for certain activities (which considerably reduces production costs), women must rely on paid labor for agricultural activities, such as stump removal, transplanting for market gardening, and transportation of harvests from the fields to major roads.

Whether married or single, women farmers reinject nearly all their revenue from the harvest into the overall operations of the family.

The fact of being solely or primarily responsible for family expenses makes it difficult for women to save any money to expand agricultural activities or build economic capital to develop activities. This insecure means of operation is unfortunately widespread and common to all women in the interviewed groups.

Compared with men, women rarely receive training (on agricultural or agroforestry techniques or financial management of their operation). In addition to reasons related to literacy, family constraints are barriers, which were also mentioned by some women to justify their lack of training within agricultural groups.

Agroforestry is a new practice for women farmers in the Project departments. They stated that they have never practiced or been trained in agroforestry. However, men already seem to be more familiar with this practice (Ignie and Kayes where some have already experienced agroforestry, particularly land owners within the context of agricultural development projects).

Women and men have free access to forests. The National Gender Profile Report on the agricultural sector shows that women's associations involved in forestry activities are concentrated in the departments of Pool (53.4 %), Plateaux (30.7%), Likouala (11.4 %) and Niari (3.4 %).¹⁷

Women are involved in and contribute significantly towards forest management. They have different roles and needs in forest resource management.

- **Would differences in vulnerability be expected between men and women and their capacity to adapt to climate change? If yes, which ones?**

¹⁶ See section 1.1.3. on modern agricultural techniques and equipment P.32

¹⁷FAO, *National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods: Country Gender Assessment Series*.

As men and women are not affected in the same way by climate change, there are naturally differences in terms of the level and type of vulnerability.

In rural areas, women are the first victims of deforestation, which forces them to spend more time looking for firewood and non-timber forest products to meet family food and energy needs.

Greenhouse gas emitting fuelwoods are thus far the main energy sources used by Congolese women to cook (firewood, charcoal, biomass waste are an integral part of the consumption habits of most households in the Republic of Congo).

Fetching water for drinking and for household needs is the responsibility of women and girls and requires a lot of time and physical effort, more from women than men.

It is often women who bear the burden of collecting water, fuelwood and food supplies.

Women have a key role in providing a balanced diet for their families, because they are generally in charge of producing subsistence crops, legumes and vegetables that are a direct part of household consumption. As a result, a shortage of food caused by drought and destruction of flora and fauna, risks aggravating the situation of women and girls, particularly in areas that are already weakened.

However, there is a low degree of involvement by women in climate change adaptation policies and programmes.¹⁸

➤ **What inequalities exist between the different social groups?**

In Congo, minority groups are made up of indigenous peoples (previously called Pygmies). These indigenous peoples, barely integrated into the national economy, live in a situation of extreme poverty and marginalization with increasingly limited access to natural resources owing to overexploitation of these resources by the Bantu. Their lifestyle is essentially based on hunting and gathering.

Interviews with indigenous peoples in the village of Onyamva in the Department of Plateaux highlighted the social disparities and stigmatization experienced by this population daily. In fact, in terms of health, indigenous women practically live on the margin of the healthcare system. They are no longer go to national healthcare facilities due to the stigmatization and discrimination experienced. They are practically forgotten.

They practice subsistence farming and have access to forests to gather NTFP. However, they find it difficult to sell off processed products (such as cassava). The Bantu with whom they cohabit do not buy their products due to assumed dirtiness.

Data from the 2007 census indicates that the net primary school enrollment rate of indigenous children between the ages of six and 11 years is 44%, which is half that of all children in this age group. Furthermore, less than 4% of indigenous pupils receive secondary education.

➤ **What roles are women and men supposed to play within the context of the project?**

There is no distinction between women or men within the context of Project implementation. However, the gender assessment detected the disparities faced by women, not only in the agricultural sector but also

¹⁸The REDD+ national strategy is not gender-sensitive

in agroforestry and forestry. For this reason, strategies have been developed to take these disparities into account and to counteract the observed inequalities.

To this end, emphasis is placed on incorporation of the practical needs and strategic interests of each of the Project's target groups, in line with the gender action plan. The objective being that, in time, women and men will be able to share equally and equitably the benefits of the Project. By way of these strategies, one of the Project's objectives is to ensure that 35% of beneficiaries are women.

The Project also intends to build the capacities of the Project team on the gender concept and effective gender mainstreaming in development projects. This is to guarantee achievement of the gender equality objectives throughout Project implementation. The Project also intends to promote women's empowerment by building their leadership and citizenship capacities. The objective here is to develop their power of negotiation with men from the community, within their families and in their working environment (within groups).

Furthermore, a participatory approach will be applied for technical training related to climate resistant agroforestry and forestry extension. Before training, there will be discussions with women to align training sessions with their availability to ensure that the timetable and scheduling of the training fits in with their family constraints and status as mothers.

In addition, within the context of mixed groups, and in order to avoid abuse related to domination by certain members of the male sex over other members of the female sex (as criticized), emphasis will be placed on equal representation in decision-making bodies. This is to avoid the management board been totally male.

➤ **Do women and men from vulnerable communities have equal access to information, and should they take part in the project and benefit fully from the anticipated project results?**

One of the Project's objectives is to ensure that all Project targets (men, women, and young people) have equal access to opportunities resulting from the Project, particularly in terms of information. For this reason, there is a plan to organize awareness raising sessions with community leaders and men in the districts covered by the Project, on the role of women in the development process through their representation in grassroots community organizations. Their awareness will also be raised on the benefits the community can derive from the involvement of women in these development processes.

Furthermore, the assessment revealed that access to information by women at village level largely depends on the channel by which this information arrives. To account for this, the Project will monitor the channels used to relay information at community level. This is to ensure that women not only have timely access to information, but also that they can participate effectively in meetings and public consultations. Agricultural sector chiefs will be involved in relaying information in the villages.

In addition, capacity building programmes on the abovementioned issues related to personal development (female leadership) will allow women to make their voices heard during these public consultations as rights holders and full citizens.

➤ **Do women have equal access to education, technical knowledge and/or improvement of skills?**

The assessment revealed a real need for training of women from groups in various domains related to their activity, as deficiencies are negatively impacting their productivity.

In fact, most of the women interviewed, unlike the men, had rarely received training (on agricultural techniques, financial management of their operation...) although the need is real and urgent in view of the deficiencies observed. The chief of Mvouti sector confirmed that, he does not remember a training session organized for women producers for the past six years.

The technical capacity building programmes planned as part of the Project are open to all Project targets (men, women, and young people). However, in terms of the barriers (family constraints for women, illiteracy rate noted in women in rural areas) observed during the assessment and which limit the participation of women at the same level as men, the Project will ensure the training is adapted to meet the profile of the producers and their social constraints.

➤ **Will the services and technologies provided by the project be available and accessible to women and men?**

Yes. In fact, the gender assessment showed that a lack of modern technologies increases not only the drudgery of agricultural work for women, but also their overload. They must complete domestic tasks, their agricultural work, processing/storage of agricultural products and provide food for the family all at the same time. Strategies have been defined to ensure access by all Project targets (women/men/young people) to services and technologies, particularly mechanization.

Concretely, the Project plans to provide mechanization through the donation of modern agricultural equipment to male and female producers.

For Component 2 (Deployment of climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems), one of the Project's objectives it is to have at least 35% women in all capacity building and support activities that will be conducted.

Moreover, gender-specific indicators will be defined at the level of each objective of the Project's logical framework, with particular regard to access to services and technologies. These indicators will enable monitoring not only of effective access by all target beneficiaries during the implementation of the Project, but also the evaluation of the number of women, men and young people who got access to services and technologies during the reporting.

➤ **Are there opportunities to promote female leadership in local governance/political systems and formal/informal institutions? If not, what obstacles are preventing women from taking on leadership roles?**

Sociocultural barriers, as well as other factors (illiteracy, non-respect of progress already made at legal and institutional level, weak economic power...) are major obstacles encountered by women producers in assuming their leadership role.

In fact, the driving principle of Congolese society is that of men being the source and holder of all authority. Determination of status within the community, as well as role distribution therefore revolves around this principle. With minor variations, women are almost excluded from the domain of power (public and private sphere) or are only involved in the margins (domestic domain).

As an opportunity, the Project could, if necessary, screen beneficiaries by ensuring positive discrimination towards women's groups, with particular reference to the PRONAR lands that will be made available by the State. Indicatively, the anticipated objective is 35% women beneficiaries.

The Project may also rely on the Departmental Directorates for Women's Empowerment and Integration in Development, present in all departments that will host the Project, through implementation of the Congolese national gender policy.

The Project will also rely on national programmes that promote women and gender equality by other technical and financial partners, particularly United Nations agencies (UNDP, UNFPA).

Finally, NGOs that support women's rights at national level are also an opportunity that the Project will use to develop women's power in terms of leadership and decision-making.

➤ **What are the different needs/priorities of women and men within the context of the project/programme? Will the project/programme be able to meet their respective needs and priorities? If yes, how?**

The assessment helped develop a baseline situation for the Project targets, differentiated by gender. The following information will be collected during the inception phase:

- Number or percent of women with secure tenure rights in the project area.
- Percentage of people (gender disaggregated) aware of legal mechanisms and procedures for land tenure security.

The different products of the logical framework, building on the gender action plan, will faithfully reflect the needs and priorities of the targets, taking into consideration not only gender, but also vulnerabilities observed. These needs include building the technical capacities of men, women and young people; the promotion of new, climate-resilient agricultural techniques among women and young people, and access to credit.

Practically, the Project plans to:

- Provide a sustainable source of fuelwood supply through climate resistant agroforestry practices, taking into consideration the fact that women are the ones primarily concerned;
- Support small enterprise development through training on business planning for producers (men/women/young people);
- Support micro-finance institutions in developing financial products and service relevant to beneficiary and women's needs (low interest rate, longer maturity periods and alignment with production cycles, etc.)

The Project document, specifically the logical framework, contains clear strategies such as indicators disaggregated by gender, which will allow for the participation of men and women in all actions planned by the Project to be verified or measured. Sub-activities are also planned as precursors to certain activities by way of corrective measures.

Specifically, the gender assessment identified priority needs specific to women, which are translated into action and integrated in the gender action plan in order to become an integral part of the logical framework of the Project document for their implementation.

➤ **Were the specific needs of vulnerable persons taken into consideration by the project/programme?**

Youth and the elderly (particularly elderly women) living in the project area face particular challenges that will be taken into account in the project implementation.

Youth

For global programming purposes, FAO defines the priority age range for rural youth development from 10 to 25 years. In Congo, it is noted that due to high population growth rates, youth make up a large segment of the total population of approximately 5.2 million. The median age is 19.2 years. In rural areas the fertility rate was estimated at 6.5 children born per woman (2011-2012). Many children, particularly girls, are not able to complete their schooling. According to the UNDP Human Development Report, mean years of schooling for boys are 7.5 while for girls only 6.1 years. Girls may also be married or in a 'pre-marriage' union at a very early age. Some 27% of women aged 20 – 24 are already in such a union or marriage according to UNDP. Under customary practices, many girls may be forced into pre-marriage unions before the age of 18. For youth in general, employment remains a challenge. While the national unemployment rate stands at 10.4 percent, youth unemployment is as high as 22.8 percent (UNDP, See [link](#)). More opportunities for employment for youth in the agriculture and forest sectors could reduce rural-urban migration.

In order to ensure that youth (including boys and girls) have opportunities to participate in and benefit from project activities, the following measures will be adopted:

- Project opportunities will be communicated through youth-friendly channels, for example through youth associations and social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp)
- The project will target young leaders in the community for engagement and wider impact. When needed, the project will facilitate/support the emergence of young leaders in target communities.
- Facilitators will be trained to seek the youth perspective in all events and trainings. They will be encouraged to adapt activities to address the particular concerns of youth.

Particular attention will be paid to the needs of indigenous youth.

Elderly

While family and community relations tend to provide some social and economic stability, the elderly (defined as 65 years or older) are a particularly vulnerable segment of the population in the Republic of Congo. Approximately 100,000 people fall in this 'old age' bracket. The elderly tend to suffer more health ailments and these may be more acute in rural areas where health services are insufficient.

By customary practice, traditional leaders tend to be elderly men and they may use their influence to access resources and to solve disputes and other problems arising at the local level. By contrast, elderly women generally lack such opportunities for status and leadership in the community. Elderly women are particularly vulnerable in the event of the death of their husband since customary inheritance rules and practice favor men. Furthermore, access to pensions is limited to 22.1% of the elderly population (UNDP Human Development Report).

The elderly often hold a wealth of information on local history, plants, animals, and traditional cultural practices. Indigenous elders in forested areas may be particularly knowledgeable on biodiversity.

To ensure that the elderly have equitable opportunities to participate in and benefit from project activities, the following measures will be adopted:

- Facilitators will be trained to seek the perspective of elderly participants in all events and trainings. They will be encouraged to adapt activities to address the particular concerns of the elderly.
- In the agroforestry activities, the project team will seek the advice of elderly members of the community to learn about past experience, traditional varieties, natural pest control methods, etc.

- Input from elderly men and women will be sought in the mid-term and final evaluation.

Particular attention will be paid to the needs of indigenous elderly, particularly women.

➤ **Did the project recognize the distinct vulnerabilities of women and men in the development of specific response strategies for each target group?**

Overall, Project interventions cover men, women and young people. However, as the gender assessment revealed specific vulnerabilities, particularly for women, elderly, and youth, the Gender Action Plan identifies and proposes specific actions which, within the context of the Project's activities, would allow adequate and targeted responses to these specific vulnerabilities.

➤ **Are the specific knowledge and skills of women and men, in particular vulnerable groups, used to contribute to the results and solutions of the project/programme?**

Methodologically, the Project favors the participatory approach, through public consultations, as well as focus groups with different target groups, the objective being to rely on pre-existing mechanisms and skills to guarantee achievement of the anticipated results.

➤ **Is it possible for the project/programme to question gender stereotypes and increase positive relationships between men and women by equitable actions? If yes, what are these opportunities and actions?**

Within the context of the gender assessment, the Project identified stereotypes which negatively impact the daily output of women. These are:

- According to some beliefs, fruits from trees planted by women are never of good quality. Moreover, until the recent past, women did not have the right to climb avocado or butter fruit trees because of these beliefs.
- According to customary beliefs, women do not inherit land. This contributes to limiting women's rights and impacting their productivity.
- According to beliefs and social constructs, the place of a woman is exclusively at home. This tends to exclude women from public affairs, considerably limiting their decision-making power and their chance to benefit from the training opportunities that are sometimes offered.

In order to overcome stereotypes within the context of the Project, awareness raising sessions on unfavorable sociocultural attitudes will be organized on site for women and men in order to deconstruct these stereotypes. Awareness raising sessions will also be organized with community leaders in respect to behavioral changes (mindsets) related to women's access to land within the customary framework;

In terms of the logical framework:

The Project's logical framework will integrate objectives and indicators disaggregated by gender. These indicators will help monitor progress over time, and changes resulting from the Project.

The gender dimension will be crosscutting throughout all areas of interventions and not just through actions in favor of and for the visibility of women.

In addition to indicators, gender-sensitive activities and expected results will be defined in the logical framework. This will force the Project implementation team to formulate actions in annual operational plans.

The Project will ensure that the institutional provisions planned take the gender issue into account and enable strategies to be implemented and gender integration to be measured in the proposed actions.

At implementation level:

- The Project team will rely on the situational analysis (the assessment) and other qualitative and quantitative data (disaggregated by gender) in due course to evaluate the gender impact of the Project's interventions on the target beneficiaries;
- In addition to the Project's flagship activities, the logical framework will incorporate specific activities in response to certain practical gender-specific needs identified during the assessment;
- The capacities of the Project team's agents will be strengthened on gender and development, to ensure real and effective gender mainstreaming during implementation of the GCF Project;
- Gender expertise will be recruited to strengthen the Project team in order to guarantee the expected gender-sensitive results; and
- The data from the various activity reports and/or other Project documents, will be routinely disaggregated in order to see the differentiated impact on each of the targets (men/women/young people).

In terms of monitoring and evaluation:

The gender dimension will be integrated into the performance and impact assessment missions of the GCF through:

- The incorporation of gender objectives into the terms of reference for the assessment (elements to be taken into account in all assessments);
- The recruitment of a gender consultant in assessment missions (final and/or mid-term);
- Disaggregation by gender of all data in the different reports, specifying data in the "young people" category;
- Availability of reports on successes or failures of initiatives or the achievement of gender objectives.

3. Gender assessment within the context of the project

This section presents a more in-depth gender analysis that goes beyond the points requested by the GCF in order to better understand the condition of women within the context of the Project.



3.1 Gender analysis in the agricultural/forestry/agroforestry value chain

The project aims to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation caused by slash-and-burn agriculture and fuelwood extraction. Given that it will be based on the implementation of agroforestry and forestry systems, it is judicious to analyze gender mainstreaming in the different value chains of these three agricultural practices.

As indicated by the study entitled “*Gender in value chains*” by AgriproFocus, gender-sensitive value chains are important in many respects. From an economic point of view, they will ensure women and men have the same conditions and opportunities; they will increase their productivity and will then make use of the full potential of all segments of the population.

3.2 Agriculture

In all the target communities in the different departments considered for field interviews, women are heavily involved in agricultural production. Based on the fact that the situation of Congolese women farmers varies slightly from one zone to another (savanna/forest), from one community to another and even from family to family depending on social and economic factors, it is important to recognize the existence of a real analogy of their working conditions and their status. The gender-based division of work, still very present in agricultural activity, particularly in rural areas, means that women bear the burden of most tasks related to agricultural production. However, stump removal and tree felling are essentially the responsibility of men.

In the districts targeted by the Project, agriculture is mainly characterized by subsistence food crop production dominated by polyculture. In this system, producers in general and women in particular combine various crops, which are most often cassava, maize, bananas, yams, and peanuts.

Cropping practices use traditional methods, namely slash-and-burn agriculture. Such cultivation is mainly practiced by women in the forest, as well as in savanna areas, but particularly in forest settings. In Mvouti for example, the interviewed women explained that agricultural land is developed through clearing followed by tree felling and burning.

Within the context of their agricultural activities, the interviewed women farmers generally use basic and archaic means of production (hoe, machete). As a result, a lack of modern technologies, particularly mechanization (especially in savanna areas where women work on large areas, as is the case with certain groups in Madingou), increases not only the drudgery of agricultural work for these women, but also the work burden, especially as they also need to complete domestic tasks, production, processing and storage of agricultural products.

3.3 Access, use and control of resources

Access to resources means the capacity to use a resource, and control represents the capacity to make decisions concerning the use of the resource. The distinction between access to certain resources and their control is important, because the capacity to use a resource does not necessarily involve the possibility of defining the use of that resource. In this section we discuss the access, use, and control over various resources.

3.3.1 Land

As indicated in the national land policy document, land is primarily for farmers, a factor of production irrespective of their economic orientation.

On the legal level, Congo recognizes two main land acquisition methods.

- Acquisition resulting from legal provisions on private property as governed by the Civil Code: succession, donation, obligation (contractual), accession, ordinance;
- Acquisition through recognition of customary land rights (land registration rules, specifically stipulated by Law No. 10-2004, amended by Law 21/2018 of June 13, 2018, setting the rules for the occupation and acquisition of land in the Republic of Congo).

However, customary law recognizes four methods of land acquisition:

1. Allocation by descent (matrilineal or patrilineal): the family head, generally, a man, decides on land allocation;
2. Through marriage: the family head allocates lands to the wife at the request of the husband;
3. Purchase: This is related to the ability of each woman to pay for one or more areas from a land owner who sets the price for his land;
4. Lease agreement: This consists of an agreement with a land owner, who in return receives money or a part of the annual production. Lease agreements are made for specific periods of time (in Ignie, the maximum lease is 2 years, until harvesting of the planted crop). Payment and amounts vary by district. Payment in Goma Tsé-Tsé, for example, ranges from 10% to 20% of the harvest, while in Louvakou it is 10% of the harvest and 59/76 USD for 1 hectare; 50 USD/ha in Mpoya). In Ngo in Plateaux, a hectare is leased at 42 USD, only to persons not native to the village and who wish to plant fields of subsistence crops, while village inhabitants use the land freely.

In all cases, these four methods of land allocation in the different departments targeted by the Project are handled by men. The field mission allowed observation of the fact that sociocultural considerations have serious impacts on access to land by Congolese women. In fact, if women are not the family head, the chance of accessing land is left to the goodwill of family heads or the men of the family, who may be a brother (older or younger), an uncle or, when these are no longer alive, a son. In all cases, in the presence of a man (brother/husband/son), his voice is the predominant one.

Some testimonies collected in the district of Madingou¹⁹ revealed that when a husband or brother is absent or not interested in agricultural activities, women may “control” fairly large areas. However, once such women want to seriously invest within the context of certain calls for projects, they must discuss this with their male relatives to receive their authorization. This situation creates chronic land insecurity for women, which limits their opportunity to plant perennial crops on land, due to the risk that the land may be taken away at any time.

Women’s groups interviewed in the Department of Niari stated that lease agreements gave them rights when the rules were well-established and respected, particularly the right to plant trees; although they were obliged to make a financial contribution or “*countercharge*” to the owner worth 10% of the harvest and also 10% from 20 trees upwards.

However, in Ngo in the Plateaux, women from land lease groups have no right to plant trees on landowners’ land because, according to these landowners, that would make these groups “*owners*” of this land.

The women interviewed in Mvouti, native to or married in Mvouti, generally stated that until now they were working “freely” on their families’ land on their individual plantations. For women coming from other towns, and residing in Mvouti, they agreed on a lease with landowners at 84 USD/ha. Unfortunately, as land lease holders, they do not have the right to plant fruit trees and can only grow food.

¹⁹ Women members of a group testified that they were expelled from family land by the brothers of their president because they believed that, as women, they had no right to settle people on land without their authorization. This was not only violent but the group’s harvests were destroyed.

Marginalization of women by customary law in terms of access to land may explain the scarce presence of women observed within most of the landowner associations interviewed. In Nyari, for example, the landowners' association has **128 members, including 29 women and 98 men**. In Ngo, the landowners' association has **six members, including one woman and five men**.

“Previously, women could control the land on an exceptional basis only when there was no adult man in the family line. This control was until the boy children reached maturity”. (Mr. MBOUMY AGNAN SG of NYARI land owners. Statement collected during focus groups held in Louvakou on May 23, 2019).

These limitations imposed by customary law on the ability of women to own land seriously hinders their effective participation in economic activities. In fact, land control rights play a central role in guaranteeing a decent life for women, particularly in rural areas. This is even truer as the land constitutes the main source of income and livelihoods.

From all conversations, it emerged that married women with access to land through marriage were in the end reduced to the role of beneficial owner only, as decision-making power reverts to the family head, husband or son although she is the main user.

“When I got married, I left my village and I went to live in my husband’s village. I worked on my mother-in-law’s plantations, but these were the plantations that her husband had left. My mother-in-law is no longer alive, and my husband is also dead, but I cannot sell and I cannot even give to anyone because these lands belong to my sons and their paternal uncles”. A participant in the Madingou focus group, May 25, 2019.

Concerning widows, Article 484 of the Family Code stipulates that women may not inherit properties from their husbands, except as beneficial users, denying them a right to ownership. This means that although they are the spouse of the deceased person, they cannot control his land heritage.

Most of the interviewed single women or heads of households state that they have access to family land but are aware that this land does not belong to them, but rather to the family. Therefore, they have no decision-making power on this land.

It appears that, under customary law, gender, matrimonial status and socioeconomic condition are very important in determining the ability of an individual to acquire land.

Although the legal reforms of 2018 clearly mention the place of women for land management in Congo, it should be recognized that this reference itself is not sufficient to regulate gender-based social relations in terms of land rights under customary law.

This Law 21 on land should be disseminated as a matter of urgency, with particular emphasis on the place of women; strategies and provisions for land administration should be implemented that take these cultural and customary realities into account; and platforms should be created for discussion and awareness raising at local and community levels.

Within the context of the Project, particularly its Component 1, three land options are planned. Apart from the PRONAR land option, the Project will need to contract with individuals (purchase and/or lease). The Project will need to ensure that it does not support the above-mentioned disparities in its land contracts.

Moreover, the Project's gender objective of involving 35% women must be implemented within the context of the support it provides to landowners in terms of securing their land rights. Women's groups must also take priority in cases of land allocation by the Project.

3.3.2 Credit

Financial resources are an instrument to develop agricultural activities in rural, as well as urban areas. Unfortunately, access to credit remains a major challenge for farmers in general and women farmers in particular (1.5% for women and 4.1% for men)²⁰.

Because Congolese banks are commercial and not agricultural banks, it is difficult for them to support agricultural activities as they have no understanding of the specificities.

"This is a barrier, because our banks here know nothing about agriculture, not the harvest cycle and not the seasons, and this creates a major problem in terms of repaying any loans they grant as they do not take all that into account".

Most women farmers interviewed in the Project sites have very little familiarity with banking procedures. Furthermore, they have very few interactions with financial institutions.

The physical location of the farms and the distance to the source of credit is one of the disadvantages for these women. As an illustration, there are no microfinance institutions in certain districts, everything needs to be done in Brazzaville. This is the case for Ignie, 45 km from Brazzaville. In Louvakou, some members of groups stated that they have an account at MUCODEC (*Mutuelles Congolaises d'Épargne et de Crédit* [Congolese Savings and Credit Unions] based in Dolisie. However, they have never received microcredit as this is conditional on a certain savings requirements.

Some women interviewed in Hinda benefited from awareness raising campaigns on agricultural microfinance and access to bank credit. They also stated that they had undertaken some awareness raising modules on financial education through the NGO CERPAC.

For the record, these women are developing in an insecure environment. With the exception of some who are land owners, most work on small farms that only provide for subsistence livelihoods. This excludes them from the possibility of guaranteeing the required loans. Furthermore, the lack of diversification of their activities means that no additional income can be expected apart from that coming in from their farming.

In order to mitigate this difficulty, other forms of savings and credit have been created for increased accessibility to the most disadvantaged women. These are Women's Savings and Credit Unions (*Caisses féminines d'épargne et de crédit mutuel* - CFECM), supported by the Ministry for Women's Empowerment and Integration in Development.

These local organizations have been established to facilitate access to credit by women, especially in rural areas. These unions are oriented towards the collection and securing of savings, and the credit beneficiaries are simply the women who have made deposits.

²⁰ European Union, *Gender Profile, Republic of Congo: Situation analysis of girls and women in the Republic of Congo. Jan 2017.*

3.3.3 Training

The assessment revealed a real need for training of women from groups in various domains related to their activities, as the deficiencies are negatively impacting their productivity. In Goma Tsé-Tsé (during public consultations led by *Initiative Développement*), the (female) president of the market gardening group expressed the wish to become involved in agroforestry, while continuing market gardening activities, but would like to receive training beforehand.

In fact, most of the women interviewed, unlike the men, have hardly been trained (in agricultural techniques, financial management of their operation...) while the need is real and urgent in view of the deficiencies observed.

"I have been agricultural sector chief here in Mvouti for six years. I do not remember a training session being organized here for women farmers." Daniel IBATA, ASC in Mvouti, interview conducted on 05/24/2019.

The only training Programme attended by some women in Mvouti is the one organized by an NGO coordinator on agroforestry using moringa.

Group interviews revealed that most women from agricultural groups are less able than men to assimilate the knowledge offered by agricultural extension services. There are far higher levels of illiteracy in women from the groups than men. This is one of the reasons motivating most of them to join with men within the context of groups, despite the male domination that they will experience.

It should be noted that, unlike the men, most of the women interviewed in the different districts do not speak French, but rather the local language (some focus groups in the south essentially were conducted in the Kituba language). In addition to reasons related to literacy, family constraints are obstacles which were also mentioned by some women to justify their lack of training within agricultural groups.

In fact, during conversations, women stated that within the context of previous agricultural projects conducted in their districts, training programmes did not always take into consideration their status as mothers and wives. Furthermore, the training was sometimes organized far from their villages (Madingou). This was obviously not possible for them, due to a lack of time and means to attend.

Also, some married or cohabiting women who were questioned stated that sometimes their husbands or partners preferred to go alone to the training and come back and train them afterwards. This forced them to be happy with secondhand training. This is the case for one of the members from a women's group in Hinda who confided in us that, as part of an agricultural project by the Ministry of Agriculture, she and her husband had been eligible to attend training offered by the agricultural technique demonstration center. Only her husband believed that it was useful for him to attend the training.

This type of behavior by husbands may have repercussions on the achievement of the gender objective set by the Project.

During the field research, it was also revealed that some husbands or partners objected to their partners to participate as the training was offered by men.

This situation calls into question the best approach for training offered within the context of Project implementation. This was also specified by women from Madingou Kayes who requested training on cassava varieties and their cultivation but drew attention to the fact that this training must be scheduled

during periods when they would be able to attend. In other words, they needed to be consulted to agree on the timing.

3.3.4 Modern agricultural techniques and equipment.

Field investigations showed that the vast majority of rural women use basic and archaic methods of production (hoe, machete), making their work arduous.

A lack of appropriate technologies that could reduce the time spent on domestic chores, production, processing and storage of agricultural products considerably worsens their state of health, depriving them of rest, leading to early aging, loss of production and increased morbidity and mortality. Field investigations revealed that, in the department of Plateaux, specifically at the Etsouali village machinery center in the district of Ngo, services cost 67 USD (plowing). Furthermore, this machine center has an insufficient number of tractors (2) to meet the demand. Most of the tractors are aging or broken down. Producers need to contact private companies at a higher cost: 84 USD.

As indicated in the report of the General Agricultural Census conducted in September 2016, and supported by our field research, small tools are the basic equipment of 71.2% of male-headed agricultural households, compared with 28% of households headed by women. These small tools essentially consist of hoes, axes, machetes, saws, chainsaws etc. Fixed installations consisting of dryers, drying areas, workbenches, granaries and silos exist in 29.3% of women-headed households. Pulled and processing equipment are respectively used by 29.7% and 30% of women-headed households.

Field investigations also revealed that, in areas where private service providers offer modern equipment services, these services are often not delivered on time to the women requesting them. This is specifically the case for women's groups in the district of Louvakou who state that they paid enormous amounts of money together with drums of diesel to service providers who never performed the work for which they were paid. It should also be noted that some equipment service providers require large areas in order to make the trip. To a certain extent, this disqualifies some women for whom access to large areas is almost impossible in rural settings.

This is also the case in Madingou in Bouenza, where women from the different interviewed groups mentioned that they find it difficult to bring in a tractor, even after paying months in advance (for example: a tractor paid for in October 2018 still had not come in June 2019...); "they do not respect agricultural calendars", "the equipment is often broken down and takes long to repair"; costs are still high: 185 USD for plowing and spraying.

With regards to small tools, some women's groups, particularly in the district of Hinda, stated during interviews that they received an agricultural equipment donation from the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Women's Integration in Development, as a one-off action. This is also the case for certain groups from Mpouya who have no problems with mechanization, because they received tractors from Minister Mboulou, so plowing is almost free, and the price is purely symbolic²¹. He also made donations to villages along the rivers. This is unfortunately not the case for women in groups from other target districts.

In terms of access to inputs, there is a generalized lack of access to plant protection products and seeds for market gardening. In fact, whether in Bouenza, Niari or Plateaux, the interviewed women's groups and individuals noted enormous difficulties in obtaining improved seed and inputs (fertilizers). Their financial

²¹ See ID consultation reports.

vulnerability due, amongst other things, to the fact that they hold primary responsibility for household chores, makes it difficult for these women (a little more than men who are mobile and less economically vulnerable) to access inputs.

The poor state of the road network also definitely affects all agricultural producers, but the findings and statements of participants in the discussions showed that women are affected a little more. In some districts, particularly Louvakou, women stated that they recruit young people to do piecework in order to transport their harvests from the plantations to the road; they also order trucks to come close to the water's edge to transport bags of retted cassava to Dolisie at 3.5 USD per bag and 2.5 USD for the bag owner.

The lack of agricultural tracks makes it difficult to transport field produce to urban centers. Farms are approximately 10 km from the village, as in the case of Mpouya. Women travel by foot and often have to stay in camps during maintenance and weeding operations. For women who do not have the means to pay young people, they carry their products on their heads from the plantations to the village.

"Mama We carry everything on our heads or on our backs then we travel for kilometers and kilometers... How much can you carry? An old woman like me?" Ms. Joséphine Mboumba, Lumière group from Mumbazi Louvakou.

3.3.5 Forest resources

Law 16-2000 of November 20, 2000 relating to the Forest Code in the Republic of Congo, Law 14-2009 of December 30, 2009 amending certain provisions of Law 16-2000 of November 20, 2000 and its enforcement texts, including Decree 2002-47 of December 31, 2002, define the conditions for forest management and use. The Forest Code, undergoing revision (see 2016, still not officially adopted), acknowledges the rights of communities to all "forest products" derived from the community's forest (Article 32, see 2016).

The National Gender Profile Report on the agricultural sector shows that women's associations involved in forest activities are concentrated in the departments of Pool (53.4 %), Plateaux (30.7%), Likouala (11.4 %) and Niari (3.4 %) ²². They specifically devote themselves to hunting for non-timber forest products (NTFPs).

Of course, women are essential in the management of forest resources. Field research revealed that they play an important role in using and processing forest resources, in order to meet their families' needs. Women and men have different roles and responsibilities in terms of forest use. Management of timber and fauna is the responsibility of men, while women manage products taken from the forest for commercial and food purposes.

However, it should be specified that the field work revealed no discrimination against women in terms of forest access. In Louvakou, the interviewed women stated that they had the right to go into the forest even when they were not land owners. *"We have the right to go into the forest and take what we want... We just need to ask"*.

Access is totally egalitarian. Women are involved in and contribute significantly towards forest management. They have different roles and needs in the management of forest resources and they do not look for the same resources as men. Women's forest activities include traditional arboriculture, harvesting of non-timber forest products, harvesting and management of fuelwood to prepare food.

Non-Timber Forest Products

²² FAO National Gender Profile op.cit.

In the different target districts, women are very involved in gathering, processing and selling NTFPs. Apart from hunting, these two activities are in fact traditionally reserved for women and children.

These products vary by district, as well as by ecological cover and dietary habits in the departments. They include *Gnétum africanun*, currently called “coco” in Lingala, “fumbua” in Kituba, mushrooms, caterpillars, wild fruits, legumes, medicinal plants, leaves from different trees particularly arrowroot, which are used to cook cassava and other foods.

Men’s forest activities are primarily for profit. The same applies to the manufacture of charcoal, which is an exclusively male activity. The development of the relevant sectors will enable these women to increase their financial independence and their purchasing power.

NTFPs provide livelihoods and income for the interviewed women. Some of these products are used for their own consumption, and others are intended for sale. It is therefore easy to understand the negative effects of any natural resource degradation phenomena on the lives of rural communities.

NTFPs have many functions: food, medicine, traditional medicine, construction and craft materials, income sources through the sale of some NTFPs such as caterpillars, honey, Gnetum leaves, palm nuts, kola nuts, etc.... religious and mystical (protective talismans etc.).

3.3.6 Fuelwood:

In Congo, firewood supplies to cook food are, by nature, an activity for women. This is effectively based on the fact that women are in charge of preparing family meals, and they therefore appear to be the primary users of natural resources in all their activities (fuelwood supplies, traditional medicine, gathering of mushrooms and caterpillars, picking of wild leaves and fruits).

Unfortunately, the focus groups with women showed that they know very little or nothing about the links between environmental conservation and global warming. They make absolutely no connection between the unusual phenomena that they are experiencing, such as drought, drying up of water sources, soil infertility, etc. and activities like deforestation. It is important to promote more awareness among women on these phenomena as well as on climate-resilient agricultural practices.

Concrete and effective alternatives to slash and burn agriculture should be introduced to women given that restrictions to natural resources access would be counterproductive and would increase the economic vulnerability of the women and their families.

3.4 Work contribution

In terms of women’s contributions to work, their workload in the productive, as well as the reproductive spheres should be revisited. Field investigation shows that women producers constitute a real agricultural workforce in the target areas.

The report of the General Agricultural Census conducted in 2016 showed that the agricultural workforce represents a total of 514,358 farmers, out of an estimated population of 4,801,684 inhabitants in 2015. Of this number, 65% of women contribute to 70% of food production. According to the same report, women represent 70% of agricultural labor and are responsible for 60 to 80% of the country’s subsistence crop production. However, agriculture contributes only 3.6% on average to the GDP. Also, despite the high level

of involvement of women in agricultural activity, as well as other considerable advantages, the agricultural sector does not manage to satisfy the national food demand.

It should be emphasized that, despite their strong motivation for agricultural work, women experience economic and social disparities which negatively impact their output. The same applies to their level of education, which, during conversations, proved to be greatly inferior to that of the men in the groups. There are so many difficulties which could (at least partially) justify the low level of impact by women in agriculture on the GDP despite their high level of participation in the agricultural workforce.

The project should take this situation of illiteracy into account in the different capacity building programmes planned in the various components.

3.5 Women and agricultural groups (associations, cooperatives)

Collective groups are the most functional type of organization found during field work. They are either mixed or exclusively made up of women. However, they are not organized in sectors and they have an average of 20 members per group. They are groups of private individuals which function independently. However, the general trend is more towards individual work. They (the women) work on common plots, but they prefer their own plots on which they work alone.

Also, in some districts, groups exist only by name. This is the case in the district of Ngo where it was noted that, after receiving support, the groups broke up once the projects left. The members were divided and only some of them continued the activities.

For those who work together within a group context, they can handle expenses that they could not have managed individually. This is particularly the case with women from certain groups in the district of Hinda who believe that this facilitates the purchase of seed and cuttings. They plan to purchase a mechanical pump on behalf of the group in a near future.

We note that another type of association-based operation was observed in some villages. In fact, in this method of operation, women help each other with sowing, weeding and harvesting, but each woman has her own field (exp. presented by a participant at the meeting in Ngo: six women each have 2 ha).

Most of the interviewed women's groups function informally. Women are not familiar with the legalization circuit. The illiteracy that characterizes many of them is not helpful (this is specifically the case with most women's groups from the town of Kayes).

Based on the fact that legal recognition is a fundamental prerequisite for any organization, and that the Project will not be able to work with non-formalized groups, it is important that these women's groups, that have functioned informally until now, be supported in their formalization in order to become legal entities and therefore eligible for the Project support.

Apart from aspects related to formalization of these groups, problems inherent in their operation, management and structure were also noted. In fact, all the dysfunctions noted within these groups will prevent these women from creating strong foundations of solidarity in order to develop strategies and derive maximum profit from opportunities that could result from their association.

3.6 Women and representation

The representation of women in the local or community authorities of the districts visited seems to be related to the perception of communities about women and their socially attributed and recognized roles.

The blatant absence of women was noted at the head of all target departments. In fact, the chairpersons of the Departmental Councils and the prefects of Bouenza, Niari, Pool, Kouilou and Plateaux are exclusively men.

“I assure you that the fault lies with the women.... They exclude themselves; they limit themselves due to their fear, illiteracy and education”. Statements made by Mr. Aimé Sibi, Departmental Director of Women’s Integration in Niari. Dolisie, May 23, 2019.

In the district of Mvouti, the executive of the village committee that makes the important decisions for the village is made up exclusively of men.

This under-representation of women and their weak decision-making power and leadership were also observed within the visited groups and communities. Women take part in public meetings cautiously. They sometimes do not have the information or are informed at the last minute. This is the case with the district of Ngo 2 and Eluna in Plateaux, where we held discussion groups with women who had only been informed of our activity on our arrival.

However, men were fairly represented and seemed to have been informed well in advance. As this is effectively a matter of access to information, it was noted during field work that the channel by which information arrives in a village is a determining factor in whether or not women take part in public meetings. In fact, village chiefs and community leaders seem to have little inclination to associate with or involve women in public meetings. The information is managed by/with men from the community. For them, public meetings are primarily a men’s affair. However, every time agricultural sector chiefs were used to pass on information, a maximum of women were at the meetings. The plausible explanation for this attitude by village chiefs and other community leaders seems to be the fact that the latter are still fairly influenced by sociocultural obstacles and the traditional perception of the role of women, which confine their role to that of wives and mothers, with no place in the management of the community’s public affairs.

For this reason, the Project must strategically rely on these agricultural sector chiefs or public employees (Departmental Directorate for Women’ Empowerment and Integration in Development) to relay information within communities.

Also, in order to reinforce women’s power within mixed agricultural groups, but also communities, awareness must be raised for women, as well as men on the distribution of social roles and gender inequalities. This can take place through training programmes and validation of the positive results of participation by women in various community activities implemented within the Project framework, as well as other things. It can also be achieved through intensified educational campaigns among community leaders and organizational and religious leaders on the role of women in development. This development cannot be achieved without the effective participation of men and women in the decision-making process at local and community levels.

3.7 Firewood use

According to the results of the agricultural sector study conducted in 2011 in Congo, the majority of rural households use firewood for cooking (72% to 84%), followed by charcoal (12% to 15%)²³. As women are at the heart of household use of firewood, they bear the costs incurred by purchasing firewood (in urban areas). Women and children may spend a significant amount of time in the collection of firewood for cooking.

3.8 Agroforestry

Agroforestry is still scarcely practiced in Congo. Arboriculture is mainly dominated by men, 70.5% versus 29.5% for women²⁴. The low level of involvement by women in this activity may be explained by their limited access to land in certain departments.

The interviewed women farmers claim that they have never practiced or been trained in agroforestry. However, they plant fruit trees on their farms (those who have the right to do so). On the other hand, men seem a little more familiar with this practice, particularly in Ignie, when in the past they had experience with an agroforestry project. This is also the case in Kayes, where according to some participants, agroforestry seems to be practiced already but only by landowners (land is leased only for subsistence crops/1 ha at 84 USD). This is also the case in Bouenza, deemed to be arboreal land with aging orchards and disappearing knowledge. However, in this district, there have been several landmark experiences with existing agroforestry, other than that of the SNR (*Service National de Reboisement* [National Reforestation Service]), supported by the ASCs or by the NGO ID or by individuals trained by ID or the ASC.

Generally, the women interviewed in the different target districts claimed that they are ready to improve their knowledge about agroforestry. The only obstacle is the restrictions related to land.

The women's subsistence crop group, supported by the ASC in Nkayi, also expressed their willingness to plant trees to ensure sustainable income for the future. *"A tree nursery and planting trees, that's the future."* Zita, a nursery gardener taking part in the ID consultations.

In any case, a real training-action strategy must be planned and developed in order to technically build women's agroforestry capacities. They must also be supported to avoid any dropouts.

However, with the state of customary laws governing land, agroforestry could be complicated in that women could be forced out at any time. This is also the case for women living in the districts of Ngo, Kayes, where only landowners can plant trees. During the implementation phase, the Project must therefore take these sociocultural realities into account.

3.9 Processing and marketing

Field work reveals that processing and marketing activities are part of women's duties. Men only get involved on an ancillary basis. In most districts where interviews were conducted, women were in fact seen to have primary responsibility for activities related to harvesting, storage, transport, processing and marketing of agricultural products.

²³ *African Development Fund, Republic of Congo: Congo Agricultural Sector Study 2011.*

²⁴ *FAO, National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods: Country Gender Assessment Series*

These activities, particularly those related to processing, take place almost daily, both to feed the family and for commercial purposes. However, they are not without difficulties for women. Processing essentially concerns the cassava tubers.

Women producers from the visited districts stated that they face several constraints that may vary from one district to another. Generally, they have limited access to reliable road connections, a lack of customers for their products and storage and processing difficulties. They also experience enormous deficits in terms of information on market opportunities, technological advances, as well as quality requirements, which considerably limits their economic and commercial opportunities.

Although the difficulties cited above may seem common to male and female producers, it must be recognized that the impact on women is greater.

For this reason, the establishment of “purchase agreements” and sales platforms, as planned by the Project through under Component 4, is especially commendable as it will reduce the difficulties faced by women farmers in selling their products.

More specifically, producers from the district of Louvakou are faced with the lack of a local market, and they transport their products to Dolisie for sale. This impacts the cost price and the profit. Deterioration of the road hinders sales. This is also the case in Loudima where the isolation of the agricultural tracks and the arduous nature of transport prevents effective marketing of their products. They also have difficulty storing products prior to selling them owing to a lack of “warehouses” and cold rooms. Producers in Kayes lack customers to buy their products owing to the impracticable nature of the tracks, amongst other factors.

3.10 Women and climate change

Women’s activities in rural areas, particularly the type of agriculture practiced and the collection and use of firewood, link women to deforestation and its negative effects. Women contribute towards deforestation, which is one of the main causes of climate change; they are also the ones who primarily suffer the adverse consequences.

In Loudima, climate change seems to have impacted peanut production this year due to a lack of rain and stronger winds than in past years. The issue of drought and drying up of water sources, as well as bush fires destroying plantations kept coming up during different interviews held with women in Bouenza. This is the case in Ngo, for example, where bush fires are very common and cause a loss of crops. Because of drought, inhabitants buy water during the dry season at 1.80 USD for a 200-liter barrel.

In Mpouya, the loss of 1 ha of banana trees due to heat and sandy soils that do not retain enough water was reported. Due to the roles assigned to them by the community, women are more affected than men by drought, hunger, malnutrition, soil infertility, bush fires, poverty, harvest losses and other product losses due to climate change. This has consequences for women, in terms of their social status and their role within the community and family.

Unfortunately, due to a lack of information, women suffer the effects of climate change, while continuing to practice activities that jeopardize environmental conservation. In other words, due to ignorance and a lack of information, they continue to expose themselves to climate change risks, while also contributing towards them. However, their contribution to climate change is very small compared with that of industry.

It is important to rethink strategies to prevent and combat the effects of climate change, fundamentally integrating the role of women and the different impacts of climate change on men and women. In fact, the

policies and strategies developed to date in the Republic of Congo are general and do not take gender specificities into account (the REDD+ national strategy does not take the gender issue into consideration at this time).

Within the context of the fight against climate change, it is also important to emphasize education and awareness-raising for women.

The efficacy of environmental and climate change policies and strategies can be ensured through gender mainstreaming and gender equality. These policies and strategies should take into account problems of differentiated impact induced by natural phenomena and strengthen the participation of women in decision-making on the subject.

3.11 Women and food security

Undernourishment and malnutrition are the main health problems affecting the most vulnerable segment of the Congolese population (children, pregnant women, the elderly and low-income households)²⁵.

The women farmers interviewed about their personal investment in feeding their households are incontestably the guarantors of food security for their families. As they have a key role in providing a balanced diets for their families, women are generally in charge of producing subsistence crops, legumes and vegetables that are a direct part of household consumption. Due to their primary responsibility in terms of food security, women have an important role to play in conserving the environment and natural resources, as well as promoting sustainable development.

During field work, women within the different interviewed groups were unfortunately not informed on their very important role in adopting agricultural systems that will guarantee sustainable food production.

²⁵ Country Programming Framework - FAO/Congo-Brazzaville 2013-2016

4. Analysis of the gender skills of the different stakeholders

The design, management and implementation of field activities incorporating a gender approach requires methods that match the practical needs and strategic interests of each community and their different component groups, which requires a certain level of expertise.

Hence the importance of reviewing the gender knowledge of individuals involved in the entire Project cycle.

4.1 Skills of stakeholders and potential partners

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAEP) and the Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF)

The Ministry of Forest Economy

Issues related to forestry, agroforestry, NTFPs and fuelwood are under the supervision of the MEF. As a project stakeholder, its capacities need to be strengthened on gender issues and development for effective support to the Project.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries is implementing the government's agricultural policy.

The National Reforestation Service (SNR)

The SNR is a public establishment under the supervision of the Ministry of Forest Economy, with numerous scientific and technical responsibilities: public plantations on behalf of the State or local authorities, technical assistance to private investors and sponsors of agroforestry plantation projects, technical assistance to forestry companies in the reforestation component of their management plans, protection of catchment areas, development of non-timber forest products, dissemination of technical information, production and distribution of seeds/plants for local populations, research and development.

A key Project partner, this entity will play a fundamental role in implementation. Hence the need to build the capacities of agents on gender and development issues to guarantee gender mainstreaming in all support provided to the Project.

National Afforestation and Reforestation Programme (Projet national d'afforestation et de reboisement - PRONAR)

The objectives of this programme include mitigating human pressure on forests through the promotion of forestry and agroforestry plantations, supporting stakeholders in afforestation and reforestation activities.

It is a strategic Project partner, specifically within the context of supporting women in agroforestry. For this reason, it would be judicious to build the capacities of this organization on gender and development issues to ensure maximum impact on the women targeted by the Project.

United Nations Agencies

United Nations agencies such as UNDP and UNFPA offer real opportunities to promote women's rights through the implementation of activities within the context of the Project.

In fact, within the context of cooperation programmes and the annual work plans with the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Integration of Women in Development, these agencies already carry out

activities in the district (Madingou) covered by the Project. Useful partnerships may be considered in order to support Project activities related to their gender equality mandate.

This is the case of the United Nations Development Programme which, within the context of its annual work plan, carries out educational activities on women's rights in the departments of Bouenza and Niari.

Gender focal points in the different sectoral ministries

Within the context of institutional meetings organized for this assessment, interviews were held with gender focal points in the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, the Ministry of Land Use Planning, the Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research and the Ministry of Forest Economy.

Almost all focal points interviewed are not really aware of their role of ensuring crosscutting gender integration. Mainly women, these focal points, or at least most of them, limit their roles to the celebration on March 8.

There is a need to build capacities, not only on gender basics, but also on gender mainstreaming in public policies, policy and strategy documents, as well as projects.

Agricultural Sector Chiefs

These are the representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries in the districts. They provide a real opportunity for the Project in terms of the gender dimension although their relevant capacities need to be strengthened.

The Project should rely on the ASCs to ensure that information reaches women in the communities, and that they effectively take part in the different consultations and meetings organized, as part of the Project or any other related activity.

5. Analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to gender mainstreaming in the Project.

Implementation of the GCF project has advantages that could be capitalized upon. This section analyzes some of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to gender mainstreaming in the Project.

5.1 Strengths

- Motivation of women farmers in the target districts

During field work, we witnessed women's motivation for participation in the Project. All of them agreed to the Project's objectives, while declaring themselves receptive to the practice of agroforestry. This motivation suggests strong mobilization on their part during Project implementation.

- Strong involvement of rural women

The strong involvement of rural women, coupled with the different Project strategies and actions, will also allow the Project to easily reach its objective of 35% women.

5.2. Weaknesses

During the assessment, we noted several weaknesses that could impact the achievement of some of the Project's objectives:

- Poor knowledge of the gender concept, as well as its mainstreaming in the different steps of the Project cycle by some project stakeholders. This was definitely noted during the assessment, but corrective measures are proposed in the plan of action.
- The poor culture of routinely disaggregating data by gender; this is also a weakness noted by the assessment that is taken into consideration in the Project operational strategies.

5.3 Opportunities

Opportunities concern legal, political, commercial or strategic measures that are new in the project environment and that relate to gender promotion on which the Project may be based.

- Implementation of the National Gender Policy action plan

The National Gender Policy adopted in 2016 has the long-term objective of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. It includes five strategic axes. Strategic axis 2 covers strengthening of the role and the place of women and girls in the market economy and has the objective of:

- Increasing the visibility and importance of labor by women, in particular rural and indigenous women, in diversification of the national economy;
- Promotion of female entrepreneurship.

Implementation of this national gender policy covers all departments and districts in the Republic of Congo including those within the Project area. This is an opportunity for the Project in that the activities related

to the role of women are directly aligned with the objectives targeted by strategic axis 2 of the National Gender Policy.

To this end, the Project should consider working in synergy with the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Women's Integration in Development and its partner, UNDP, to pool their interventions.

5.4 Threats

Threats are understood here to be any action likely to perpetuate or reinforce gender inequalities. These are addressed in order to propose mitigating actions in the action plan.

- The low income received from agricultural activities coupled with the fact that women (married, widowed, or heads of household) are those who primarily take care of the family.

This financial vulnerability prevents some of them from finding the **10% or 20%** contribution required by the Project and could be a gender threat for this Project. In fact, regarding the financial vulnerability of women revealed by the assessment, it is not surprising that this criterion could rule out a substantial proportion of women because they are incapable of meeting it.

- Cultural practices and determinants that give preeminence to men over women are a threat to Project implementation from the gender promotion point of view.

In fact, if all disparity reduction strategies noted during the assessment are not implemented, in order to motivate full participation by women, with particular reference to access to information and the representativity and mixed nature of the management boards of groups, the Project's targeted objective of 35% risks being difficult to achieve.

- Stereotypes linked to gender-based division of labor: these considerably limit women and prevent them from expressing their full potential. They limit women in their daily actions, confining them to socially constructed roles, and making them dependent on men within the context of performing certain tasks.

These stereotypes must be deconstructed to allow woman to freely perform all tasks related to their agricultural or agroforestry activity with the only obstacle being their physical ability.

For example, the following was suggested during field interviews:

- Misunderstanding/lack of cohesion in women's groups;
- Lack of a cooperative working culture, which makes it difficult to provide support to beneficiaries within the context of the Project.

6. Gender integration strategy in the Green Climate Fund

6.1 Gender integration in the different Project stages

6.1.1 In terms of the logical framework

The logical framework of the PREFOREST Project must integrate objectives and indicators disaggregated by gender (the indicators will allow monitoring of progress over time, while following changes throughout the Project). The gender dimension must be crosscutting throughout all axes of intervention and should not only incorporate a few actions in favor of women. The results, indicators and activities should therefore already be pre-defined in the logical framework. This would force the Project implementation team to formulate actions in annual operational plans.

The Project will ensure that the stipulated institutional provisions take the gender issue into account and enable strategies to be implemented and gender integration to be measured in the proposed actions.

6.1.2 At implementation level

- Rely on the situational analysis (Gender Assessment) and other qualitative and quantitative data (disaggregated by gender), when evaluating the gender impact of the Project's interventions;
- Build the capacities of the Project team agents, as well as other partners, such as government agencies, the Steering Committee and the Technical Committee, on gender and development modules for effective gender mainstreaming in the different components of the GCF Project, as well as monitoring of action plan implementation;
- Recruit a gender expert in the Project team;
- Routinely disaggregate all data in the different activity reports and/or other Project documents in order to highlight the different situations of each of the targets (men/women/young people);
- Within the context of implementation of the GCF Project, routinely target the incorporation of the specific needs of men, women and young people in all the Project's interventions. To this end, the Project has set an objective of ensuring that 30% women are affected by all activities during implementation, as well as all support being provided to targets within the Project context (strengthening of land rights, support to mechanization...).

6.1.3 In terms of monitoring/evaluation

- Incorporate the gender dimension in missions to evaluate the performance and impact of the Green Climate Fund Project, including gender objectives within the framework of the terms of reference (factors to be taken into account in all evaluations);
- Include gender expertise in the Project team;
- Ensure that all data from the various evaluation reports is disaggregated by gender, specifying data in the "young people" category;

- The Project team must ensure the availability of reports on successes or failures of initiatives or the achievement of gender objectives.

6.2 Intervention axes

The actions proposed below are the results of an analysis of the assessment. They take into account the identified priorities, as well as relevance in terms of feasibility. Five axes of intervention have been identified including: 1) Training, 2) Women, forestry, agroforestry and climate change, 3) Access to land, 4) Women's empowerment, and 5) Collective actions and small-scale farmer's organizations.

6.2.1 Axis 1: Training

The assessment revealed that, due to their status as mothers and wives and constraints related to their domestic workload, women from the different districts visited did not always benefit from the training programmes offered to them, either as individual producers or members of a group.

Also, factors such as illiteracy and their low appropriation ability leads to self-stigmatization and prevent women from benefiting from capacity building programmes to increase their productivity.

To this end, training on agricultural and financial management techniques should be planned. All this should take into consideration not only the family constraints experienced by women, but also language difficulties.

Proposed actions:

- Incorporate functional literacy in the activities to be conducted with beneficiaries;
- Experiment with training women trainers to provide technical supervision of producers;
- Train women's and mixed groups in accounting management for farming (keeping records of sales, procurement, and other expenses related to farming) and entrepreneurial culture;

In terms of support teams:

- Build the capacities of the project team on gender concepts and gender mainstreaming in development projects;
- Build the capacities of PRONAR, SNR, MEF, MAEP, MTE (*Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement* [Ministry of Tourism and the Environment]) on the gender and development approach;
- Build the capacities of the ASCs on gender and incorporation of gender in development so that they can act as supervisory agents in their communities and promote the rights of women.

6.2.2 Axis 2: Women, agroforestry, forestry and climate change.

Unfortunately, due to ignorance and a lack of information, women suffer the effects of climate change, while continuing to practice activities that jeopardize environmental conservation. Due to their daily interaction with ecosystems, women must be informed, trained and involved in discussions relating to climate change and associated thematic.

Proposed actions:

- Promote sharing of experiences and dissemination of good practices related to agroforestry and climate change developed with the participation of women within the context of the project;
- Educate/train women on agroforestry techniques to mitigate climate change

6.2.3 Axis 3: Access to land

Customary practices and norms negatively impact land access and control by women in rural areas. They recognize four methods of land acquisition in rural areas. These four methods of land allocation are all in the hands of men, leading to women marginalization. As a result, women find themselves in a situation of land insecurity which makes them even more vulnerable.

Proposed actions:

- Raise awareness of community leaders in terms of behavioral changes (mindsets) to promote access to land by women within the customary framework;
- Raise awareness and inform women about the existing legal mechanisms and procedures for land security.

6.2.4 Axis 4: Women's empowerment

The assessment revealed that sociocultural obstacles and some stereotypes are detrimental to the image of women and considerably limit their power and full participation in decision-making bodies at community and local levels. This leads not only to discrimination, but also unequal treatment.

Proposed actions:

- Build the capacity of women in leadership and citizenship, in order to improve the quality of their production and strengthen their negotiating power with men from the community, within their families and their environment;
- Organize educational sessions with community leaders and men on the role of women in the development process through their representation within community organizations in the project implementation areas (rural);
- Raise awareness of men and women on stereotypes linked to the gender-based division of labor/sociocultural obstacles, in order to combat the work overload of women at domestic level.

6.2.5 Axis 5: Collective actions and small-scale farmers' organizations

Various shortcomings were observed within the interviewed farmers groups. Apart from aspects related to their formalization, problems inherent in the operation, management and structure of these different entities were also noted. Furthermore, these groups find it difficult to grasp the need to organize themselves, form association and group together to become stronger and more empowered.

Proposed actions:

- Support to the structure and operation of women's and mixed groups, particularly family groups carrying out production and marketing activities (at least 30%);

- Strengthen the organizational and technical capacities of groups so that they can offer their members (men/women/young people) sustainable services (group marketing, sale of inputs, etc.) and ensure these services are equally accessible to men and women (at least 30%);
- Strengthen mixed farmers' organizations so that women can be represented in decision-making bodies and ensure that these organizations incorporate the strategic interests of women in their orientations and activities.

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8. Gender Action Plan

Strategic Guidelines

The objective of this action plan is crosscutting integration of gender in the GCF project. It provides guidelines on priority actions within the logical framework, as well as those to be taken into account during implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Logical framework of the project:

The Project will integrate objectives and indicators disaggregated by gender (the indicators will allow monitoring of progress over time, while following changes throughout the project). The gender dimension must be crosscutting throughout all the axes of intervention and should not only incorporate some actions in favor of women. The results, indicators and activities should therefore already be pre-defined in the logical framework. This would force the project implementation team to formulate actions in annual operational plans.

The Project will ensure that the stipulated institutional provisions take gender into account, that they enable implementation of strategies, and measure the proposed gender integration.

At implementation level:

- The Project's overarching gender target has been clarified as 'at least 35% women' or ³35%. In this sense, while striving for gender equality (50/50 male-female participation), some activities will be expected to have more or less women but none less than 35% women. By committing to and communicating a clear project-wide target of ³35% women for every activity, the project team, its counterparts and partners will be better coordinated to support this clear objective.
- The implementation of the GAP will be the responsibility of all members of the project team, and job descriptions/terms of reference for all team members will reflect various tasks in relation to the GAP and gender mainstreaming. Overall management/ supervisory responsibility for the plan's implementation will fall with the Chief Technical Officer and Lead Technical Officer. Gender experts at national and headquarters level will track the implementation of the GAP, conduct the mid-term and final evaluation (as part of a team), and provide support on technical queries related to implementation.
- The project wide target of 35% women will be applied in recruitment to the Project Management Unit (PMU), with responsibility for day-to-day management.
- All data will be systematically disaggregated in the different activity reports and/or other Project documents in order to highlight the different situations of each of the targets (men/women/youth);
- During implementation, there will be a systematic focus on incorporating the specific needs of men, women, youth and elderly in all interventions.
- In addition, the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Integration of Women in Development will coordinate closely with the project and provide support for gender mainstreaming (i.e. capacity building, awareness). This Ministry will also be represented in the Project's Technical Committee, part of the Project governance structure.
- A female focal point will be designated in each Project village to assist with information sharing and coordination among female beneficiaries.
- The Project will be based on the situational analysis and other qualitative and quantitative data (disaggregated by gender) at the time the gender impact of the Project's interventions is evaluated;

- The capacities of the Project team’s agents will be strengthened on gender and development modules, to ensure effective gender mainstreaming in the different components of the GCF Project. Awareness raising and procedures for handling cases of GBV will be part of the capacity building strategy.
- A Project Stakeholder Engagement Strategy will specifically address how best to engage and ensure the benefits for women, youth, and the elderly in project activities.
- A Project Communication Strategy will include appropriate messaging on gender based violence (GBV).
- The Project Grievance mechanism will be fully accessible to women. The mechanism will include clear procedures to deal with GBV and those handling complaints will be trained on appropriate steps to take. Information will be forthcoming on medical, psychological, legal, security and socioeconomic support for victims. Complaints may be submitted orally if necessary.
- Prevention of GBV will also be promoted by incorporating messaging on GBV in the project’s Communication Strategy, by encouraging household/couples dialogue, by mobilizing local traditional chiefs and leaders for GBV related conflict management, and by including GBV in the project’ grievance mechanism. The project will collaborate with organizations providing support and advice on GBV (e.g. UNICEF, UNFPA, IFRC, MSF, ACOLVEF, and Thomas Sankara Association).
- Women’s participation during meetings will be monitored. A notetaker will record how many times men and women intervene during meetings and how their interventions are handled (See table).

			Observations (If possible, the names of the people who participate)
 # of people attending			
 # of people who express their opinion			
 # of people who propose something that is then agreed upon			

-

At monitoring and evaluation level:

- Incorporation of the gender dimension in missions to evaluate performance and impact by the Green Climate Fund Project, including inclusion of gender objectives in the terms of reference (factors to be taken into account in all evaluations);

- Inclusion of gender expertise in the Project team;
- Ensure that all data from the various evaluation reports is disaggregated by gender, specifying data for the “youth” category;
- Ensure the availability of reports on successes or failures of initiatives or the achievement of gender objectives.

Table. Gender Action Plan

Components	Results	Activities	Target	Indicators	Timeline	Budget	Responsible party
Component 1.		Objective 1: Promote the land tenure rights of women within the customary and national framework					
Land-use and resources planning and strengthening of land access and security rights	<p>Result 1: The land tenure rights of women or women’s groups are strengthened pursuant to Law 21/18</p> <p>Result 2: Women’s land tenure rights are promoted and strengthened within the customary framework</p>	<p>Establish a baseline of information on situation for women’s existing tenure rights</p> <p>Support women or women’s groups in acquiring land tenure rights within the context of the Project</p> <p>Raise awareness of community leaders in respect to behavioral changes (mindsets) related to women’s access to land within the customary framework</p>	<p>At least 800 women will receive joint or sole land agreements through the project.</p> <p>At least 29,000 men and women (including youth and elderly) will be exposed to awareness campaigns on women’s access to land and/or legal mechanisms.</p>	<p>Number of women or women-led groups who obtained land agreements thanks to the Project in order to conduct agroforestry or sustainable forestry activities</p> <p>Number of M/F/community leaders sensitized</p> <p>Number of awareness raising campaigns organized</p>	<p>Y1 – Y8 (<u>long-term support needs anticipated</u>)</p>	<p>\$123,200</p>	<p>FAO; MAEP; Ministry of Forest Economy; MPFIFD; UNDP; CSOs</p>

	Result 3: Women farmers master national legal mechanisms related to land	Raise awareness and inform women and men about the existing legal mechanisms and procedures for land tenure security using also channels to reach youth and elderly.	At least 25% of women and men in the project area are aware of legal mechanisms and procedures for land tenure security.	Number of women and men sensitized or trained	<u>Y1-Y2</u>		FAO PRONAR Project team
Component 2.		Objective 2: Strengthen the adoption of more sustainable agroforestry and forestry practices by women					
Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems for climate change mitigation	Result 1: Effective and increased adoption of more resilient agroforestry and sustainable forestry practices by women	Encourage women (as well as youth and elderly) to use agroforestry and forestry systems that are more resilient to climate change Strengthen women's knowledge on agroforestry, forestry and climate change issues Support women to establish village tree nurseries	At least 35% of participants in agroforestry training activities will be women. At least 5 tree nurseries will be managed by village women. At least 3 stories featuring women's role in agroforestry and forestry systems will be shared.	Number of women participating in agroforestry training Number of tree nurseries managed by women Number of experiences shared	<u>Y1-Y8</u>	9,080,543	MAEP Ministry of Forest Economy MPFIFD FAO PRONAR SNR (<i>Service National de Reboisement</i> [National Reforestation Service])

	<p>Result 2: Women's capacities are strengthened, and their knowledge of agroforestry techniques and climate change is increased</p>	Promote experience sharing and the dissemination of good practice, developed with the participation of women, youth, and elderly in the areas of agroforestry and climate change within the context of the Project					
		Raise awareness /train women, youth, and elderly on agroforestry techniques to mitigate climate change	At least 900 women will receive training on agroforestry techniques.	Number of women and men trained	<u>Y1-Y3</u>		FAO; MAEP; Ministry of Forest Economy; MPFIFD; PRONAR; SNR
		<p>Result 3:</p> <p>Women's capacities are strengthened, and their knowledge of assisted natural regeneration and climate change is increased</p>	Training of women trainers for technical supervision of producers	At least 5 women will be trained as trainers.	Number of female supervisors/technical trainers recruited	<u>Y1-Y2</u>	
		Train and equip women for assisted natural regeneration	At least 500 women are practicing assisted natural regeneration	Number of women trained in assisted natural regeneration Number of women practicing assisted	<u>Y2-Y6</u>		FAO; MAEP; Ministry of Forest Economy; MPFIFD; PRONAR; SNR

	Result 4: Women are aware of the benefits of adopting climate resistant agroforestry practices			natural regeneration			
		Raise awareness and inform women about the benefits of agroforestry.	At least 10,000 women will receive information on the benefits of agroforestry.	Number of awareness raising campaigns Number of women and men sensitized or trained	<u>Y1-Y8</u>		FAO PRONAR Project team
Component 3.	Objective 3: Strengthen the technical and financial capacities of producers						
Strengthening national agricultural financing structures, business capacities and value chains	Result 1: The financial management capacities of women's and mixed groups are increased	Train women's and mixed groups (including youth and elderly) in accounting management for farming (keeping records of sales, procurement and other expenses related to farming) and the entrepreneurial culture	At least 5 training sessions organized on accounting management for women farmers. At least 100 people (with at least 35% women) trained on accounting management.	Number of on-site training sessions organized on accounting management for women farmers Number of women/men/young people trained	<u>Y1 – Y3</u>	\$ 273,850	MPFIFD ; FAO CERPAC (Center for Exchange and Resource for the Promotion of Community Actions) CSOs
	Result 2: Women have increased access to agricultural credit to implement sustainable practices		Strengthen the organizational and technical capacities of groups so that they can offer their members (Men/Women/Youth & elderly) sustainable services (group marketing, sale of	At least 10 groups or associations (and their members) will be trained on organizational capacity topics. At least 50 women will be part of the			Number of groups trained Number of women trained

		inputs, etc.); and ensure these services are equally accessible to men and women Train women, youth and elderly in the procedures for obtaining credit and support them in developing solid business plans Train women, youth and elderly in financing methods other than banks (e.g. fundraising)	developed a business plan. At least 100 women and young people informed in financing methods (e.g. fundraising).	Number of women involved in a business plan development Number of women and young people informed in other financing methods			
Project Management	Objective 4: Strengthen the technical and institutional capacities of the project team on the gender dimension						
	Result 1: The technical and institutional capacities of the Project team on the gender dimension are increased Result 2:	Strengthen the capacities of the Project team and stakeholders (government authorities) on the gender concept and the gender dimension in development projects (including facilitation skills to	All team members will complete gender training and have access to gender advisory support when needed.	Number of persons (M/W/Y) trained on the gender approach and development	<u>Ongoing</u>	332,885	MAEP ; MET [Ministry of Employment and Labor) ; Ministry of Forest Economy ; MPFIFD ; FAO ; PRONAR ; SNR

	The project effectively communicates and engages with women, youth, and elderly	engage women, youth, and elderly)					
		Gender expertise provided in the interim and final Project evaluation		Gender sensitive expert is recruited and is taking part in evaluation of the Project	<u>Y4 & Y8</u>		FAO MPFIFD MAEP
		Prepare and implement a Stakeholder Engagement strategy and Communication strategy, addressing also issues of GBV		Stakeholder Engagement Strategy; Communication Strategy Female focal point designated in each participating village	<u>Y1</u>		
		Increase access of women, youth and elderly to the project's grievance mechanism.	Information on the grievance mechanism is included in workshops and meetings attended by women, youth and elderly.	Workshop reports	<u>Y1-Y2</u>		
		Establish collaboration with organizations working on GBV		Meeting reports	<u>Y1-Y8</u>		
<u>TOTAL</u>						\$9,810,478	

9. Annexes

Lists of participants

Institutional meeting with gender focal points in the different sectoral ministries				
Place: FAO meeting room				
Date: 05/02/2019				
N	First and Last Names	Institution	Position	Telephone and mail
1	Paulette EBINA	MEF	Gender Focal Point	055569567 / 066413600
2	Yves Joclain KABA	MPPIFD	Focal Point	066623574 / 050674873
3	Blanche MAKO	Major Works	Focal Point	055786025 / 065680176
4	Françoise R OTABO	MRSIT (<i>Ministere de la Recherche Scientifique et de L'innovation Technologique</i> [Ministry of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation])	Focal Point	066689662 otabo.franoise@gmail.com
5	Prisca ONDONGO	MTE	Gender Focal Point	040262650 / 066453396
6	Jean Parfait AMPALI	FAO	Consultant	055284911 parfait.ampali@fao.org
7	Claude MABIALA NGOMA	FAO	Assistant	066197098 claudemabialangoma@gao.org
8	Nicole NGUEMA METOGO	FAO	Consultant	065716214

Interviews with various stakeholders				
Place: Mvouti sub-prefecture				
Date: 05/24/2019				
No.	First and Last Names	Group	Position	Telephone and mail
1	MENO Marie	Kissivo	Member	
2	KIJONETO Rachelle	Kissivo	Member	053218434
3	MAKONA Judith	Kissivo	President	055983290
4	KIBA Merline	Kissivo	Member	065806251
5	IBATA Danielle	Kissivo	Member	044509015
6	MABIALA Agathe	Adem	Member	
7	MAKAYA Angèle	Kiburi Mambou	Treasury	055042829
8	TCHIBINDA Elisabeth	Kiburi Mambou	Member	050289280
9	PEMBA Louise	Kiburi Mambou	Member	057518189
10	MAKAYA Victoire	UAE	Treasury	
11	LOEMBA KIBINDA Antoinette	Kissivo	Member	
12	TCHIBINDA Solange	Kajumba na Likondo	Member	055852499
13	MBOUNGOU Cedrick	UAE	Member	
14	LOUMBA Clandine	UAE	Member	053572643
15	PEMBA Adèle	UAE	Member	
16	PAMBOU Claudine	Lougoukoulou mu ntoto	Secretary	057099981
17	MENO Marguerite	Sala Bilanga	Member	
18	MAHRUNGOU Elie	Sala Bilanga	Member	065029398
19	BOULOU Yvette	Sala Bilanga	Member	069117835
20	BATOMBI Judith	Lougoukoulou mu ntoto	Treasury	053338210
21	TSANGUI Bamamaralle	Lougoukoulou mu ntoto	Member	057498122
22	TSADI Honorine	Sala Bilanga	PVFE	065712324

23	MAVUNGOU Francina	Sala Bilanga	Member	
24	MIETE Cydie	Sala Bilanga	Member	064599108
25	MASSIAKA Melanie	Sala Bilanga	Member	
26	BIMOKONO Marguerite	Lougoukoulou mu ntoto	Member	
27	TCHITONLA Jacqueline	Lougoukoulou mu ntoto	Member	
28	MISSAMOU BOUANGA Martine	Sala Bilanga	Member	056366253
29	MOUKOKO Roger	Sub-prefecture Protocol	Private Secretary	050308377
30	IBATA Daniel		Agricultural Sector Chief	044509015
31	Claude MABIALA NGOMA	FAO	FAO Assistant	066197098
32	NGUEMA Nicole	FAO	FAO Consultant	065716214
33	KAMPE Jean Pierre	FAO	Consultant	066303226
34	ROY Hagen	FAO	Consultant Researcher	

Interviews with various stakeholders

Place: Madingou

Date: 05/20/2019

No.	First and Last Names	Group	Address and email
1	NZENGO Pierrette	SPF	069796892 Madingou Gare
2	ADJOMEY Angèle	AFE	069671371 Madingou Gare
3	KOUANGA Léontine Epse NZIKOU	R.A.I.D	066799676 Madingou Poste
4	MOUKOULA Elizabeth	Gp Ayro-p. les J.SLM	069534137 Madingou Gare
5	MATONDO Pauline	AFMDM (<i>Association des Jeunes Filles Mères Désœuvrées de Moyoundzi</i> [Association for Young Unemployed Mothers from Moyoundzi])	055651127 Mouyondzi cq NKILA
6	NGOMA MABIALA Mesmin Déchou	C/sert at DDPF - B	Madingou Gare
7	BOUSLO née NGOUNGA Marcelia	MTD	066393111 Mouyondzi (M'KOSSO)

Meeting with groups from Kinkala

Place: Kinkala

Date May 29, 2019

No.	First and Last Names	Institution	Position	Telephone and mail
1	BITSOUMANOU Félicité	Departmental Directorate	DDIFD (<i>Direction départementale de l'Intégration de la femme aud développement</i> [Department Directorate for Women's Empowerment and Integration in Development])	066782027
2	NIAKATSINDILA Elisabeth	Zola Farmer	General Secretary	055485475
3	ZALA Pauline	Zola Farmer	Manager	068506504
4	LOUMOAMOU Christophine	PISCA	President	055451871
5	MALEKA Cécile	Sala zingu	President	055000763
6	MVILA Marie	Sala zingu kia m	Member	069352676
7	WATOULA Avila	Sala zingu kia m	President CCV	057289396
8	BIBILA Clémentine	COFMKI	President	057825955
9	NGANGA Mireille	COFMKI	Member	069045282
10	BOUKANZO Emiliene	COFMKI	Member	055118166
11	MILANDOU Astride	COPIBO	Member	066768718
12	BOUBONDZO Annie	COPIBO	Controller	069953506
13	NKOUNKOU Ursula	Pilot Farm	Supervisor	068359003
14	MASSAMBA Seraphine	Pilot Farm	Member	068613046
15	MATONDO Martine	Sala Nzingu	Member	064841992

16	NTIMANAKOLA Marie Gilberte	Pilot Farm	Member	050299586
17	MBIRI Anne Nathalie	Sala Kia Nzambi	Member	066390554
18	MASSAMBATSONA Elie	Sala Kia Nzambi	Treasury	065003045
19	MANCKOUD Claude	Sala Kia Nzambi	Member	055818867
20		Sala Kia Nzambi	Member	055872753

NGO Meetings				
Date: 05/30/2019				
No.	First and Last Names	Institution	Position	Telephone and mail
1	Nino Alexis Bienvenu	GAPAN Group	President	065894045
2	MVIRI Urban	GAPAN Group	President CCV	066860314 / 055590690
3	GALLY Hyacinthe	MKOUENDAW Group	President	066550115
4	NKUERE Daniel	La Main dans La Main (<i>Hand in Hand</i>) Group	Secretary	068490406
5	NGATSEBE Adrien	Independent	//	069609419
6	EDZONG Stéphanie	Independent	//	066821571
7	MFOUROU Gaston	La Main dans La Main Group	President	069118166
8	AMPIE Véronique	La Main dans La Main Group	Assistant Treasurer	069485396
9	GUILANGO Cresti Djanelaline	GPJA	Student	065409585
10	ADZABI Mexanet	GPJA	Farmer	064721777
11	MACKELA Hermann	Entreprise Josephat	Manager	069784765
12	TCHIKAYA Donatien	Entreprise Josephat	DT Manager	066365030
13	KONGANDO Eveline	GAPAN Group	Vice-President	065479155
14	CHIO Angèle	PS COFTN		069234884
15	NDALA Elvis Thierry	Okiéne Production Group	President	068499569
16	MBOUANDZOBO Peggy Carine	Okiéne Production Group	Member	055562567

17	LOUBA Parfaite	Grace à Dieu (Thanks to God) Group	President	069737536
18	FUNKHAT OMBOU François	NDOUO-DOUO Group	President	068184468
19	BILELELE Angèle	NDOUO-DOUO Group	Treasury Secretary	069891964
20		Grace à Dieu (Thanks to God) Group	Treasury Secretary	064512474

Meeting in MPOH village**Date 06/30/2019**

No.	First and Last Names	Institution	Position	Telephone and mail
1	NGUELOLO Richard			068101278
2	NGANTSOU Denis			068316686
3	NGAYO William			066139701
4	NGANION Godefroy			
5	NGOKANA Arvelon			
6	NGAYOU Mesmin			
7	OGNAMY OTIA Léonard			
8	IMBOU Jonas			
9	AGNIN Louis			
10	WAWOLI Honoré			
11	OKILI Anatole			066709739
12	INDO Parfaite			
13	Mangobali Genevieve			
14	NDZALA Diane			
15	OLONKOUINI Yvette			
16	AYIAYIE Cyriac			
17	AGNIN Audrey			
18	NGANTSOU Estelle			
19	NGANION Lena			
20	IBATA Judrelle			