



Securing Permanent Forests to Combat Climate Change and Enhance Sustainable National and Local Economies in Cameroon

ANNEX G

BASELINE ASSESSMENT OF POLICIES AND INITIATIVES ON FOREST SECTOR AND REDD+ IN CAMEROON

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ACRONYMS

AFR	African Landscape Restoration Initiative
AU	African Union
AEZ	Agro Ecological Zone
BNP	Benue National Park
CDC	Cameroon Development Corporation
NDC	Cameroon' Nationally Determined Contributions
COMIFAC	Central African Forest Commission
CAFI	Central African Forest Initiative
CSO	Civil Society Organization
COP	Conference of Paris
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FLEGT	Forest Enforcement Governance and Trade
FLR	Forest Landscape Restoration
FPIC	free Prior Informed Consent
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GGW	Great Green Wall
GHG	Green House Gas
HEAVECAM	Hevea Cameroon
HCV	High Conservation Value
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
MINEPDED	Ministry Environment Nature Protection and Sustainable Development
MINADER	Ministry of Agriculture
MINFI	Ministry of Finance
MINFOF	Ministry of Forestry
MINATD	Ministry of Territorial Administration
MRV	Monitoring Report and Verification
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
ONCC	National Cocoa and coffee Board
SND	National Development Strategy
INS	National Institute of Statistics
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NPFDP	National Plantation forests Development Program
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
PES	Payment for Environmental Service
PFA	Permanent forest area
PSMNR	Program for the Sustainable Management and Natural Resources
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RDFC	Road map to Deforestation Free Cocoa
SAFACAM	Société Africain Forestier et Agricole du Cameroun
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change
VPA	Voluntary Partnership and Trade
WRI	World Research Institute
WWF	Worldwide Fund
MINEPDED	Ministry of Environment Nature Protection and Sustainable Development

INTRODUCTION

1.1. CONTEXT

The rate of deforestation and forest degradation in Cameroon remains extremely high. It is reported that Cameroon lost about 752,000 ha of forest between 2001 and 2015. This lost in forest represents an average annual deforestation rate of 0.16% over that time span and amounts to a reduction of 163,500,000 tonnes of stored carbon (MINEPDED, 2017; Global Forest Watch, 2017). In fact, this is one of the highest rates in the Central African region (the average rate in Central Africa being estimated at 0.16%). It is important to emphasise that this rate has increased significantly over the past year (from 0.03% to 0.08% and 0.06% to 0.07% respectively between 2001 and 2015) (MINEPDED, 2017). Furthermore, projections highlight that this rate may double by 2028 and triple by 2035 (Hansen et al., 2013). With regards to forest degradation, it has been reported that about 75% of the forest in Cameroon has been subjected to exploitation and degradation (FAO, 2007; Robiglio et al., 2010).

The government of Cameroon has taken a series of fundamental steps to conserve and protect forest ecosystems in the country. For example, about 12.6 million ha of permanent forests, which is about 26.5% of national territory, have been classified (MINFOF, 2017). That being said, about 19.5 million tons of carbon are released each year from permanent forests due to deforestation and forest degradation (MINEPDED, 2017).

The root causes of this deforestation and forest degradation in permanent forest areas (PFAs) in Cameroon are the incessant encroachments and illegal activities carried out by land users including mining, wood exploitation for energy, development of infrastructure (e.g., roads and dams), deep-sea ports, agro-industries, and other extractive groups. Most conversion of PFAs to other land uses in recent years has been driven by rapid expansion of agro-industrial plantations especially palm oil, mining, extraction of timber resources for commercial purposes and wood energy (MINEPDED, 2017). Agricultural expansion into PFAs for the cultivation food crops (like maize, Millet / Sorghum, banana etc.) as well as cash crops like cocoa, cotton, and rubber is also endemic in Cameroon (MINEPDED, 2017).

To address these drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and promote sustainable forest management, the government of Cameroon with support from IUCN is currently preparing a project for submission to the Green Climate Fund. The project seeks to use a landscape approach to convert the above threats/drivers of deforestation and forest degradation into opportunities. These opportunities may be achieved by transforming and promoting Cameroon's REDD+ payment mechanisms in sustainably managed PFAs and supporting governance systems outside permanent forests. It is expected that this will transform, catalyse, and influence private sector investments in logging concessions, communities, and buffer zones outside PFAs. Furthermore, this will generate economic and socio-cultural benefits and incentives for private sector, communities, and government to protect and sustainably manage PFAs. This will also ironically benefit from REDD+ related payment systems as a result of emission reductions.

The project will coordinate efforts in three different landscapes (South-east Moist Forest, Bakossi – Bamboutos highlands, and the soudano-sahelian region) to:

- Improve governance systems for sustainable forest management of PFAs.
- Promote sustainable use of wood by communities, notably by harnessing value for Non-Timber Forests Product (NTFP), transforming use of fuelwood to a more sustainable supply system and diversifying energy sources for communities to alleviate fuelwood dependency and transition to microhydro, solar energy, clean cook, etc.;

- Secure and restore woodland dedicated to exploitation for fuelwood to meet the needs of local communities.
- Identify new markets for non-timber forest products.
- Transform the agricultural sector by working with both major industries (palm oil etc.) to zero deforestation commodities and with small holders (cocoa, coffee, etc.) on climate smart agriculture.
- Transform the logging sector to incentivize sustainable forest management in forest concessions in PFAs.
- Transform the mining sector in the landscapes in ways that protect (or return) the landscape to a forested cover.
- Harness investment opportunities that will strengthen dialogue with actors from the private sector and those living around PFAs to facilitate investment opportunities that require long term forest protection, reinforces sustainable management of PFAs, restores degraded land and forests in and around PFAs and sustainable harvesting of forest commodities.
- Identify key private sector and para-public companies in mining and timber exploitation and other development infrastructure investors and work with them to effectively engage in environmentally friendly practices.
- Engage with various stakeholders, especially government and the private sector to systematically design and implement Environmental Impact Assessments during construction of roads, settlements, railroads, and dams in PFAs, and completely avoid the construction of these projects in PFAs if possible, and;
- Address governance and other adaptation needs resulting from climate change in the project sites.

The project is expected to learn from past experiences, create synergy with ongoing initiatives, and align / contribute to the achievement of national environment and development needs in and out of the forest sector. Thus, a situational analysis is relevant to properly locate the project in the overall context in terms of policies and initiatives in Cameroon and beyond.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this report are to:

- Provide an overview of drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Cameroon including in PFAs and options to offset these drivers;
- Document the fundamental objectives of forest policies and related initiatives that have been formulated to advance sustainable forest management within Cameroon's forest including PFAs;
- Demonstrate how the project under preparation aligns with the objectives or contributes to attaining the objectives of forest policies and related initiatives;
- Identify existing gaps in current forest policies and initiatives and demonstrate how the project under preparation can fill these gaps;
- Identify lessons learned from ongoing or past projects that can be upscaled by this project that is under preparation; and
- Identify opportunities for synergy with planned projects and the project under preparation.

1.3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology that was employed to accomplish the aforementioned objectives included mostly desk review of relevant literature including, but not limited to:

- Studies on the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Cameroon including strategic options to address these drivers;

- The 1993 forest policy;
- Law No 94/01 of 20 January 1994 pertaining to forestry, wildlife and fisheries and the different implementing regulations;
- Law No 96/12 of 05 August 1996 providing a framework on environmental management;
- Decree No 95/678/PM of 18 December 1995 establishing an indicative framework of land use in southern forest areas under the first national inventory carried out with the support of Canadian Cooperation between 1984 and 1987;
- Standards of different types of forest inventories for management, operations, recognition, and pre-investments;
- Decree No 0222 of 25 May 2001 on procedures for drafting, approval, monitoring, and control of implementation of management plans of PFA in production forests;
- Joint Order No 0076/MINATD/MINFI/MINFOF of 26 June 2012 formalizing detailed rules of application, user, and monitoring revenue management from exploitation of forest and wildlife resources for municipalities and village communities;
- Decree No 2005/0577/PM of 23 February 2005 formalizing procedures for conducting environmental impact studies;
- Decree No 2013/0171/PM of 14 February 2013 formalizing procedures for conducting environmental and social impact assessments;
- New York Declaration on Forests;
- Literature on the Bonn Challenge;
- Articles of the Paris Agreement;
- The Great Green Wall initiative;
- COMIFAC convergence plan;
- CAFI (Central African Forest Initiative) documents;
- Cameroon's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC);
- Cameroon's National Adaptation Plan for Climate Change;
- The REDD+ National Strategy;
- Cameroon's Strategy and Country Program for GCF investment;
- Relevant projects and program documents; and
- Relevant peer-reviewed publications.

Stakeholders are expected to provide inputs during the inception workshop on past, ongoing, and planned programs, and projects.

2. OVERVIEW OF DRIVERS OF DEFORESTATION AND FOREST DEGRADATION AND OPTIONS TO OFFSET DRIVERS

2.1. DRIVERS OF DEFORESTATION AND FOREST DEGRADATION

2.1.1. AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is the major driver of deforestation and forest degradation in Cameroon. Deforestation and forest degradation is underpinned by the cultivation of cash crops like cocoa, cotton, rubber, palm oil, as well as food crops like maize, millet / sorghum, and plantains etc. The estimated annual cocoa production in Cameroon in 2018/2019 published by ONCC was 264,000 tonnes¹. Cotton is cultivated in the northern part of the country and the total area covered by the production of this cash crop from 2001 to 2016 has changed from 124,734 ha² to 209,930 ha². The government has set ambitious targets for increasing cotton production 600,000 tons by 2026 and

¹ <https://www.businessincameroon.com/agriculture/1706-10432-cameroon-the-nccb-forecasts-a-slight-increase-in-cocoa-production-during-the-2019/2020-campaign>

² Mouvement coopératif en zone cotonnière du Cameroun, 2017

triple the production of cocoa by 2030 with the focus of improving yields, setting up new plantations, and continuing to provide local support to operator (SND 30).

Rubber is one of the main cultivated cash crops in large plantations by foreign agro-industrial companies or parastatal in Cameroon. About 49,000 ha of forests have been converted in recent decades for the production of this crop. The main existing plantations in Cameroon are from CDC (Cameroon Development Corporation) in Tiko in the Southwest Region of the country, Société Africaine Forestière et Agricole du Cameroun (SAFACAM) in Dizangué, Hévéa du Cameroun (HEVECAM), and in Niété (MINEPDED, 2017). Similarly, the cultivation of palm oil in Cameroon deforested about 46 850 ha of forests in 2009 and 63 200 ha in 2014 (MINEPDED, 2017). Maize cultivation is an agricultural driver of deforestation in Cameroon as the country produces around 1,572,007 tons of maize per year on an area of 849,885 ha (INS, 2013). The national production of millet / sorghum, is mainly carried out in the Sudano-Sahelian in the Northern region of the country with around 95% of national production (Annuaire Statistique, 2015). National production of sorghum / millet was 1,240,970 tons in 2011. Other crops like banana cultivation is yet another driver of deforestation in Cameroon. The total forest area that has been deforested for the cultivation of bananas in the country stands at about 260,301 ha (MINEPDED, 2017).

Finally, animal husbandry is another driver of deforestation and forest degradation, especially in the northern part of the country. In this region, deforestation from animal husbandry is predominantly caused by the establishment of ranches and pruning of trees by foreign transhumant herders (MINEPDED, 2017).

2.1.2. MINING

Large-scale mining projects are underway in Cameroon and artisanal mining is increasing (Pelon 2016; Funoh 2014). In 2012, WWF identified 30 mining exploration permits that encroached on 12 protected areas, and dozens more are in the immediate vicinity of the protected areas. Three major exploration titles (10,000 to 300,000 ha) have been assigned in the eastern region of the country and their operations will likely have adverse impacts on forest ecosystems in the region (MINEPDED, 2017). Large mining projects can have major impacts on the environment and socio-economic aspects of land use in project areas, such as the elimination of forests and carbon stocks, and a reduction in species biodiversity.

2.1.3. FUEL WOOD COLLECTION

Fuelwood is an important source of energy for households and small businesses in developing countries including Cameroon. Firewood is used in the vast majority of households in rural areas, and in more than 50% of households in urban areas in Cameroon (MINEPDED, 2017). It is obtained from forests in all the regions of the country and thus contribute massively to deforestation and forest degradation.

Table 1: National annual consumption of fuel wood in Cameroon

Regions and cities	Fuel wood consumption (in tons) in urban areas	Fuel wood consumption (in tons) in rural areas
Centre	130 411	384 901
East	89 773	216 496
Littoral	133 013	81 975
South	72 354	180 073
Southwest	178 132	334 504

Yaoundé	297 802	-
Douala	312 540	-
West	81 101	436 123
Northwest	71 027	480 248
Maroua	128 000	-
Extreme North	332 551	1 061 608
Garoua	92 359	-
North	136 729	537 508
Ngaoundere	59 760	-
Adamawa	111 047	238 844

Source: Eba'a Atyi et al. (2013)

2.1.4 LOGGING

Logging from the informal sector as well that from the formal sector (especially industrial logging by concessionaires contributes enormously to the degradation of forest ecosystems in Cameroon especially in the South, East, Centre, and Southwest Region of the country. According to MINEPDED (2017), the total surface area of forests that has been degraded by logging from the informal sector stands at 488,000 ha, while the surface area of forests ecosystems that have been degraded as a result of industrial logging is estimated at 760, 000 ha.

2.1.5 INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

To support its economic development, Cameroon intends to acquire a plethora of infrastructure. Consequently, the country is already densifying its road and rail networks. As Dkamela (2011) explains, the country intends to extend the density of its rail network by several kilometres in 2020. The Cameroonian government has also extended its paved road network by 6,300 km in 2015 to 8,500 km by 2020 (Tchantchou et al. 2015). All these projects are causing deforestation of forests in the country. In addition, the construction of numerous hydroelectric dams, to meet the deficit of current energies of the country are already being implemented. The Memve'ele dams located near Campo-Ma'an Park and gorilla reserve in the southern region, the Lom-Pangar dam in the eastern region, and the Mekin dam located near the famous Dja Wildlife Reserve, UNESCO World Heritage, have already emerged and are already inflicting deleterious impacts to forest ecosystems. This is because the peculiarity of these dams lies in the fact that they all are located in areas that are still exceptionally rich in terms of forests and biodiversity. As MINEPDED (2017) further explains, the development of these infrastructures will allow greater fluidity of products and goods from forests and are already the source of irreversible loss or fragmentation of habitats.

2.2. STRATEGIC OPTIONS TO REDUCE/OFFSET DRIVERS OF DEFORESTATION AND FOREST DEGRADATION IN THE FORESTRY

2.2.1. SECTORAL

Sectoral strategic options entail adjustments to sector strategies and action plans for sustainably increasing productivity without harming forests. Some of these options include the following (Alemagi et al. 2015; MINEPDED, 2017):

- Establish standards that control the construction of roads near forests of High Conservation Value (HCV);
- Ensure zoning and protection of HCV forests alongside new roads during the development of environmental and social management plans;

- If necessary, establish control points on the axes of the transport, to fight against poaching and illegal logging;
- Apply environmental and social safeguards and environmental impact assessment to all projects (especially infrastructural development projects and mining projects) that lead to deforestation during the design, installation, and operational phase;
- Develop, promote and, where appropriate, legislate national standards recognized for specific products (such as palm oil, timber, cocoa, rubber) which leads to deforestation, and apply them;
- Design financing "packages" including a handful of key sectors, incentives, and technical support to encourage farmers in the supply chain to adopt agreed production standards that reduce deforestation;
- Improve policies, regulations, and management standards for sustainable forest management;
- Promote investments in the sustainable production of fuelwood and charcoal;
- Restore forests landscapes; and
- Intensify and diversify agroforestry systems.

2.2.2. CROSS-CUTTING

Cross-cutting strategies are options that entail policy and institutional adjustments within a given jurisdiction. They may be national or sub-national and can be used to tackle deforestation and forest degradation. The main options are presented below (MINEPDEP, 2017):

- Guide ongoing political and legislative reforms to ensure consistency with sectoral laws and policies related to climate change and REDD + through frameworks, platforms, and approaches;
- Create an enabling business environment and financial frameworks for profitable investment in sustainable intensification;
- Establish a register of projects, programs, and initiatives related to REDD +;
- Improved land management and strength land tenure security;
- Payment for Environmental Services (PES) to promote agriculture that is aimed at zero deforestation; and
- Finance the implementation of REDD+.

3. FOREST POLICIES AND RELATED INITIATIVES

3.1. INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

3.1.1. NEW YORK DECLARATION ON FOREST

The New York Declaration on Forests was a non-legally binding political declaration that grew out of dialogue in 2014 among governments, companies, and civil society, spurred by the UN Secretary General's Climate Summit. For the first time, world leaders endorsed a global timeline to cut natural forest loss in half by 2020 and strive to end it by 2030 (UN Climate Summit, 2014). It also called for restoring forests and croplands of an area larger than India. Meeting these goals, the participants at this summit agreed, would cut between 4.5 and 8.8 billion tons of carbon pollution every year – about as much as the current emissions of the United States.

The entities at the New York Declaration on Forests announced dozens of concrete actions and partnerships to demonstrate their commitment to implement this Declaration and Action Agenda. Some of these highly specific supplemental commitments demonstrated the new political will for

building forest conservation and restoration. This included commitments for the development of public policies to eliminate deforestation, a pledge by indigenous peoples to protect hundreds of millions of hectares of tropical forests, new commitments from forest country governments to reduce deforestation or to restore degraded lands, new bilateral and multilateral programs to pay (in the form of incentives) countries for reducing deforestation over the next 6 years, and new procurement policies for several of the largest forest commodity importer governments (UN Climate Summit, 2014).

3.1.2. BONN CHALLENGE

The Bonn Challenge is a global goal to bring 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes into restoration by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030. Launched by the Government of Germany and IUCN in 2011, the challenge has surpassed the 150-million-hectare milestone for pledges in 2017 (Bonn Challenge, 2020).

Cameroon has committed to restoring over 12 million hectares of deforested and degraded land by 2030 as part of the Bonn Challenge initiative (IUCN, 2017). The initiative is the biggest pledge made so far in the species-rich Congo Basin, home to the world's second-largest tropical rainforest. Cameroon's pledge to the Bonn Challenge will help create sustainable livelihoods for forest-dependent communities, protect Cameroon's unique flora and fauna, cut carbon emissions, and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) (IUNC, 2017).

3.1.3. PARIS AGREEMENT

Cameroon is a signatory to the 2015 Paris Agreement. Article 5 of the Paris Agreement is dedicated to REDD+. Parties under Article 5 of the Paris Agreement are encouraged to take action, implement, and support, through results-based payments, the existing framework as set out in related guidance and decisions already agreed under the Convention. These agreed guidance and decisions include policy approaches and positive incentives for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and improving the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. Other guidance includes alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests, while reaffirming the importance of incentivizing non-carbon benefits associated with such approaches (UNFCCC, 2015).

Table 2: Alignment of the project under preparation with the objectives of international forest policies and initiatives

International forest policy and initiatives	Objectives	Alignment of the project under preparation with the objectives of international forest policies and initiatives
New York Declaration on Forest	Cut natural forest loss in half by 2020 and end the lost by 2030 through forests and croplands restoration.	The project under preparation aligns with the objective of the New York Declaration on Forest in that it will restore degraded land and forests in and around PFAs in the project sites.
Bonn Challenge	Bring 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes into restoration by	The project under preparation aligns with the objectives or contributes to attain the

	2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030.	objectives of the Bonn Challenge since it has a landscape restoration component. This will contribute to ensuring that Cameroon is able to meet up with its commitment under Bonn Challenge which is to restore over 12 million hectares of deforested and degraded land by 2030.
Paris Agreement	Article 5 of the Paris Agreement encourages parties that are rich in forests including Cameroon to take concrete action in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, promoting conservation and sustainable forest management, as well as enhancing forest carbon stocks.	The project under preparation seeks to promote Cameroon's REDD+ payment mechanisms in sustainably managed PFAs and support forest governance systems outside permanent forests.

3.2. REGIONAL LEVEL – AFRICA

3.2.1. AFR100

Ten African countries launched the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) in 2015 to bring 100 million hectares of land in Africa to restoration by 2030 (WRI, 2015). AFR100 contributes to the Bonn Challenge, the African Union Agenda 2063, the SDG, and other targets. Since its launch in 2015, AFR100 has secured political commitments in Africa and defined restoration strategies. Currently, the initiative focuses on implementing forest landscape restoration (FLR) action plans and monitoring systems and raising private investment for restoration. Commitments made through AFR100 build on significant climate pledges made by many African countries including Cameroon to support a binding global climate agreement. According to the World Resource Institute, following through on the AFR100 would cumulatively reduce emissions by 1.2 Gt CO₂eq over the next 10 years, or 36% of Africa's annual emissions and 0.25% of global emissions (WRI, 2015).

AFR100 recognizes the benefits that forests and trees can provide in African landscapes such as improved soil fertility and food security, greater availability and quality of water resources, reduced desertification, increased biodiversity, green jobs, economic growth especially improvement in livelihoods, and increased capacity for climate change resilience, adaptation, and mitigation (WRI, 2015).

3.2.2. THE GREAT GREEN WALL INITIATIVE

The Great Green Wall is an African-led movement with an epic ambition to grow an 8,000 km natural wonder of the world across the entire width of Africa. By 2030, the Wall aims to restore 100 million hectares of currently degraded land, sequester 250 million tonnes of carbon, and create 10 million jobs in rural areas (Great Green Wall, 2021).

The Great Green Wall is taking root in Africa's Sahel region which is one of the poorest places on the planet. More than anywhere else on Earth, the Sahel is on the frontline of climate change and millions of locals are already facing its devastating impact. Persistent droughts, lack of food, conflicts over dwindling natural resources are just some of the many issues plaguing the region.

3.2.3. AFRICAN UNION AGENDA 2063

One of the fundamental goals of Africa Union Agenda 2063 is to promote environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies and communities (AU, 2021). To achieve this goal, the African Union (AU) has set aside the following three priority areas where action is being taken to achieve this goal:

- Sustainable and inclusive economic growth;
- Biodiversity, conservation, and Sustainable natural resource management; and
- Climate resilience and natural disasters preparedness.

Table 3: Alignment of the project under preparation with the objectives of regional forest policies and initiatives

Regional forest policy and initiatives	Objectives	Alignment of the project under preparation with the objectives of the regional forest policies and initiatives
AFR100	Restore 100 million hectares of land in Africa by 2030.	The project will restore degraded land and forests in and around PFAs and promote sustainable harvesting of forest commodities especially NTFPs.
The Great Green Wall initiative	By 2030, the initiative aims to restore 100 million hectares of currently degraded land in Africa, thereby sequestering 250 million tons of carbon in African forests.	The project will contribute to carbon sequestration in Africa forests as approximately 2.5 million tons of carbon will be sequestered in PFAs because of this project.
African Union Agenda 2063	Promote environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies and communities.	The project will improve governance systems for sustainable forest management of PFAs, promote sustainable use of wood by communities, notably by harnessing value for NTFPs, transforming use of fuelwood to a more sustainable supply systems. The project will also diversifying energy sources for communities to alleviate pressure for fuelwood use to microhydro, solar energy, clean cook, etc., and secure / restore woodland dedicated to exploitation for fuelwood to meet the needs of local communities. Finally, the project will ensure that adaptation needs and co-benefits are discussed,

		identified and capitalized in the project.
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3.4. SUB-REGIONAL LEVEL – CENTRAL AFRICA

3.4.1. COMIFAC CONVERGENCE PLAN

COMIFAC member states including Cameroon are already committed to efforts on regional coordination on forestry issues in the Central African Sub-region. COMIFAC was created in 2005 as a regional authority to guide, monitor and promote the sustainable management of forests in Central Africa. The COMIFAC Convergence Plan, adopted by the Head of State of Central Africa in 2005, defines a common regional intervention strategy for the countries of the Central Africa sub-region and their international development partners. The Convergence Plan was revised and adopted in July 2014 (it spans from 2015 - 2025), during and extraordinary COMIFAC Ministers council. The Convergence Plan outlines the planned actions for sustainable forest management and forest conservation in Central Africa. The plan's strategies include harmonizing forest and tax policies, developing alternative forest activities, reducing poverty through sustainable forest management, and livelihoods improvement of forest-dependent communities (COMIFAC, 2015). COMIFAC via its Convergence Plan has played a fundamental role in promoting and coordinating sustainable forest management including REDD+ in the Central African sub-region (including Cameroon) over the past years.

3.4.2. CENTRAL AFRICAN FOREST INITIATIVE

The Central Africa Forest Initiative (CAFI) is as a collaborative partnership that was created in 2015. This initiative provides funding to Central African partner countries including Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon to promote sustainable forest management and green initiatives in the forest sector in these countries (CAFI, 2020). For instance, the CAFI Executive Board provided a grant of 1 million US\$ to support Cameroon to develop its National Investment Framework for REDD+ (CAFI, 2018). The development of this framework was employed for stakeholder consultations and communications – to both collect and disseminate information and continuous capacity building of members of the National REDD+ Steering Committee, the National Climate Change Observatory, the REDD+ Technical Secretariat, and key personnel in sectoral ministries (CAFI, 2021).

Table 4: Alignment of the project under preparation with the objectives of sub-regional forest policies and initiatives

Sub-regional forest policy and initiatives	Objectives	Alignment of the project under preparation with the objectives of the sub-regional forest policies and initiatives
COMIFAC convergence plan	Harmonize forest and tax policies, develop alternative forest activities, and reduce poverty through sustainable forest management and	The project will boost conservation and, sustainable production and marketing of natural resources from PFAs such as wood and NTFPs thereby improving the livelihood of

	livelihoods improvement of forest-dependent communities.	forest-dependent communities in the project sites.
Central African Forest Initiative	Financially support sustainable forest management including REDD+ investments in Cameroon and other countries in the Central African sub region.	The project will support sustainable management and exploitation of timber and other forest products in PFAs (forest concessions and Council Forests), notably through the development and implementation of certification schemes and Code of Conduct for sustainable forest management, develop, revise and support the implementation of management plans in PFAs, promote reduced impact logging in PFAs, secure protected areas and forest reserves, increased restoration of degraded lands and forests in and around PFAs to facilitate carbon sequestration for REDD+ and biodiversity conservation.

3.5. NATIONAL LEVEL

3.5.1. NATIONAL COMMITMENTS AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

3.5.1.1. National Development Strategy (SND 30)

The objective of Cameroon's National Development Strategy (SND 30) are (i) to establish conditions favourable for economic growth and accumulation of national wealth and ensure that the structural changes indispensable for the industrialisation of the country are achieved, (ii) improve the living conditions of the population and their access to basic social services by ensuring significant reduction and unemployment, and (iii) strengthen climate change adaptation and mitigate the effects of climate change, ensure environmental management that assures sustainable and inclusive economic growth, societal development, and improve governance to enhance policy performance toward achieving developmental goals (Republic of Cameroon, 2020).

To achieve all the strategy's objectives, the government plans to rely on the following four fundamental pillars including (Republic of Cameroon, 2020):

- Structural transformation of the national economy;
- Development of human capital and wellbeing;
- Promotion of employment and economic integration; and
- Governance, decentralisation, and strategic management of the state.

3.5.1.2. Cameroon' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)

The long-term goal of Cameroon's NDC is to achieve a reduction of 35% of its Green House Gas (GHG) emissions compared to a baseline scenario for the target year (2030). To accomplish this goal, the country plans to implement some of the following fundamental climate change adaption and mitigation strategies (Republic of Cameroon, 2021):

- Improving productivity and competitiveness;
- Sustainable forest management through the exploitation and development of productive forests within the framework of management plans;
- Contribution to economic growth and poverty alleviation through the retrocession of part of the tax revenue to communities, job creation, the creation of communal forests in the Permanent Forest Estate (PFE) and community forests in the Non-Permanent Forest Estate (NPFE);
- Biodiversity conservation through the reinforcement of the national network of protected areas;
- Ensuring coherence in the land tenure system through zoning plans; and
- Increasing the use of renewable energy in electricity production, especially in areas that are difficult to connect to the electricity grid.

3.5.1.3. Cameroon's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) for Climate Change

Cameroon's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) for Climate Change addresses the impacts of climate change in the country by proposing acts such as reducing population vulnerability by increasing the resilience and quality of life, as well as, increasing adaptive capacity to new opportunities for country development (UNFCCC, 2015). The Plan also demonstrates steps to achieve these goals including improving education on climate change, informing, distributing, and mobilising population on climate change adaptation, increasing population climate resilience to climate change in primary and agroecological sectors, and integrating climate change adaptation in strategies and national policy strategies. Pertaining to the forestry sector directly, the plan proposes better education and research of the positive and negative effects of climate change, installation of a monitoring system for forest fires, implementation of forest health, and support and reinforce REDD+ implementation strategies and policies (MINEPDED, 2015).

Further addressed in the NAP, are innovations in the agriculture sector, energy sector, and urban development. The expansion of agricultural land often leads to the rise in deforestation to increase field productivity to meet rising demand. The plan is expected to improve agriculture practices to maximize yield rather than focusing on the expansion of agricultural land to reduce unnecessary ecological damage. In addition, the primary objective in the energy sector is to develop renewable or alternative energy sources greatly reducing the overreliance on wood (UNFCCC, 2015).

3.5.1.4. Cameroon's Country Programme for GCF investment

In November 2017, the Government of Cameroon received from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) resources for its preparatory support program aimed at strengthening the capacity of its Designated National Authority. Cameroon's Country Program for GCF investment was developed to better leverage this funding mechanism, and to help build a low carbon and climate resilient economy (Republic of Cameroon, 2019). It represents the framework of strategic relationship of Cameroon vis-à-vis not only the GCF, but also with the accredited entities intervening in Cameroon. In this country program, a total, 12 priority programs were selected in Cameroon including (Republic of Cameroon, 2019):

- Securing, conservation and sustainable management of forests;
- Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation;

- Development of integrated and resilient agriculture in response to the effects of climate change;
- Reducing the vulnerability of livestock and the fisheries sector to the effects of climate change;
- Promotion of low-carbon public transport offers and systems in the sector;
- Development of energy production from renewable sources;
- Promotion of energy efficiency in the industry and infrastructure sector;
- Cities resilient to climate change;
- Protection of the coastline from the effects of climate change;
- Establishment of an observation;
- Information management and warning system on climate risks in Cameroon;
- Forest ecosystems resilient to climate change; and
- Populations, infrastructure, and resilience to climate change.

Table 5: Alignment of the project under preparation with the objectives of national commitments and development policies

National commitments and development policies	Objectives	Alignment of the project under preparation with the objectives of the national commitments and development policies
Cameroon's National Development Strategy (SND 30)	Establish favorable conditions for economic growth thereby improving the living conditions of the population and strengthen climate change adaptation and mitigate the effects of climate change.	The project will boost sustainable production and marketing of forest resources from PFAs such as wood and NTFPs, thereby improving the livelihood of forest-dependent communities in the project sites and contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation.
Cameroon' Nationally Determined Contributions-updated (NDC)	Achieve a reduction of 35% of its Green House Gas (GHG) emissions compared to a baseline scenario for the target year (2030) through the development of agricultural production that reduces deforestation and forest degradation; as well as intensification of agroforestry/agricultural systems.	The project seeks to transform the agricultural sector by working with both major industries (palm oil, rubber) to zero deforestation commodities and with small holders (cocoa, coffee, etc.) on climate smart agricultural practices like the intensification of agroforestry systems.
Cameroon's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) for Climate Change	Support and reinforce REDD+ implementation strategies and policies in the country, among others.	The project seeks to promote Cameroon's REDD+ payment mechanisms in sustainably managed PFAs.

Cameroon's Country Programme for GCF investment	Secure, conserve and promote sustainable management of forests ecosystems as well as reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, among others.	The project will improve governance systems for sustainable forest management of PFAs thereby contribution, to reducing emission from deforestation and forest degradation with these PFAs.
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3.5.2. NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON FORESTRY

3.5.2.1. 1994 Forest Law

Cameroon undertook a several reforms to protect its environment since the 1992 UN conference on Environment and Development in Rio, which were influenced among other factors by the outcome of the Rio conference on the importance of the rainforest (Ndombe, 2019). In addition, the dwindling revenues from the oil and agriculture sectors, resulted to the government seeking to alternative income sources, in a period when the timber demonstrated a steady increase in terms of contribution to the GDP (increase from 3.5% in 1989 to 12% of GDP in 2000). Taking all these into consideration the Cameroon National Assembly adopted forest law in 1994 with the aim of achieving the following:

- Rationalising the use of forest land;
- Enabling communities to benefit more significantly from their right to use forest resources;
- Allocating harvesting rights with greater transparency and efficiency;
- Supporting sustainable forest management; and
- Reforming the taxation system.

According to FAO (2016), the Forestry Law was adopted in a period when the forest sector experienced and a steady increase in deforestation and forest degradation with an average annual rate of 0.90%. The focus of the Cameroon's 1994 Forestry and Wildlife law was aimed at involving communities in the management and protection of forest resources.

A key innovation in the development of the 1994 law, considering the concept of deforestation, was the division of the forest in to two categories (article 20): The first category involves the permanent Forest Estate- which "shall comprise lands that are used solely for forestry and or as a wildlife habitat" and shall cover at least 30% of the country's national territory and need to consider the country's ecological diversity. It also includes strict ecological reserves, flora reserves, protection forests, recreational forests, research and teaching forests, production forests, reforestation areas and botanic areas. The second category involves the Non-Permanent Forest Estate which "shall comprise forest lands that may be used for other purposes than forestry" (Ndombe, 2019). The forestry law embodied accepted development and environmental concepts including inter alia the involvement of NGOs, the private sector, village communities and other stakeholders, recognizing the rights of indigenous people and calls for the introduction of pre-emptive rights over community forest (FAO, 2002).

Apart from the Cameroon 1994 Forestry and Wildlife and Fisheries law, there exists other legal instruments, including Orders and Decrees, which either strengthens or complements the Forestry Law. Their objectives and how they align with the project under preparation is presented in table 4.

Table 6: Alignment of the project under preparation with the objectives of National laws

National legislations	Objectives	Alignment of the project under preparation with the objectives of the national legislation
1994 Forestry Law	The objectives of the 1994 Forestry Law focus on: - Rationalising the use of forest land - Enabling communities to benefit more significantly from their right to use forest resources - Allocating harvesting rights with greater transparency and efficiency (output 1.1) - Supporting sustainable forest management - Reforming the taxation system Article 1 of the law stipulates that this law and the implementing instruments thereof lay down forestry, wildlife, and fisheries regulations with a view to attaining the general objectives of the forestry; wildlife and fisheries policy, within the framework of an integrated management ensuring sustainable conservation and use of the said resources and of the various ecosystems. Part II of the Law is based on the protection of nature and biodiversity and takes into consideration the protection of forests and, fauna. Article 71 -74) make provisions for the promotion and marketing of timber and forest products.	The project aligns with the objectives of the Forestry law via the following components and outputs³: Component 1: Sustainable Forest management and restoration Output 1.1: Improved governance systems for sustainable forest management Output 1.2: Strengthened sustainable forest management of PFAs Output 1.3: Increased restoration of degraded lands and forests in and around permanent forest areas to facilitate carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, gender equality and well-being (agroforestry, improved energy systems for domestic uses, etc.) Component 3: Market development and supply chain transformation - Output 3.1: Organized and strengthened priority NTFPs value chains products to ensure their sustainable production. - Output 3.2: Strengthened existing platforms to support the development of new business in the forestry sector, including some sustainable NTFPs and agriculture value chains
Decree No. 95/531/PM of 23 August 1995	Laid down the procedures for implementing the Forests System. It defines the different forest sub classes and highlights nature and biodiversity protection. It provides clarity on the 2 forest domains and provides orientation	This project under preparation seeks to strengthen sustainable forest management in the PFAs and promote restoration of degraded lands and forests in an around PFA. It will also promote biodiversity conservation while livelihood of indigenous communities.

³ These are components and outputs as indicated by the project concept. They will be revised and refined as the preparation process progresses.

	on forest use, inventory, and operational arrangements.	
The 1996 National Environmental Management Plan and the Environmental Management Framework Law	The overall objective of the Plan was to develop policies, strategies and actions for environmental protection and the rational management of resources to contribute to sustainable development with 5 priority areas: - Participatory land use management; - Sustainable management of natural resources; - Restoration of degraded land and improvement of soil fertility; - Capacity building; and - Concerted management of shared resources at the sub-regional level.	The project strongly supports Sustainable Forest management and restoration. The project is associated with a participatory approach through building the capacity of stakeholders living around PFAS on sustainable forest management. Component 1 will contribute to the restoration of degraded lands and forests as well as enhancing forest governance systems.
Law No 96/12 of 05 August 1996	This law established the general legal framework for the management of the environment and ESIA in Cameroon.	The project under development will take into consideration ESIA where needed with respect to the provision of the 1996 law.
Decree No 2005/0577/PM of 23 February 2005 Decree No 2013/0171/PM of 14 February 2013 formalizing procedures for conducting environmental and social impact assessments.	They formalized the procedures of conducting EIA and SIA and provided the different categories of activities where this should obtain.	The project will engage with various stakeholders, especially government and the private sector to systematically design and implement Environmental Impact Assessments for road construction, settlement, railroads, and dams in PFAs and if feasible totally avoid construction of roads, railways, and dams in PFAs.
Decree N° 76 -166 of 27 April 1976 It establishes the terms and conditions of management of national lands	It establishes the terms and conditions of management of national lands.	The project sustainable manage PFAs and restore degraded lands in and around PFAs. PFAs are state lands, and the project is helping to strengthen government efforts to protect these natural lands.
Decree No 95/678/PM of 18 December 1995 Establishing an indicative framework of land use in southern forest areas	Under the first national inventory carried out with the support of Canadian Cooperation between 1984 and 1987; Standards of different types of forest inventories for management, operations, recognition, and pre-investments.	The project under development will develop the market and supply chain transformation of selected NTFPs. It is inherent that an inventory will be conducted on the NTFP, in collaboration with MINFOF to ensure that sustainable management.

3.5.3. STRATEGIES

3.5.3.1. REDD+ Strategy

The objective of REDD+ is to use financial incentives and market instruments to mitigate carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and to promote conservation efforts in developing countries (Streck, 2016). In June 2014, Cameroon launched the process of developing its National REDD+ Strategy, which covers the country's five agro-ecological zones (AEZ). Technical documents were developed to present the reference situation and explore efforts needed to reverse the deforestation and forest degradation curve. In 2018 the National REDD+ strategy policy which provided strategic options for addressing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, was validated. This partly helps the country's achieve its Paris Agreement engagement as stipulated in Article 5.2 of the Paris Agreement- "Parties are encouraged to take action to implement and support, including through results-based payments, the existing framework as set out in related guidance and decisions already agreed under the Convention for: policy approaches and positive incentives for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries; and alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests, while reaffirming the importance of incentivizing, as appropriate, non-carbon benefits associated with such approaches".

The main goal of the national REDD+ strategy is to contribute to climate stabilization through emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, conservation of forest carbon stocks, enhancement of forest carbon stocks, increasing forest carbon stocks and sustainable forest management, while improving the livelihoods of local communities and forest-dependent people and ensuring economic and social development, while ensuring fair, equitable and sustainable economic and social development.

3.5.3.2. Land Degradation Neutrality

In view of strengthening global efforts on sustainable land management, twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 12) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), held in Ankara in October 2015, endorsed SDG target 15.3 and the concept of land degradation neutrality (LDN) as a driving force for the implementation of the Convention (Republic of Cameroon, 2017). During this conference, the LDN was defined as "a state in which the quantity and quality of land resources needed to support ecosystem functions and services and to enhance food security remain stable or increase at given temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems". All member countries were invited to formulate voluntary targets to achieve the LDN

To render the above operational, the government of Cameroon in 2017, voluntarily set targets of halting and reversing land degradation to be reached by 2030 as follows:

- *At national level:*
- The LDN is achieved compared to 2015 (no net loss) and 10% more of the national territory is improved (net gain);
- *At the Communal level:*
- The LDN is achieved in at least 90% of municipalities located in priority areas for the fight against land degradation.
- *At the specific level:*
- 12 million hectares of degraded land are restored;

- The conversion of forests into other forms of land uses as a result of the implementation of development programmes and projects and the development of agricultural, livestock and fisheries production are reduced by half;
- The dependence of urban populations on firewood in the areas most affected by land degradation is reduced by 75%;
- Forest and land degradation due to logging is reduced by 75%;
- Land degradation caused by projects is fully compensated for at least; and
- Mangrove degradation is reduced by half.

3.5.3.3. Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) Strategy

Since the institution of the Cameroon's 1994 forest law, the forest sector has witnessed substantial efforts towards sustainable forest management. However, deforestation and land degradation, continue to be a principal threat to the forest ecosystems. The Cameroonian government therefore identified environmental protection and ecosystem preservation as key challenges in its national program for economic emergence by 2035. Restoration and sustainable management of forest resources are therefore important to ensure that ecosystems remain functional (MINEPDED-MINFOF, 2019)

Within the framework of the AFR100 initiative and the Bonn Challenge framework, in 2017, the Republic of Cameroon set a target to restore 12,062,768 hectares of degraded land by 2030. This target is an important contribution to the national development and conservation objectives.

In 2020, the government elaborated a strategic framework for the restoration of forest and degraded lands in Cameroon. The objective of the strategic framework was to map out policy options for a National FLR Strategy (NFLRS). This strategic framework laid out a vision and an operational action plan to achieve the goal of restoring 12 million hectares of degraded forests and landscapes by 2030 (MINEPDED-MINFOF, 2020). Despite the incomplete assessment of restoration opportunities, the Strategic Framework proposes 5 orientations similar to strategic axes on how to realize the 12 million hectares commitment by 2030 as followed:

- Establish the Elements for Achieving the National FLR Commitment;
- Develop a multi-sectoral approach to FLR;
- Adopt and operationalize monitoring, evaluation and communication systems on landscape and forest restoration;
- Developing sustainable financing mechanisms for FLR; and
- Capitalize on and enhance the role of research in implementing and scaling up FLR.

3.5.3.4. The Great Green Wall Initiative: Strategy and action plan for the implementation in Cameroon

The overall vision of the Great Green Wall is to resolutely tackle the main environmental and climate threats through regional cooperation and synergy of actions (MINEPDED, 2020). It is based on the major targets of the following relevant indicators:

- By 2020-2025, slow down the advance of desertification, restore and enhance the potential of arid and semi-arid zones, and create the conditions for sustainable development; and
- In the long term, transform the vast arid expanses of the Sahel into genuine rural production and sustainable development poles (PRPDD), powerful vectors of indication for the return to the land of the living forces.

The overall objective of the Great Green Wall Initiative is to improve the livelihoods of local communities in the Sahelo-Saharan zones through the sound management of ecosystems

between the 100 mm isohyets in the North and 400 mm in the South. It will be achieved through 3 strategic and 4 operational objectives as follows:

Strategic Objectives:

- To improve the livelihoods of people in African drylands and reduce their vulnerability to climate change and variability
- To improve the condition and health of African dryland ecosystems and their resilience to climate change and variability and the adverse effects of drought.
- Mobilise resources for the implementation of the Great Green Wall initiative through effective partnerships between national and international actors.

Operational Objectives:

- Actively influence relevant international, continental, regional, national, and local mechanisms, and actors to effectively address desertification/land degradation and drought in the Sahelian zones.
- To work towards the creation of a general climate favourable to the search for solutions to settle the populations of the drylands on their lands and to ensure them equitable and peaceful access to land resources.
- Improve knowledge of the social, economic, biophysical, and cultural dynamics of drylands
- Mobilise financial and technological resources at national, bilateral, and multilateral levels, and ensure that they are better targeted and coordinated to increase their impact and effectiveness

At national level, Cameroon has elaborated and validated a national strategy for the GGW with an objective of creating conditions for socio-economic and environmental development. The implementation of the strategy involves actions aimed at:

- Conserving, restoring and enhancing biodiversity and soils;
- Diversifying farming systems;
- Satisfying domestic needs and increasing income through the promotion of income-generating activities;
- Improving/installing basic infrastructure; and
- Eradicating poverty.

3.5.3.5. National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan

Cameroon as a CBD member state, and given the importance of biodiversity to its economy, to adhering to the provisions of the CBD convention officially validated its first National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) in 2000. After 10 years of implementation, faced with major evolving trends and emerging issues, including among others, emerging threats from climate change, biophysical changes, and socio-economic pressure with devastating effects on species and their habitats, the strategy became inadequate in stimulating the urgent and dynamic response required on biodiversity issues. In this view, the government decided to revise and updated the 2000 NBSAP which served as an important planning instrument for biodiversity.

Biodiversity strategy goals and targets

Four Strategic Goals were defined specifying the four major areas for intervention aimed at redressing the drivers of ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss as shown below:

1. Address the underlying causes of biodiversity degradation and loss by reducing the direct and indirect pressures on biodiversity.

2. Maintain and Improve the Status of Biodiversity by Safeguarding Ecosystems, Habitats, and Species and Genetic Diversity.
3. Promote the sustainable utilization of biodiversity for wealth creation and contribution to poverty alleviation.
4. Mainstream biodiversity in sector and local level strategies and strengthen coordination and capacity for implementation.

Table 7: Alignment of project under preparation with objectives of national strategy

National Strategy	Objectives	Alignment of the project under preparation with the objectives of the national strategy
National REDD+ Strategy	The main goal of the national REDD+ strategy is to contribute to climate stabilization through emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, conservation of forest carbon stocks, enhancement of forest carbon stocks, increasing forest carbon stocks and sustainable forest management, while improving the livelihoods of local communities and forest-dependent people and ensuring economic and social development. while ensuring fair, equitable and sustainable economic and social development.	The project will contribute to reducing emissions resulting from deforestation and forest degradation through: Strengthening the forest governance systems and management systems in PFAs; and Building the capacity of stakeholders involved or influencing PFAs ranging from government, CSOs, communities and communities around PFAs on sustainable management and use of natural resources and in MRV of forest cover and carbon stock ensuring gender consideration. This will also help strengthen partnership collaboration. - The project seeks to increase and conserve carbon stock in protected areas through restoration of degraded lands and forests around PFAs. The project will enhance sustainable livelihood of local communities around PFAs through the development of NTFP value chains and forest business models.
Land Degradation Neutrality	The objective is for member states to voluntarily set targets of halting and reversing land degradation to be reached by 2030.	This project seeks to strengthen forest protection, restoration of degraded lands and sustainable management of forest resources in 3 major regions in Cameroon, namely, the northern savannahs, Humid dense forests constituting an estimated 11,103,475 ha of PFAs and immediate peripheries. The total surface cover of the permanent forest domain in Cameroon is 11.78 million hectares (Nghobuocheet al., 2020), therefore, the project will contribute to strengthen the sustainable management of more that 80% of the country's PFAs. Thereby, the project will not only contribute to the LDN restoration target (of 12 million hectares) but also reduce deforestation and forest degradation from through forest conversion for other land uses. This will therefore align with the LDN targets at national of improving 10% of the national territory and fighting against land degradation at municipal level.
National Biodiversity	The major objectives of the NBSAP are to improve environmental stability for natural ecosystems and their	- The project will under development will:

Strategic Action Plan	biodiversity; to restore degraded ecosystems and maintain equilibrium among biological communities; to establish an appropriate framework for access to genetic resources and equitable sharing of benefits arising from biodiversity use and ecosystems services; and to improve policy, legal and institutional framework for a better management and conservation of national biodiversity. To mainstream gender issues into biodiversity planning and capacity building activities, four strategic goals were defined specifying the four major areas for intervention aimed at redressing the drivers of ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss as shown below: A. Address the underlying causes of biodiversity degradation and loss by reducing the direct and indirect pressures on biodiversity B. Maintain and Improve the Status of Biodiversity by Safeguarding Ecosystems, Habitats, and Species and Genetic Diversity C. Promote the sustainable utilization of biodiversity for wealth creation and contribution to poverty alleviation D. Mainstream biodiversity in sector and local level strategies and strengthen coordination and capacity for implementation For realizing each of the above goals, a set of 20 Targets were defined to be met by 2020. The Targets were defined to provide the orientation to identify actions to enable the redress of specific issues that contribute to the loss of biodiversity. Details found in appendix 1	- Organize and strengthened priority NTFPs value chains products to ensure their sustainable production and strengthened existing platforms to support the development of new business in the forestry sector, including some sustainable NTFPs and agriculture value chains (Target 4); - Reduce the rate of ecosystem degradation and fragmentation through increasing restoration of degraded lands and forests in and around permanent forest areas to facilitate carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, gender equality and well-being (agroforestry, improved energy systems for domestic uses, etc.) (Target 6); - Strengthen the sustainable management of PFAs which is home to most biodiversity will contribute to preserving some endemic and threatened flora and fauna (Target 7); - Contribute to reducing deforestation and forest degradation in PFAs through the restoration of degraded lands and forests to facilitate carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation as well as sustainable management of selected NTFP (Target 10); - Contribute to the protection and management through improvement of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) governance (Target 11); - Improve the capacities of women, men, local communities, and indigenous peoples living in and around PFAs on SFM, development and management of water resilient systems will result in a strong community- based ecosystem conservation and management which will contribute to enhancing gender consideration in the effective implementation of biodiversity conservation and management (Target 13 and 19); and - Build collaboration across different stakeholder groups including government institutions, CSOs, farmers groups, councils, and local population on MRV on forest cover and carbon stock (Target 20).
Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) Strategy	The objective of the strategic framework is to map out policy options for a National FLR Strategy (NFLRS). This strategic framework laid out a vision and an operational action plan to achieve the goal of restoring 12 million hectares of degraded forests and landscapes by 2030.	This project will restore degraded lands in and around projected areas in the targeted project areas thereby contributing to achieving the country's commitment of restoring 12 million hectares of degraded landscapes. The project will also build the capacity of stakeholders' forest cover and carbon stock MRV.

	This will be achieved through the following strategic orientation: - Establishment of the Elements for Achieving the National FLR Commitment - Development of a multi-sectoral approach to FLR - Adaptation and operationalisation of monitoring, evaluation and communication systems on landscape and forest restoration - Developing sustainable financing mechanisms for FLR - Capitalisation on and enhancement of the role of research in implementing and scaling up FLR	
The Great Green Wall Initiative: Strategy and action plan for implementation in Cameroon	At global level, the vision of the Great Green Wall is to resolutely tackle the main environmental and climate threats through regional cooperation and synergy of actions. In Cameroon the objective of the national strategy is to create conditions for socio-economic and environmental development. The implementation of this strategy involves actions aimed at: - Conserving, restoring, and enhancing biodiversity and soils - Diversifying farming systems; - Satisfying domestic needs and increasing income through the promotion of income-generating activities; - Improving/installing basic infrastructure; and - Eradicating poverty.	The project under development will strengthen forest governance in PFA and restore degraded lands in and around PFAs. This will contribute to enhancing biodiversity and soil conservation. The project will also develop and strengthen NTFP value chains which will serve as an alternative source of income to local communities and reduce pressure on the forest.

3.5.4. OTHER INITIATIVES

3.5.4.1. Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT)

The Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) is a European Union's program aimed at reducing illegal logging by strengthening sustainable and legal forest management, improving governance, and promoting trade in legally produced timber. It works through a Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs), which are legally binding trade agreements between the European Union (EU) and a timber-producing country outside the EU. The purpose of the VPA is to make sure that timber and timber products exported

to EU are legally sourced. It also aims at stopping illegal logging in timber-exporting countries by improving regulations and governance of the forest sector 4.

On May 6th, 2010, the Government of Cameroon and the European Union concluded negotiations of the FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement. The aim of this agreement with the Cameroon was to strengthen forest governance, promote Cameroonian timber products, and improve the country's competitiveness in the international marketplace. The VPA also considered strengthening the capacity of Cameroonian forest stakeholders and encourage investment in sustainable management of forests (EU, 2010). It provided the necessary framework of legislation, systems and controls and verification procedures to ensure that all timber imports from Cameroon into the EU market are legally acquired, harvested, transported, and exported. This is shown through the FLEGT license issued for each shipment.

Table 8: Alignment of project under development with other relevant instruments

National Strategy	Objectives	Alignment of the project under preparation with the objectives of the national strategy
FLEGT VPA Agreement	On May 6 th , 2010, the Government of Cameroon and the European Union concluded negotiations of the FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement. The aim of this agreement with the Cameroon was to strengthen forest governance, promote Cameroonian timber products, and improve the country's competitiveness in the international marketplace. The VPA also considered strengthening the capacity of Cameroonian forest stakeholders and encourage investment in sustainable management of forests (EU, 2010). It provided the necessary framework of legislation, systems and controls and verification procedures to ensure that all timber imports from Cameroon into the EU market are legally acquired, harvested, transported, and exported. This is shown through the FLEGT license issued for each shipment	Component 1 of the climate smart project under preparation which focuses on Sustainable Forest management and restoration completely aligns with the FLEGT process as output 1.1 seeks to improve forest governance systems for sustainable forest management. According to the 1994 forestry law, production forest belongs to the PFAs, and illegal logging contributes to emission resulting from uncontrolled degradation, thereby, resulting in a reduction in forest carbon stock and biodiversity loss. Outcome 1.2 will facilitate forest carbon and biodiversity conservation through restoration of degraded lands and forest in and around permanent forest areas while outcome 2 strengthens the sustainable management of PFAs.

⁴ <https://www.wwf.org.la/projects/flegt/>

4. CASE STUDY SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT (SFM) AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE IN CAMEROON

SFM is one critical activity that contributes to Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) – alongside conservation set aside, tree planting or reforestation of various sorts (e.g., on farm or in plantations) and measures to reduce or make more efficient other land uses that compete with forests. SFM's multiple benefits, including wood and non-wood production, can make it a good option when considering policy support to measures that contribute to REDD+ objectives by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, as well as the conservation and increase of carbon stocks; generating socio-economic benefits for multiple stakeholders; and producing state revenues through taxes and harvesting fees (Nhantumbo, 2018).

There is a close link between SFM and climate change response. It is important to note that both SFM and emission reduction can be viewed as outcomes or as processes. For example, SFM as a process (i.e., a set of activities that ensure forest sustainability) can contribute to REDD+ as an outcome (i.e., a state of reduced deforestation and forest degradation). But conversely, REDD+ as a process (i.e., a set of activities including results-based financing) can contribute to SFM as an outcome (i.e., a state of sustainable forest management) (Nhantumbo, 2018). The contribution of SFM to climate change response will depend on the strength of the policy and regulatory frameworks (including their implementation) that supports SFM and on how climate change adaptation and mitigation are mainstreamed in the SFM strategic reference management documents (regulatory guidelines to prepare management instruments – article XXX for example and the management instruments themselves – FMU management plans, protected areas management plans etc.).

4.1. OVERVIEW OF BARRIERS TO SFM IN CAMEROON

Cameroon has identified SFM as an important option for making contributions to the global climate change mitigation and adaptation commitments. SFM in Cameroon is underpinned by the 1994 Forest Code, which is being implemented through a number of legislative and regulatory acts intended to drive sustainable forest use. Over the years, SFM has made progress with the increase in the number and size of forest types managed under SFM principles and guidelines. These different forest types are expected to be managed through the design and implementation of compulsory forest management plans in order to ensure that the ecological, economic, and social dimensions of sustainable forest management are achieved (Cerutti et al., 2017). However, SFM is suffering from a mix of challenges related to governance, economic, technical, and financial issues (Ewane et al., 2015; Cerutti et al., 2017). Unsustainable practices in the forestry sector have been linked to the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Cameroon (Tegegne et al., 2016; MINEPDED, 2017).

The adoption of sustainable forestry practices depends on the choice of forest managers, practitioners, and decision makers; however, their choices are influenced by a number of barriers. In Cameroon, these barriers are related to economic, governance, regulatory and legislative frameworks, knowledge, and capacity (Chia et al., 2020). Each of these categories of barriers have interrelated sub barriers that influence SFM in different ways (Table xxx).

Table Types of barriers facing SFM in Cameroon

Categories of Barriers	Sub/key barriers
Economic related barriers	High opportunity cost of maintaining forests as compared to other land uses

	High transaction cost for improved forest management
	Limited financial benefits from adopting improved forest management
	Inadequate incentives
Regulatory and legislative frameworks related barriers	Inadequate regulatory framework
	Inadequate political will and incentive to enforce regulations
	Impracticable technical directives from legislation
Governance related barriers	Unclear tenure and resource rights
	Poor transparency and accountability
	Corruption
	Limited participation of relevant actors in the development of management plans
Knowledge and capacity related barriers	Limited understanding of the benefits of improved forest management
	Limited financial and material resources
	Inadequate human resources to implement and monitor regulations
	Lack of successful examples and poor disclosure of what is known

Source: Chia et al., 2020

4.2. IMPLICATION OF BARRIERS ON CARBON EMISSION REDUCTION

Today, SFM is a key aspect in the international debate related to carbon emission reductions from avoided deforestation and forest degradation. Cameroon is part of this global effort, as a tropical forest country, it has a substantial part of its forest being managed under the framework of SFM objectives and principles. It is noted that SFM practices in Cameroon provides substantial opportunity to reduce forest carbon emissions (Cerutti et al., 2017; MINEPDED, 2017). The REDD+ national strategy, through its strategic option no.3 focuses on the forest sector, underscores the vital role of SFM in achieving emission reductions in Cameroon. It highlights that emission reduction programs in the forestry sector should place emphasize on enhancing the adoption of SFM practices (MINEPDED, 2018). The emission reduction programs and projects that will be developed in the different agroecological zones of Cameroon will include huge surface areas of production forest as part of their carbon accounting area. The policy and institutional transformations must address SFM barriers to ensure that emission reductions from the implementation of SFM practices are real (Chia et al., 2020). At the national level, REDD+ support should contribute to enforcing the governance and regulatory frameworks, enhance technical and institutional capacity, and ensure the availability of information and knowledge. The REDD+ readiness support was an opportunity for Cameroon to address these policy gaps. However, an evaluation of the REDD+ readiness process as of date, indicates that more effort is needed in terms of concrete institutional and policy actions to fill these sectoral gaps (Chia et al 2019). The private sector, both small, medium, and large-scale production systems are to be kept alongside concerning the improvement in the enabling environment for the adoption of SFM practices (Chia et al., 2020).

In the process of designing programs and projects, effective consultations should be held with forest managers on the choice of SFM practices to be adopted in their concessions, and on the synergies between REDD+ and SFM practices. Furthermore, consultations should be capable of presenting to forest managers the links between carbon emission reductions and results-based financial flows. This will be relevant in terms of incentivizing their operations and increasing their competitiveness with other economic land uses (Chia et al., 2020).

4.3. INTEGRATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION IN SFM INSTRUMENTS (GUIDELINES, MANAGEMENT PLANS, ETC.)

Currently, climate change is not sufficiently integrated in the management instruments of PFAs, be it production forest or protected areas. The strategic reference documents for developing PFA management instruments need to explicitly take into consideration emission reduction requirements and climate change adaptation / resilient. For example, the management plans of forest management units and protected areas need to be climate smart i.e., explicitly integration of climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, including but not limited to the flow of socioeconomic benefits.

5. PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

An assessment was conducted to check alignment with some relevant, past, ongoing, and planned initiative. Table 9 and 10 below shows the alignment and potential for collaboration of the project under development.

Table 9: Complementarity and lessons for upscaling of the project under preparation and relevant programs and initiatives

Programs and initiatives	Description	Potential areas of synergy and lessons for upscaling
The Cameron government Roadmap to Deforestation-Free Cocoa initiative Implementation period from 2021 onwards	The RDFC initiative is a multi-stakeholder approach bringing together stakeholders across all stakeholder groups with the aim of eliminating deforestation across the cocoa supply chain. The objective of the initiative is to: - Protect and restore forests while strengthening the implementation of forest law on protected areas and restoring degraded forest lands - Ensure sustainable production and commercialisation of cocoa through cocoa - Include community engagement and livelihood by ensuring a living income and access to finance	Areas of synergy include the improvement of agriculture (cocoa) and NTFP value chains for forest conservation and livelihood improvement
Program for the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Cameroon - PSMNR Phase IV MINFOF KfW, GIZ, WCS and WWF. 2018-2022	The purpose of the project is the sustainable forest and wildlife management by affected stakeholders in and around Mt Cameroun NP, Korup NP, Takamanda NP, Bayang Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary (WS) and since 2018 the Bakossi NP for their benefit, with special emphasis on the poorer segments of the local population. This is to contribute to the preservation of high-value ecosystems in the Southwest Region, thereby sustainably contributing to improved livelihoods of surrounding communities.	This project aligns with the PSMNR Phase IV as it seeks to sustainably manage PFAs and restore degraded lands in and around PFAs with a strong contribution to biodiversity conservation. There is a potential of harmonizing efforts in the Bakossi landscape as it is an area of intersection for both projects

National Plantation forests Development Program (NPFDP) Cameroon 2020-2045	The vision of the NPFDP for Cameroon is to provide a strategic driving instrument that should help in planning the creation and development of plantation forests, harmonise the roles of all stakeholders also while contributing to put in place an enabling institutional environment for private investors, in tune with other national initiatives as part of the sector and value chain approach. The approach will provide a development focus of enhancing the country's forest resource regeneration potential in order to contribute to the well-being of locals by improving their income and living standards. Specifically, the programs aim to promote the growth and exploitation of plantation forests by creating 40,000 ha of forests per year over 25 years, thus 1,000,000 up to 2045, and support stakeholders in the silviculture sector value chain. This will be achieved through: - Increasing timber production, and products other than lumber, construction wood and firewood, enhancing wood products and developing silviculture value chains; - Providing eco-system services other than supplies (recreation, etc.); - Restoring degraded lands and landscapes; - Supporting research - innovation, training and capacity building; and - Implementing the programme consistently, ensuring that all social categories are involved from decision-making to implementation.	The project will contribute to the restoration of degraded landscapes in around PfAs. It will also build stakeholder capacity on SFM and MRV of forest cover and carbon stock.
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Table 10: Complementarity and lessons for upscaling of the project under preparation and relevant projects

Projects	Description	IUCN project alignment	Areas of improvement	Lessons for upscaling in IUCN project
Project for the Sustainable Management of Forests under the Authority of Cameroonians Councils: (GCP/CMR/033/GFF).	This project aims to reduce deforestation and forest degradation in order to improve biodiversity conservation, reduce emissions and increase carbon stocks and improve the living conditions of local communities. It will facilitate: - Sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity in communal forests; - Capacity building to strengthen biodiversity conservation and sustainable management in communal forests; - Capacity building on forest carbon management; and - Restoring ecosystems and increasing carbon stocks in communal forests. Dimako, Gari-Gombo and Yokadouma councils in the revision of their management plans, capacity building of the communal forestry units/members of the CPF and the characterization of biodiversity in these communal forests.	Sustainable Forest management and restoration - Improved governance systems for sustainable forest management - Strengthened sustainable forest management of PFAs - Increased restoration of degraded lands and forests in and around permanent forest areas to facilitate carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, gender equality and well-being (agroforestry, improved energy systems for domestic uses, etc.) - Increased capacity of		The GCP/CMR/033/GFF project focuses on a municipal council approach to reduce deforestation and forest degradation and the enhancement of livelihood of local communities. The IUCN project could consider identifying the municipalities included in the project and strengthen their capacity to participate in the projects.

		government institutions, CSO, councils and local populations on monitoring, reporting and verification of forest cover and carbon stocks		
Benue National Park (BNP) Management Support Project, Second Phase	The objective is to contribute to the restoration and protection of the biological resources of the PNB and its peripheral zone in a context of integrated management of the area, with a view to maintaining its biodiversity and contributing to local development. The specific objectives are as follows: To contribute to the protection and monitoring of the PNB and its peripheral zone To contribute to the reinforcement of the operational capacities of the Conservation Department; To contribute to the sustainable development of the biological and ecotourism resources of the PNB and its peripheral zone with a view to securing and improving the livelihoods of the local populations; To promote the integrated management of the PNB according to the landscape approach - Expected impacts:	The UICN project completely aligns with the objectives of the BNP projects as it aims at sustainable management of PFA, restoration of degraded forest in and around PFAs, building capacity of relevant stakeholders on MRV on forest cover and carbon stock.		Although the BNP in a smaller scale with respect to the IUCN project under development, it may be important to consider the sustainable development of the biological and ecotourism resources in some of the PFA and its peripheral zone in order to strengthen efforts towards securing and improving the livelihoods of the local populations.

	The Park's management efficiency score is improved by about 50%; At least 85% of the protected area of the BNP is secured, with a focus on the northern part of the Park; and Pressures on resources are reduced by about 50% compared to the state of pressures in 2019.			
Reducing deforestation and forest degradation in Ngoyla-Mintom forest block through the implementation of sustainable integrated management in the Tri-National landscape Dja - Odzala - Minkebe (TRIDOM) 2011-2016	The objective of the project was to contribute to biodiversity conservation and to safeguard and maintain carbon stocks in the Ngoyla-Mintom forest block Reducing deforestation and forest degradation in Ngoyla-Mintom forest block through the implementation of sustainable integrated management in the Tri-National landscape Dja - Odzala - Minkebe (TRIDOM) 2011-2016	Component 1 of this project under development which focuses on sustainable forest management and restoration seek to improve sustainable foresee management system governance, strengthen sustainable forest management of PFAs and restore degraded forest and lands in and around PFA. This will contribute to safeguarding forest carbon stock, and biodiversity conservation especially those hosted by PFAs		This project can build on the existing FPIC platform in Ngoyla Mintom for stakeholder consultation. It is important as well to draw lessons from the REDD+ pilot projects in Ngoyla-Mintom (project led by WWC) for national use
Forest and Environment Project GIZ 2020 to 2022 The project is active in four regions (Centre, Far North,	Objectives: Local actors benefit sustainably from Cameroon's environment and forest resources: -Promoting the sustainable use of forest resources and biodiversity in municipalities;	This project will promote the sustainable use of natural resources through developing Markets and supply chain transformation for selected NTFPs in the	Both projects will involve the development of value chains for NTFPs for the local	

North and East) and at national level	-Developing value chains based on timber and non-timber forest products for the benefit of vulnerable local people; -Providing environmental education to increase levels of appreciation of natural resources, climate change mitigation and the environment; and -Improving general conditions for policy dialogue and valorisation of forest resources.	targeted project areas including the North and the East.	population. Thus, it is important to align on the NTFPs especially in the North and the East where both projects may intersect in terms of implementing areas	
Mintom Community Forestry Landscape Project Rainforest Alliance (Ongoing)	Objectives: Sustainable management of forest resources and limit expansion of agricultural activities into the Dja Reserve	The IUCN project as well focus on reducing degradation in PFAs and improvement of livelihood of communities around these PFAs. The project also seeks to build capacity of communities around PFA.	There is need to harmonize efforts towards sustainable management of forest resources in the Dja Reserve.	
Increasing local communities' resilience to climate change through youth entrepreneurship and integrated natural resources management IFAD PADFA II Adaptation Fund	The overall objective of the project is to increase local communities' resilience to climate change through resilient livelihoods and integrated natural resources management. The project will deliver this objective through three outcomes: 1. Climate proofed institutional frameworks and local development plans at regional and local level;	This project under development is in line with objective 2 and 3 of IFAD PADFA II project. IT seeks to through component 2 to build capacity of stakeholders in including government institutions, CSOs, local communities and farmer's group. Component 1 seeks to		

	2. Ecosystems resilience to climate change is strengthened through monitoring and better knowledge of their status and vulnerability; and 3. Sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems leading to climate resilient ecosystems, green jobs creation for youth and resilient livelihoods.	strengthen sustainable management of PFAs through, strengthening governance systems, the restoration of degraded lands in and around protected areas, while component 3 aims at improving livelihood of communities through developing market opportunities in NTFP value chains.		
TRIDOM II “ Integrated and transboundary biodiversity conservation in the basins of the Republic of Cameroon” PNDP 2020-2026	The project objective is to strengthen the conservation of globally threatened species in Cameroon by improving biodiversity enforcement, resilience, and management. Outcome 2: Improved management effectiveness of PAs in forest landscapes (specifically Dja, Boumba Bek, Mangame, NGoyla and Nki) Outcome 3.2: Adoption of management practices and community centred initiatives in the forest interzone that support sustainable livelihoods, SLM and reduce wildlife crime.	The project under development completely aligns with outcome 2 and 3.2 of the PNDP project as it focuses on improving PFAs in forest landscapes in South of Cameroon (Dja, Boumba Bek, Mangame, NGoyla and Nki). Component 2 builds the capacity of actors including local community around PFAs towards a community-based Forest management system.	One of the area of interventions is the IUCN project is the South Region. There is a strong opportunity to synergize SFM system of PFA in this region.	

6. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SYNERGY AND LESSONS LEARN

Some gaps were identified of the forest policies and initiatives that have been analysed. Table 11 provides in the gaps in each of the policies and initiatives and how the project will contribute to address these gaps.

Table 11: Potential of project under preparation to address gaps of forest policies and initiatives

Forest policies and initiatives	Gaps	How the project contributes to address gaps
Bonn Challenge	It is argued that restoration takes too long, costs too much, and produces too few benefits to justify public or private expenditures.	The project will contribute to providing an enabling environment to mobilise stakeholders and financial opportunities, incentives for restoration.
Paris Agreement	The Agreement encourages parties that are rich in forests including Cameroon to take concrete action to promote REDD+. However, it does not state concrete actions that are needed to promote REDD+.	The project operationalises the Paris Agreement by providing concrete steps that can be used to advance REDD+ and promote Cameroon's REDD+ payment mechanisms in sustainably managed forests.
The 1994 forestry law	The implementation of the forest law has been ineffective as it is constantly hampered by irregularities partly resulting from among others weak institutional capacity of forest services. The law does not articulate exploitable quantities of NWFP by local communities in the execution of user rights.	The project will contribute to address the gap of weak capacity through the proposed component 2. The capacities of different stakeholder groups will be build including government institutions, CSO, councils and local populations. The project takes into consideration the strong implication of the Ministry of Forestry who will ensure that the sustainable management and value chain development of NTFPs align with legal provisions.
Decree No. 95/531/PM of 23 August 1995,	In as much as the objectives of the forestry law and policies are towards forest protection and sustainable management, the forest remains a major climate sink for climate change	The project will demonstrate the need to mainstream climate change in existing policies and related management instruments of PFAs.

	mitigation which the law fails to integrate.	
REDD+ Strategy	In as much as the REDD+ strategy was established in 2018, there are still some enabling conditions such as the institutional and technical capacity and the Warsaw framework elements.	The project will contribute to enhancing the institutional and technical capacity for REDD+, including the operationalisation of sectoral and cross-cutting strategic options.
FLEGT VPA Agreement	The FLEGT VPA has not been effectively implemented since its establishment. According to findings, this is partly due to the fact that the technical systems proposed in the VPA are not suitable to Cameroon's informal sector and there is need for significant reforms before the VPA can contribute to governance of the informal sector. Main suggestions are to remain flexible and more responsive to local realities and priorities while maintaining the broader objectives agreed upon during VPA negotiations.	This project will improve the forest governance system and strengthen sustainable forest management through a multi-stakeholder engagement approach including, government institutions, private sector Civil Society Organization and local communities and authorities. The development and implementation will build on the provisions of existing policies and legal provisions while taking into consideration local community realities.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Deforestation and forest degradation remains a key issue that the governments continue to battle with especially amidst the current climate change issues facing the world. However, government effort to address deforestation and forest degradation, and climate change has resulted in a set of policies and legal framework put in place. The country has witnessed a huge overlap in the implementation of its different policies that have affected forest cover in the last decade and a half.

This report provided an overview of the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, documents fundamental objectives of forest policies and related initiatives, demonstrated how the current project under preparation aligns with forest policies, programs, initiatives, as well as how projecting the project under preparation can fill gaps that were identified. This report also identified that apart from agriculture that has been identified as the main driver of deforestation and forest degradation, the mining sector, fuel wood collection, logging activities and infrastructural development significantly contributes to deforestation and forest degradation.

This report demonstrates how the project idea aligns with global level policies and initiatives such as the New York Declaration on Forest, the Bonn Challenge, the UNFCCC Paris Agreement; regional level initiatives such as the AFR100, the Great Green Wall initiative, African Union Agenda 2063; Sub-regional level initiatives and policies such as the COMIFAC convergence plan, the Central African Forest Initiative, and national level policies such as the SND30, NDC, NAP and GCF country program.

Furthermore, the report demonstrated alignment of project under development with forestry and related policies such as the 1994 Forestry law, the National environmental management plan, the law formalizing the procedure for conducting SEIA etc. In addition, an assessment was conducted to demonstrated alignment with relevant strategies and it was presented that the project under development aligned with the REDD+ Strategy in terms of it potential to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, the Land Degradation Neutrality, national biodiversity strategy due to its potential to conserve biodiversity and the FLEGT VPA.

Presented in Tables 9 and 10 of this report, the project being prepared demonstrates alignment and potential for synergy with other ongoing and future projects such as, the Roadmap to Deforestation-Free Cocoa, PSMNR in the Southwest Region. Projects included amongst others the Benue National Park (BNP) Management Support Project, Second Phase, the Ngoyla Mintom REDD+ projects, the Mintom Community Forestry Landscape Project etc. Lastly, there are several opportunities for synergy and lessons learned in relation to past and ongoing projects and programs.

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