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FUND**

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28 September 2026

Consideration of funding proposals – Addendum V

Funding proposal package for FP312

Summary

This addendum contains the following seven parts:

- a) A funding proposal titled "Securing Permanent Forests to Combat Climate Change and Enhance Sustainable National and Local Economies in Cameroon (SPEFOCE)";
- b) No-objection letter issued by the national designated authority(ies) or focal point(s);
- c) Environmental and social report(s) disclosure;
- d) Secretariat's assessment;
- e) Independent Technical Advisory Panel's assessment;
- f) Response from the accredited entity to the independent Technical Advisory Panel's assessment; and
- g) Gender documentation.

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The documents are presented as submitted by the Accredited Entity.

Funding Proposal

Project Title:	Securing Permanent Forests to Combat Climate Change and Enhance Sustainable National and Local Economies in Cameroon (SPEFOCE)
Country:	Cameroon
Accredited Entity:	International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
Date of first submission:	<u>2022/11/11</u>
Date of current submission	<u>2026/06/22</u>
Version number	<u>V.21</u>



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PROJECT/PROGRAMME SUMMARY			
A.1. Project or programme	Project	A.2. Public or private sector	Public
A.3. Request for Proposals (RFP)	<u>Not applicable</u>		
A.4. Result area (s)		GCF contribution	Co-financers' contribution¹
	Mitigation total	67 %	44 %
	☐ Energy generation and access		
	☐ Low-emission transport		
	☐ Buildings, cities, industries and appliances		
	☒ Forestry and land use	<u>67 %</u>	<u>44 %</u>
	Adaptation total	33 %	56 %
	☒ Most vulnerable people and communities	<u>3%</u>	<u>25%</u>
	☒ Health and well-being, and food and water security	<u>21%</u>	<u>23%</u>
	☐ Infrastructure and built environment		
	☒ Ecosystems and ecosystem services	<u>9%</u>	<u>8 %</u>
	A.5. Expected mitigation outcome <i>(Core indicator 1: GHG emissions reduced, avoided or removed / sequestered)</i>	2,467,777 tCO ₂ e (avoided emissions: 1,589,313 tCO ₂ e; sequestration: 878,464 tCO ₂ e)	A.6. Expected adaptation outcome <i>(Core indicator 2: direct and indirect beneficiaries reached)</i>
A.7. Total financing (GCF + co-finance²)	46 045 635 USD	A.9. Project size	1,346,605 <i>Indicate 4. % of indirect beneficiaries vis-à-vis total population</i>
A.8. Total GCF funding requested	29 740 699 USD		Small (Upto USD 50 million)
A.10. Financial instrument(s) requested for the GCF funding	☒ Grant ☐ Equity <u>Enter number</u> ☐ Loan <u>Enter number</u> ☐ Results-based payment <u>Enter number</u> ☐ Guarantee		
A.11. Implementation period	<i>7 years</i>	A.12. Total lifespan	<i>20 years</i>
A.13. Expected date of AE internal approval	<i>Q3 2026</i>	A.14. ESS category	B
A.15. Has this FP been submitted as a CN before?	Yes ☒ No ☐	A.16. Has Readiness or PPF support been used to prepare this FP?	Yes ☒ No ☐
A.17. Is this FP included in the entity work programme?	Yes ☒ No ☐	A.18. Is this FP included in the country programme?	Yes ☒ No ☐
A.19. Complementarity and coherence	Yes ☒ No ☐		
A.20. Executing Entity information	Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)		

A.21. Executive summary

Cameroon has experienced significant forest cover loss, including in Permanent Forest Areas (PFAs), with a notable loss of 2.2 million hectares of tree cover from 2001-2024 (GFW, 2024), of which 47% in primary forests. This alarming trend threatens biodiversity, undermines ecosystem services, and exacerbates climate change, as forests in Cameroon play a critical role in carbon sequestration and climate regulation. Deforestation and forest degradation are increasingly driven by the combined effects of climate variability including changing rainfall patterns and rising temperatures, and anthropogenic pressures such as agricultural expansion, illegal logging, population growth, and unsustainable harvesting of forest resources.

PFAs in Cameroon provide diverse ecosystem goods and services that are vital for economic development at national and local levels. They are carbon sinks, essential for enhancing the resilience of surrounding communities. Although the PFAs are designated for conservation, illegal logging and agricultural expansion continue to undermine these Protected Areas “PA”, intensifying the urgency for immediate intervention to preserve both the nation's ecosystems and the livelihoods of communities that depend on these forests. PFAs are under increasing threats of climate change; efforts to avoid and limit PFA degradation and restore them are constrained by financial, economic, ecological, political, social, and technical factors that interact at the national and local levels.

Cameroon is highly vulnerable to climate change, with observed increases in temperature (approximately +1.5°C since 1960) and increasing rainfall variability, including more frequent droughts in the north and intense precipitation events in the south^{3,4}. These changes are projected to intensify, leading to reduced agricultural productivity, increased forest fire risk, and degradation of ecosystem services critical for livelihoods. Forest-dependent communities, particularly in and around PFAs, are disproportionately affected due to high reliance on climate-sensitive natural resources and limited adaptive capacity.

In this context, sustainable forest management and restoration are essential adaptation strategies, as they enhance water regulation, stabilize soils, buffer microclimates, and diversify climate-resilient livelihood options, thereby reducing vulnerability to climate shocks.

Proposed interventions

Thus, to keep Cameroon's Permanent Forest Areas safe, and at the same time to enhance socioeconomic and climate resilience of surrounding communities in the short, medium, and long-term, the SPEFOCE project will address the governance, technical, economic and financial barriers related to (i) Insufficient institutional coordination on sustainable forest management and restoration; (ii) Obsolete PFA management plans in the context of climate change; (iii) Unclear land / tree tenure and land use plans which disincentivizes involvement and investments in restoration and sustainable forest management; (iv) Capacity and knowledge gaps that hinder the transfer and adoption of climate-resilient practices in restoration; (v) High interest rates related to forestry and agriculture sector investments, and (vi) Rudimentary processing techniques, equipment and facilities used by green businesses.

The project will be implemented in three intervention areas in different agroecological zones (AEZ): the Sudano Sahelian AEZ with the Waza Landscape, the Bimodal rainforest AEZ with the Dja-Lobeke (DL) Landscape, and the Western Highlands AEZ with the Bakossi-Bamboutous (BB) Landscape.

The project objective is to transform land use and forest management practices in and around Permanent Forest Areas (PFAs) into climate-resilient, low-emission and economically viable systems that sustainably generate forest ecosystem goods and services for national and local economies, reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and strengthen the climate change resilience of forest-dependent communities and ecosystems. Over a 20-year accounting period, the project is expected to deliver a combined portfolio mitigation potential of approximately 2,467,777 tCO₂e, comprising 1,589,313 tCO₂e from

¹ Co-financer's contribution means the financial resources required, whether Public Finance or Private Finance, in addition to the GCF contribution (i.e. GCF financial resources requested by the Accredited Entity) to implement the project or programme described in the funding proposal.

² Refer to the Policy of Co-financing of the GCF..

³ World Bank (2023). *Climate Change Knowledge Portal: Cameroon*

⁴ IPCC (2022). *Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), Working Group II: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability – Africa Chapter*

avoided emissions and 878,464 tCO₂e from enhanced sequestration, across approximately 60,008 ha of forest and agricultural landscapes (see Annex 22).

To achieve this objective, the project adopts a holistic approach structured around four technical (4) components:

Component 1: Climate-smart sustainable forest management (SFM) and land restoration practices effectively implemented in targeted forest landscapes

Component 2: Value chain development and transformation are operational

Component 3: Stakeholders' capacities are strengthened on climate-resilient land-use practices

Component 4: Strong project monitoring and knowledge-driven partnerships

Climate results and benefits

By strengthening governance, climate-responsive planning and sustainable management of Permanent Forest Areas (PFAs), while improving access to green finance, value chain development and capacity building at local and national levels, the project will reduce deforestation and forest degradation. It will restore forest ecosystems and enhance livelihoods and climate resilience of surrounding communities. In the long term, the project will support a transition toward low-carbon, inclusive forest-based development, and enhance the resilience of communities and ecosystems in and around the three (3) PFAs targeted by the project in Cameroon.

The project will contribute directly to enhancing the resilience of 197,979 vulnerable beneficiaries, with 1,346,605 expected indirect beneficiaries through the introduction of climate-resilient agricultural practices and other income-generating and livelihood support activities such as value chain development. In total, the number of hectares targeted for agroforestry, reforestation and restoration is 10,008 ha and for sustainable forest management and conservation is 50,000 ha, contributing to increased resilience of vulnerable ecosystems in the targeted AEZs to climate change impacts such as flooding, droughts, and wildfires. The conservation of permanent forests, sustainable use of production forests, promotion of agroforestry, afforestation, and reforestation will result in a combined portfolio mitigation potential of 2,467,777 tCO₂e over the twenty-year accounting period, comprising 1,589,313 tCO₂e from avoided emissions and 878,464 tCO₂e from enhanced sequestration.

PROJECT/PROGRAMME INFORMATION

B.1. Climate context

Cameroon's population is estimated at 29 million in 2025 and projected to reach 42 million by 2050. This growing population is placing growing pressure on land, forests, and water resources that sustain over 70% of the population through agriculture and forest-based livelihoods. Unsustainable land use, weak governance, and climate change are compounding poverty, food insecurity, and ecosystem degradation, particularly in the Waza (Sudano-Sahelian), Dja-Lobeke (Bimodal Rainforest), and Bakossi-Bamboutous (Western Highlands) landscapes.

In these areas, rapid population growth, rising temperatures (projected +2 to +4.8°C), and declining rainfall are intensifying droughts, soil erosion, and biodiversity loss, pushing communities to expand cropland into forests and deplete natural resources. Nationwide, forest cover loss reached 2.2 million hectares of tree cover from 2001-2024⁵, including 47% in primary forests, with annual loss projected to triple by 2035. These combined pressures threaten agricultural productivity (expected 20–25% yield decline in key crops), reduce carbon sequestration, and endanger the livelihoods of over 2.3 million people living around Permanent Forest Areas (PFAs). Without coordinated restoration, sustainable forest management, and diversified climate-resilient livelihoods, Cameroon faces accelerating ecosystem collapse and deepening climate vulnerability that will undermine national development and climate goals. The SPEFOCE project directly addresses these national challenges by targeting three of the main PFAs that are likely to drive change at the national level and thus impact all PFAs.

⁵ Global Forest Watch (2024). Tree cover loss in Cameroon. World Resources Institute. Available at: www.globalforestwatch.org/dashboards/country/CMR. Accessed April 2026. Based on Hansen et al. (2013), updated dataset.

PROJECT/PROGRAMME INFORMATION

B.1. Climate context

PFAs in Cameroon are estimated to cover 12.6 million ha or 26.5% of the national territory. They are essential for enhancing the climate resilience of vulnerable forest-dependent communities through the provision of ecosystem goods and services, especially non-timber forest products (NTFPs) that are vital for economic development at the national and local levels. In addition, these forests are also active carbon sinks. Well-managed forest ecosystems absorb and store atmospheric CO₂ through biomass and soil organic carbon accumulation.

Continued degradation through illegal logging, agricultural encroachment, uncontrolled burning and unsustainable hinders the sequestration capacity by reducing growth rates, increasing tree mortality and degrading soil carbon stocks. As these degradation processes intensify, forests can shift from being net carbon sinks, to carbon-neutral or even net carbon sources. PFAs in Cameroon have experienced an increase in average annual forest cover loss, especially in the three targeted landscapes of the project. Based on the project's satellite land cover analysis (Annex 22E), in the Waza Landscape, annual forest loss is 7,558.59 ha, corresponding to an estimated loss of 158,730.3 ha between 2000 and 2021. In the BB Landscape, the annual loss is estimated at 717.86 ha, for an overall loss of 15,075.1 ha, while the DL Landscape annual loss is 1,440.03 ha, corresponding to an overall loss of 30,240.67 ha for the same period. These landscape-level figures are derived from the project's Restoration Opportunities Assessment (Annex H/24/ROAM) and satellite land cover analysis (Annex 22E), which provide parcel-level data not available from the GFW national dataset. At the regional level, GFW (2024) data confirm that the Sud region (encompassing the Dja-Lobéké landscape) lost 430 kha of tree cover between 2001 and 2024 (9.0% decrease), while the Extrême-Nord region (encompassing the Waza landscape) and Sud-Ouest/Ouest regions (encompassing the Bakossi-Bamboutos landscape) also experienced sustained losses, consistent with the project-level data. The SPEFOCE project intervenes on 60,008 ha across the three landscapes, comprising 10,008 ha of active agroforestry and forest restoration and 50,000 ha under SFM governance.

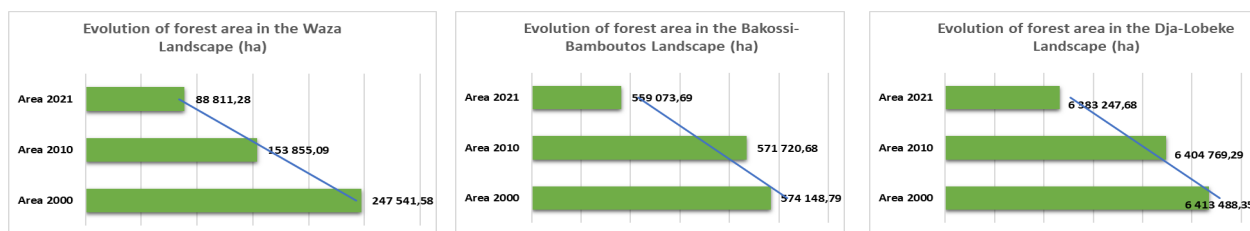


Figure 1: Evolution of forests in the project implementation landscapes between 2000, 2010 and 2021
(Source: Satellite land cover analysis, Annex 22E).

Moreover, the country is faced with numerous barriers to SFM, NTFPs production, processing, and marketing, as well as forest restoration that can be grouped into institutional and governance barriers, technical barriers, and financial and economic barriers:

- **Institutional and governance barriers:** Weak Forest governance that leads to illegal forest activities such as extraction of timber and bushmeat hunting are the principal factors. Firstly, there is insufficient institutional coordination on the topic of sustainable forest management (SFM) and restoration due to institutional inertia. Secondly, management plans for PFAs are not designed to account for projected climate risks (e.g. increased drought frequency, shifting rainfall regimes), limiting their effectiveness in maintaining ecosystem functionality and resilience under future climate conditions. Lastly, unclear land/tree tenure and outdated land use plans discourages interested actors including communities from venturing into restoration and SFM.
- **Technical Barriers:** Technologies and practices needed for low-emission and climate-resilient forestry in Cameroon are still at an infancy stage. This is due to capacity and knowledge gaps, which are hindering the transfer and adoption of climate-resilient practices in restoration, and impeding the transfer and adoption of low-carbon and climate-resilient practices in PFAs management.

- **Economic and financial barriers:** Local communities and other stakeholders engaged in the forestry sector have inadequate access to financial services that enable the adoption of best climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions and practices. The low access to green business financing is due to the following factors: negative perception of green investment as high risk, and unprofitable by financial institutions; high interest rates related to forestry and agriculture sector investment; rudimentary processing techniques, equipment and facilities used by green businesses; and limited access of green businesses to national, regional, and international markets.

As for the Dja-Lobeke Landscape, the main drivers of permanent forest loss are cash crop agriculture (rubber, oil palm and cocoa) and food crop agriculture (cassava, pineapple, plantain, and maize), coupled with artisanal mining. Logging remains the main driver of permanent forest degradation in this landscape coupled with bushfires and hunting. Underlying factors for deforestation / forest degradation in this landscape include political instability in CAR, large-scale mining projects in Mbalam, high international and regional market demand for timber, the economic crisis coupled with the structural adjustment programme and urban growth. These results are corroborated by findings from Yisu et al. 2020, Tegegne et al. 2016, Dkamela 2011, MINEPDED 2016, Weng et al. 2014, and Hoyle and Levang 2012. See Annex 22B, page 30, section 4.

Climate hazards, projected impacts and adaptation needs (see Annex 22C, Section 4.1 for more detail)

Cameroon is highly vulnerable to climate change due to its ecological diversity, reliance on climate-sensitive sectors, and the high dependence of rural populations on natural resources. Observed climate trends indicate a steady increase in temperatures of approximately 0.15–0.25°C per decade since the 1960s, alongside increasing rainfall variability across the country^{6,7}. These changes are already manifesting through more frequent and prolonged droughts in the northern regions, increased incidence of extreme rainfall events and flooding in southern and forested zones, and growing intra-seasonal variability that disrupts agricultural calendars^{8,9}.

Climate projections indicate that these trends will intensify, with average temperatures expected to rise by approximately 2–3°C by 2050 under moderate to high emission scenarios^{10,11}. This warming is expected to increase evapotranspiration rates, reduce soil moisture, and exacerbate water stress across both forest and agricultural systems. Rainfall patterns are projected to become increasingly erratic, characterized by delayed onset of rains, shorter wet seasons, and more intense precipitation events. These shifts will disrupt ecological processes, including forest regeneration cycles and agricultural production systems, while also increasing the frequency and severity of extreme events such as droughts, floods, and storms^{12,13}.

The three intervention landscapes—Dja-Lobéké (humid bimodal rainforest), Bakossi-Bamboutos (Western Highlands), and Waza (Sudano-Sahelian zone)—are each exposed to distinct but overlapping climate risks, with varying frequencies and intensities of climate-driven hazards including heatwaves, droughts, high winds, rainfall variability, flooding, erosion, and landslides. In the humid bimodal rainforest landscape of Dja-Lobéké, forestry and wildlife systems are particularly vulnerable to increasing temperatures, drought stress, and high wind events. These pressures contribute to biodiversity loss, reduced forest regeneration capacity, and declining availability of NTFPs, directly undermining the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities^{14,15}. In addition, heavy rainfall events accelerate soil erosion and nutrient leaching, further degrading ecosystem productivity.

In the Western Highlands landscape of Bakossi-Bamboutos, increasing drought frequency and temperature variability are placing growing pressure on both forestry systems and livestock production. These climatic

⁶ World Bank (2023). *Climate Change Knowledge Portal: Cameroon*

⁷ IPCC (2022). *Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), Working Group II: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability – Africa Chapter*

⁸ Government of Cameroon (2015). *National Adaptation Plan (NAP)*

⁹ USAID (2018). *Climate Risk Profile: Cameroon*

¹⁰ IPCC (2022). *Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), Working Group II: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability – Africa Chapter*

¹¹ World Bank (2023). *Climate Change Knowledge Portal: Cameroon*

¹² IPCC (2022). *Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), Working Group II: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability – Africa Chapter*

¹³ FAO (2020). *The State of the World's Forests / Climate impacts on forests*

¹⁴ IPCC (2022). *Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), Working Group II: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability – Africa Chapter*

¹⁵ CIFOR (2020). *Forests and climate change adaptation in Central Africa*

stresses contribute to land degradation processes, including soil erosion and landslides, particularly on steep slopes, while also driving habitat fragmentation and reducing ecosystem connectivity. The combined effects of climatic and anthropogenic pressures weaken ecosystem resilience and reduce the capacity of landscapes to provide essential services such as water regulation and soil stabilization^{16,17}.

In the Sudano-Sahelian Waza landscape, climate risks are particularly acute. Rainfed agricultural systems, which underpin local livelihoods, are highly sensitive to rainfall variability and drought. Climate projections indicate that yields of key staple crops—including millet, sorghum, maize, and cowpea—could decline by 20–25% in the absence of adaptation measures^{18,19}. Rising temperatures and prolonged dry periods are also increasing the risk of desertification, soil degradation, and vegetation loss, while more intense rainfall events contribute to localized flooding and erosion. These dynamics significantly heighten food insecurity and livelihood vulnerability in already fragile socio-ecological systems.

Across all three landscapes, the interaction of climate change with existing pressures—such as deforestation, unsustainable land use practices, and weak governance—amplifies ecosystem degradation and undermines resilience. Increased temperatures and prolonged dry spells contribute to higher rates of tree mortality, increased forest fire risk, and reduced carbon sequestration capacity, while erratic rainfall patterns disrupt both natural and managed systems. In forest ecosystems, these changes reduce regeneration rates and biodiversity, while in agricultural systems they destabilize production cycles and increase yield variability^{20,21}.

These impacts have direct and significant implications for the more than 2.3 million people living in and around Cameroon's Permanent Forest Areas, who rely heavily on ecosystem services for their livelihoods. Climate-induced degradation of forests reduces the availability of food, fuelwood, and income-generating products, while also weakening critical ecosystem functions such as water regulation, microclimate buffering, and soil stabilization. This increases both the exposure and sensitivity of communities to climate shocks, particularly for vulnerable groups including smallholder farmers, women, and Indigenous Peoples^{22,23}.

Without targeted intervention, these climate risks are expected to intensify, further eroding ecosystem integrity and undermining socio-economic resilience. Addressing these challenges requires integrated adaptation approaches that enhance ecosystem resilience while strengthening the adaptive capacity of communities. Sustainable forest management, climate-resilient restoration, and diversification of livelihood systems are therefore critical adaptation strategies, as they help stabilize ecosystem services, reduce vulnerability to climate hazards, and support long-term climate-resilient development pathways.

Table 1 summarises climate hazards, impacts, and adaptation needs in the three interventions areas.

Table 1. Climate hazards, impacts and adaptation needs for the intervention areas.

Climate Hazard	Impacts	Adaptation / Restoration needs	Target Landscape / Area
Increase in temperature	Dryness, loss of species habitat, increased forest fires and tree mortality, reduced livelihoods, decreased income	Assisted natural regeneration, agroforestry, reforestation, use of improved seeds, promotion of drought-tolerant species	Waza: Agricultural lands, mountains, hills; Dja-Lobeke: Agricultural lands, mountains; Bakossi-Bamboutous: Agricultural lands, mountains, forest reserves
Heat waves	Increased risk of bushfires, loss of biodiversity, reduced productivity	Reforestation, agroforestry, fire prevention measures, living hedges, community forest management	All landscapes, particularly hills, mountains, and community forests
Rainfall variability / delayed onset / shorter wet seasons	Disruption of cropping calendar, reduced soil moisture, crop failures, fragmentation of habitats	Modification of agricultural calendar, boreholes/wells, agroforestry, assisted natural regeneration, use of improved seeds, organic farming (compost/manure/crop rotation), protection of riparian forests	Waza: Agricultural lands, buffer zones; Dja-Lobeke: Agricultural lands, mountains; Bakossi-Bamboutous: Agricultural lands, riverbanks
Drought	Increased aridity, reduced pasture productivity,	Irrigation, transhumance, agroforestry, reforestation, fodder improvement, improved seeds, protection of natural forests	Waza: Pastures, hillsides, agricultural lands; Bakossi-Bamboutous: Pastures, agricultural lands

¹⁶ FAO (2020). *The State of the World's Forests / Climate impacts on forests*

¹⁷ World Bank (2023). *Climate Change Knowledge Portal: Cameroon*

¹⁸ World Bank (2023). *Climate Change Knowledge Portal: Cameroon*

¹⁹ IFAD (2021). *Rural climate risk and agricultural productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa*

²⁰ IPCC (2022). *Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), Working Group II: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability – Africa Chapter*

²¹ FAO (2020). *The State of the World's Forests / Climate impacts on forests*

²² IPBES (2019). *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*

²³ Government of Cameroon (2021). *Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)*

	unavailability of NTFPs, and bushfires		
Flooding	Destruction of trees, soil erosion, soil degradation, loss of crops, loss of biodiversity	Reforestation, protection/restoration of watersheds, anti-erosion measures, construction of dykes, living hedges	Waza & Bakossi-Bamboutous: Riverbanks, buffer zones around water bodies; hillsides; riparian forests Dja-Lobeke: Agricultural lands, mountains
Landslides due to intense or prolonged rainfall	Land movement, destruction of crops, loss of biodiversity	Reforestation, anti-erosion measures (stone barriers, terraces), living hedges	Waza & Bakossi-Bamboutous: Hillsides, mountains, agricultural lands

Ex-ante estimations of the mitigation potential of the project

*(*The methodology and calculations can be found in Annexes 22.)*

The SPEFOCE project delivers climate mitigation through two complementary components, both operating across the three project landscapes of Waza, Dja-Lobéké, and Bakossi-Bamboutous. The first is an enhanced sequestration component, covering agroforestry on existing cropland, reforestation of community and council forests, restoration of degraded forest reserves and park areas, and restoration of riparian forest buffers. The second is an avoided emissions component, covering sustainable forest management (SFM) governance activities, management plan development, community patrolling, fire management, and enforcement, that reduce deforestation in designated permanent forest areas within each landscape. Ex-ante estimates are presented for both components and combined into a single portfolio total over a 20-year accounting period.

The Restoration Opportunities Assessment Report (Annex H) identified a combined restoration potential of approximately 190,330 ha across the three landscapes (158,730 ha in Waza, 16,525 ha in Dja-Lobéké, and 15,075 ha in Bakossi-Bamboutous), spanning agroforestry, reforestation, and restoration interventions. The project will intervene on approximately 60,008 ha drawn from within this broader potential: 10,008 ha of active agroforestry and forest restoration activities, and 50,000 ha of forest under SFM governance across the three landscapes. The specific location of intervention areas will be determined through participatory land use planning at the start of project implementation.

The avoided emissions component uses landscape-specific historical deforestation rates derived from satellite land cover analysis (Annex 22E) as the project-level reference level, in the absence of a validated sub-national reference level for the three landscapes. Emission factors are drawn from Cameroon's proposed Forest Reference Level (FRL) submitted to the UNFCCC in January 2026, providing alignment with the national framework wherever currently possible. Once the proposed FRL has completed UNFCCC technical assessment and validated sub-national parameters become available, the reference level values used in this calculation will be reviewed and updated to ensure full alignment.

The ex-ante estimates are constructed conservatively at each stage of the calculation chain. For the sequestration component, an attribution factor of 0.85 is applied to reflect the complexity of landscape carbon dynamics and the possibility that non-project drivers contribute to a portion of biomass gains. For the avoided emissions component, an attribution factor of 1.0 is applied, reflecting the direct and bounded causal link between SFM governance and the reduction in deforestation, with leakage separately deducted. Landscape-specific leakage deductions are applied to both components. For the sequestration component, a Year 1 survival factor, and an annual mortality rate from Year 2 onward, are applied to forestry-related activities, reflecting realistic establishment performance under specific management conditions. Finally, a 20% uncertainty deduction is applied to both components before reporting. Full methodology descriptions and calculations are shown in Annex 22.

Mitigation potential of the project

Across all three landscapes, during the seven-year implementation phase, the project delivers a mitigation potential of 1,642,165 tCO₂e (LOW estimate), comprising 1,589,313 tCO₂e from the avoided emissions component and 52,851 tCO₂e from the enhanced sequestration component. Over a 20-year accounting

lifetime, the combined portfolio mitigation potential reaches 2,467,777 tCO₂e (LOW estimate), with the sequestration component growing to 878,464 tCO₂e.

Mitigation potential by landscape and component (LOW estimate, tCO₂e).

Landscape	Avoided emissions (SFM governance)	Enhanced sequestration	7-yr combined	20-yr combined
Waza	1,517,350	6,799	1,524,149	1,632,166
Dja-Lobéké	10,216	15,743	25,959	268,748
Bakossi-Bamboutos	61,747	30,310	92,057	566,862
Portfolio total	1,589,313	52,851	1,642,165	2,467,777

B.2 (a). Theory of Change narrative and diagram

Theory of Change

The project is based on the recognition that deforestation, forest degradation and the failure of large-scale restoration in Cameroon are driven by outdated forest governance and planning frameworks, fragmented land-use decision-making across sectors, limited economic incentives for sustainable land management, and insufficient technical and institutional capacity to integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation into forest and landscape management.

The project assumes that if governance systems and management instruments for Permanent Forest Areas (protected areas, production forests, communal and community forests) are revised, operationalized and enforced in line with climate-smart Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) principles, and if large-scale, climate-resilient forest and landscape restoration interventions are implemented based on participatory land-use planning, clarified tenure arrangements and climate risk assessments, then deforestation and forest degradation will be reduced, while forest carbon stocks, biodiversity and critical ecosystem services will be restored and enhanced.

These ecological outcomes will be sustained if, in parallel, the enabling environment for green investment and results-based finance is strengthened through the advancement and operationalization of REDD+ instruments (NFMS, FREL, REDD+ Registry and Safeguard Information System), improved transparency and monitoring of mitigation and adaptation results, and the development of innovative financing mechanisms, including Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) value chains and adaptation results-based instruments. By generating diversified, climate-resilient and gender-responsive livelihood opportunities for local communities, Indigenous Peoples and smallholder farmers, these mechanisms align economic incentives with long-term forest conservation and restoration objectives.

While the project does not initiate the development of a national Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL), it will support the finalisation and operationalisation of the FREL, building on ongoing REDD+ readiness processes and partner-supported initiatives. This includes targeted technical and institutional support to address remaining gaps in data, methodologies and capacities required to complete the FREL and enable its effective application.

B.2 (a). Theory of Change narrative and diagram

The project will further strengthen forest monitoring systems, integrate data from restoration and agroforestry interventions, and enhance institutional capacities for emissions accounting and reporting, thereby ensuring that landscape-level interventions are aligned with and contribute to national REDD+ frameworks without duplicating existing efforts. This support is critical to enabling access to results-based climate finance and embedding project interventions within a robust national carbon accounting and monitoring framework.

Furthermore, if the technical, institutional and entrepreneurial capacities of public institutions, local governments, private sector actors, financial institutions and community organizations are strengthened, and if access to agro-climatic information and monitoring tools is improved, then stakeholders will be able to effectively plan, implement, finance and sustain climate-resilient land-use practices beyond the project lifetime.

In the medium to long term, the integrated combination of improved forest governance, climate-smart restoration, green financing and capacity development will generate transformational impacts, including sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, increased carbon sequestration, enhanced resilience of forest and agricultural landscapes, improved livelihoods and food security, and a structural shift towards a low-emission, climate-resilient development pathway consistent with the GCF investment criteria and Cameroon's national climate commitments.

The project generates mitigation outcomes through two complementary mechanisms: (i) enhanced sequestration through the promotion of agroforestry systems on cropland, active reforestation and restoration of community forests, parklands, reserves and riparian buffer zones; and (ii) avoided emissions in forest landscapes through reduced degradation and improved management of PFAs. These interventions are expected to deliver a combined portfolio mitigation potential of 2,467,777 tCO₂e over the 20-year accounting period, comprising 1,589,313 tCO₂e from avoided emissions and 878,464 tCO₂e from enhanced sequestration (see Annex 22 for full methodology and calculations).

The adaptation logic of the project is based on addressing climate-induced risks to forest ecosystems and dependent livelihoods. Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of droughts, floods, and temperature stress, which in turn accelerate forest degradation, reduce ecosystem productivity, and undermine livelihood systems. By integrating climate risk assessments into forest management, restoring degraded landscapes using climate-resilient species and practices, and strengthening climate-informed land-use planning, the project reduces exposure and sensitivity to climate hazards. Simultaneously, by diversifying livelihoods and improving access to climate information, it enhances adaptive capacity. Together, these interventions reduce vulnerability and build long-term resilience of both ecosystems and communities.

Goal Statement and Causal Pathway

Project Goal is to transform land use and forest management practices in and around Permanent Forest Areas (PFAs) into climate-resilient, low-emission and economically viable systems that sustainably generate forest ecosystem goods and services for national and local economies, reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and strengthen the climate change resilience of forest-dependent communities and ecosystems.

IF, Land tenure and land-use planning around Permanent Forest Areas (PFAs) are clarified and operationalised; institutional inertia is addressed through revised, climate-smart Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and protected area management systems; coordination across land-use sectors is strengthened; large-scale restoration is implemented using climate-resilient and locally adapted models; national REDD+ MRV, registry and safeguard systems are operational and trusted; and stakeholders, including public institutions, communities, Indigenous Peoples, private sector actors and financial institutions, are equipped with the capacities, climate information, market access and financing needed to invest in low-emission and climate-resilient forest and land-use practices;

THEN, Carbon emissions from land-use change and forest degradation in PFAs will be sustainably reduced; carbon stocks in degraded forests and lands will be enhanced; biodiversity and critical ecosystem services will be restored; climate-resilient livelihood systems based on sustainable forestry, agroforestry and Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) value chains will be adopted by communities, Indigenous Peoples and

smallholders; and public and private actors will mobilize and sustain investment in restoration and SFM beyond the project lifetime;

BECAUSE, Forest and landscape management systems will have been structurally transformed to integrate climate risks, incentives and safeguards into decision-making; restoration and SFM investments will be technically robust, socially inclusive and economically viable; verified mitigation and adaptation results will unlock green finance; the permanence of carbon sequestration outcomes will be underpinned by legal, governance and land tenure reforms; and tangible livelihood benefits will create long-term ownership, behavioral change and resilience at landscape scale.

The goals are rooted in four outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Targeted PFAs are managed and restored using climate-smart sustainable forest management practices that reduce deforestation and degradation, increase carbon sequestration, and maintain forest ecosystem services.
- Outcome 2: Forest product NTFP value chains are operational, competitive and low-emission, generating stable incomes for local communities while conserving forest resources.
- Outcome 3: Stakeholders (communities, local governments, state services, private sector) have the technical, organizational and governance capacities to plan and adopt climate-resilient land-use practices in and around PFAs.
- Outcome 4: A robust monitoring, governance and knowledge-driven partnership system guides public and private decisions, secures climate/REDD+ financing, and enables scaling up of resilient, low-emission and economically viable forest management models.

The outcomes will be generated from interrelated outputs through the implementation of a combination of activities related to improving the policy management instruments and enabling environment, improving the capacity of stakeholders at the national and local levels. These activities will catalyze future engagement and investments in sustainable exploitation and management of PFA ecosystems by contributing to providing solutions to several interrelated barriers as listed below.

Alignment with GCF Paradigm Shift Objectives and Investment Criteria

The project demonstrates strong paradigm shift potential by addressing the root causes of deforestation and land degradation in and around Permanent Forest Areas through an integrated approach that combines improved forest governance, climate-resilient restoration, green financing and capacity development. It shifts land-use systems from extractive and climate-vulnerable practices to climate-smart, restoration-based and investment-ready models that can be replicated and scaled through national policies and market mechanisms.

The project delivers clear mitigation impacts by reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation while increasing carbon sequestration through large-scale restoration, agroforestry and improved Sustainable Forest Management, supported by robust MRV systems. It also generates significant adaptation benefits by enhancing the resilience of ecosystems and forest-dependent livelihoods to climate risks such as droughts, heatwaves, rainfall variability, floods and erosion. Adaptive capacity is strengthened through access to agroclimatic information, diversified income sources and climate-resilient production systems, reducing the vulnerability of communities and Indigenous Peoples.

The project contributes to sustainable development by improving livelihoods, food security and income diversification, with strong inclusion of women and Indigenous Peoples, while strengthening institutional capacities for sustainable forest and landscape management, and the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Strong country ownership is ensured through alignment with Cameroon's National REDD+ Strategy, NDC and forestry policy frameworks, with leadership from national institutions and decentralized implementation. Efficiency and effectiveness are achieved by building on existing national systems and leveraging private finance and results-based mechanisms, ensuring sustainability beyond GCF grant support.

A

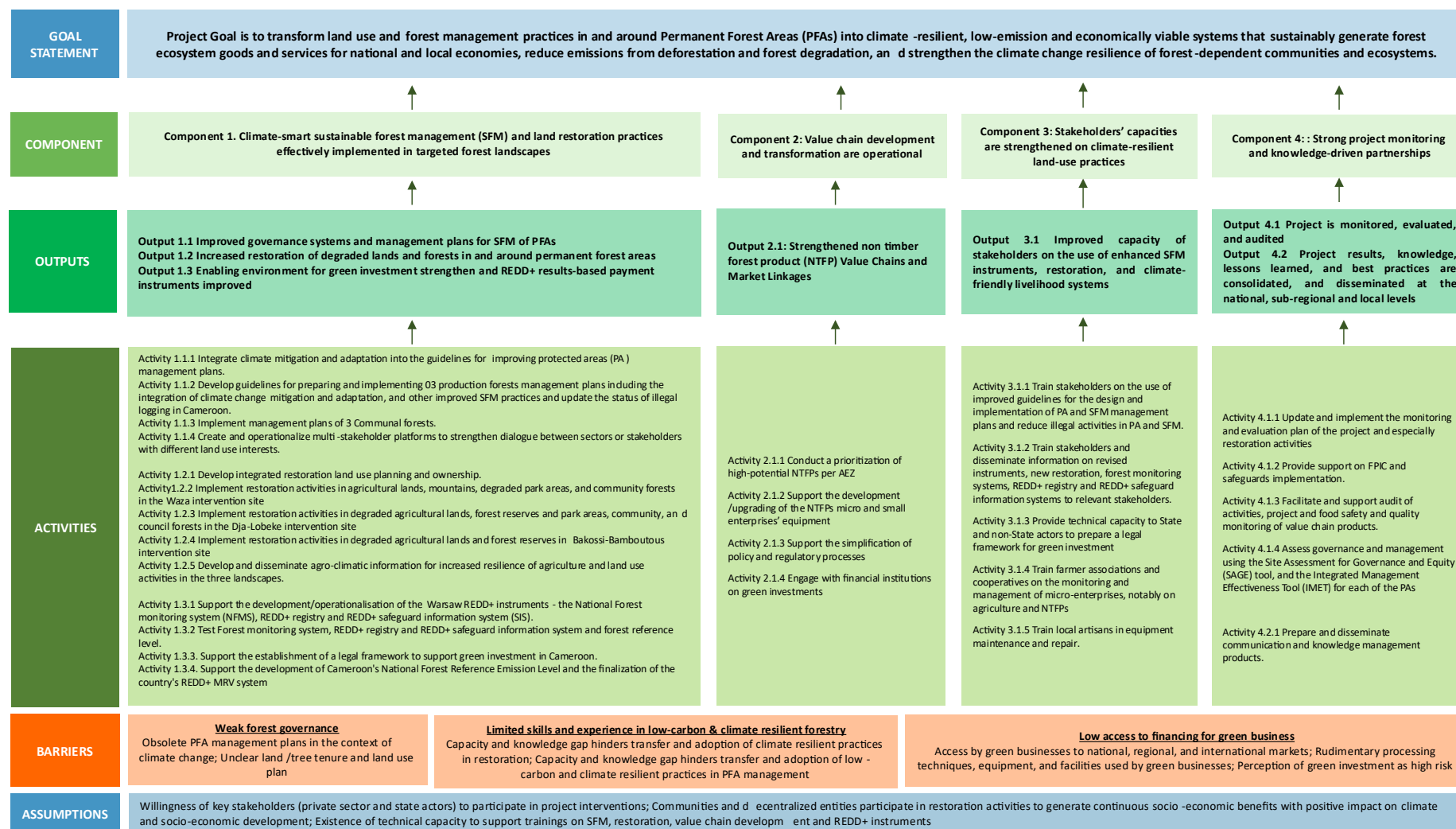


Figure 2: Schematic presentation of the theory of change of this project

B.2 (b). Outcome mapping to GCF results areas and co-benefit categorization

Outcome number	GCF Mitigation Results Area (MRA 1-4)				GCF Adaptation Results Area (ARA 1-4)			
	MRA 1 Energy generation and access	MRA 2 Low-emission transport	MRA 3 Building, cities, industries, appliances	MRA 4 Forestry and land use	ARA 1 Most vulnerable people and communities	ARA 2 Health, well-being, food and water security	ARA 3 Infrastructure and built environment	ARA 4 Ecosystems and ecosystem services
Outcome 1	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Outcome 2	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Outcome 3	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☒	☐	☒
Outcome 4	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☒	☐	☒

Co-benefit number	Co-benefit					
	Environmental	Social	Economic	Gender	Adaptation	Mitigation
Co-benefit 1	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Co-benefit 2	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Co-benefit 3	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The project adopts an integrated climate response approach that simultaneously addresses the drivers and impacts of both climate change mitigation and adaptation within Cameroon's forest and landscape systems. Climate change is already increasing the frequency and intensity of droughts, floods, temperature stress, and extreme weather events, which accelerate forest degradation, reduce ecosystem productivity, and undermine rural livelihoods. At the same time, deforestation and unsustainable land-use practices are contributing significantly to greenhouse gas emissions and weakening the capacity of forest ecosystems to act as carbon sinks.

The project components are therefore designed to deliver synergistic mitigation and adaptation outcomes through a coherent landscape-based approach. From an adaptation perspective, interventions reduce vulnerability by: (i) decreasing ecosystem and livelihood sensitivity through climate-resilient forest management and restoration; (ii) reducing exposure to climate hazards through improved land-use planning and governance; and (iii) strengthening adaptive capacity through diversified livelihoods, climate information services, and institutional strengthening. These measures enhance the resilience of both ecosystems and forest-dependent communities under current and projected climate conditions.

From a mitigation perspective, the project addresses emissions from deforestation and forest degradation by improving the management of Permanent Forest Areas (PFAs), reducing unsustainable land-use practices, and restoring degraded forest and agricultural landscapes. Enhanced forest governance, combined with large-scale restoration and the introduction of agroforestry systems, increases carbon sequestration in both forest and agricultural systems, while avoiding emissions associated with land degradation and forest loss. In addition, the development of sustainable value chains and green financing mechanisms aligns economic incentives with forest conservation, reducing pressure on natural forests and supporting long-term emissions reductions.

Importantly, mitigation and adaptation benefits are mutually reinforcing within the project design. Healthy and restored forest ecosystems enhance carbon storage while simultaneously providing critical ecosystem services such as water regulation, soil stabilization, and microclimate buffering, which are essential for climate adaptation. Similarly, climate-resilient livelihoods reduce dependence on unsustainable resource extraction,

thereby lowering deforestation pressures and associated emissions. By integrating these approaches, the project contributes to a structural shift toward low-emission, climate-resilient development pathways, consistent with Cameroon's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), National Adaptation Plan (NAP), and REDD+ strategy. The Components, Outputs and Activities of the project are as follows:

Component 1. Climate-smart sustainable forest management (SFM) and land restoration practices effectively implemented in targeted forest landscapes

This component addresses key climate risks affecting forest ecosystems, including increasing temperatures, prolonged dry periods, high wind events, and erratic rainfall patterns, which contribute to forest degradation, reduced regeneration, and biodiversity loss. By integrating climate risk considerations into SFM for PFAs and implementing climate-resilient restoration approaches, the component reduces ecosystem sensitivity to climate stressors and enhances the capacity of forests to maintain critical ecosystem services such as water regulation, soil stabilization, and microclimate buffering under changing climatic conditions. Activities under this component will contribute to overcoming barriers that hinder the design and uptake of climate-smart sustainable management practices and landscape restoration. Furthermore, activities delivering the project's GHG mitigation potential fall under this component, under Output 1.2, with the promotion of agroforestry on cropland, active restoration of community forests, parklands, reserves and riparian buffer zones over 7,155 ha, and with sustainable management practices over 14,583 ha of PFAs.

Output 1.1 Improved governance systems and management plans for SFM of PFAs

This output shall contribute to addressing the barriers related to the obsolescence of PFA management plans in the context of climate change. The project will support the revision of the guidelines for preparing the management plans of PFAs (PAs and production forests). The revision shall ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation practices are integrated in the planning, management, and policy guidelines, taking into consideration evolution in the ecology and the role of forests ecosystems in enhancing social, economic, and environmental conditions. The revision process shall be participatory, involving all relevant stakeholders such as MINFOF, MINEPDED, CSOs, Logging Concessions, council forests managers, representatives of local communities and IP groups/networks, financial and technical partners etc. This output strengthens the integration of climate risk considerations into forest management planning, ensuring that management systems are responsive to projected climate hazards such as drought, temperature increases, and extreme weather events.

Activity 1.1.1 Integrate climate mitigation and adaptation into the guidelines for improving protected areas (PA) management plans. Current management options for PAs are obsolete, mainly because they do not include emerging themes like climate change adaptation and mitigation. If elaborated and vetted by the government through participatory means, the new guidelines shall fill this gap in all 3 landscapes and promote effective climate-smart protected area management that benefits both forests and forest fringe communities while conserving biodiversity. Beyond ecosystem conservation and the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, this initiative will support the National Observatory on Climate Change (ONACC) in providing forest-adjacent communities with enhanced access to climate services (weather and seasonal forecasts, agro-meteorological advisories, early warning systems for floods and droughts), which are essential for adapting to climate-related hazards. In a context where populations across the project landscapes heavily rely on subsistence agriculture and the exploitation and harvesting of natural resources, these services will be crucial in strengthening their socio-economic resilience. Management plans will integrate forward-looking climate risk assessments, including projected changes in temperature, rainfall variability, drought frequency, and extreme weather events, to ensure that forest management practices remain effective under future climate conditions while also maintaining carbon stocks. The revision process will ensure that climate mitigation and adaptation are an integral part of SFM and biodiversity conservation within PAs.

Activity 1.1.2 Develop guidelines for preparing and implementing 03 production forests management plans including the integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation, and other improved SFM practices and update the status of illegal logging in Cameroon. Experts will be hired to design a guideline document that will help promote Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in Logging Concessions and Council Forests, aimed at increasing the sustainability of logging activities. These experts will support assessing gaps and needs in terms of improved management practices. The process will involve stakeholder consultations

and validation, including the process for the guidelines to be enacted into use in the forestry sector. By embedding climate considerations into forest management guidelines, this activity enhances ecosystem resilience to climate stressors such as drought, fire, and extreme weather, while reducing emissions from forest degradation through improved monitoring and control of illegal logging.

Activity 1.1.3 Implement management plans of 3 Communal forests. In Cameroon, protected areas are managed through five-year management plans that guide conservation actions, resource allocation, and engagement with surrounding communities. However, the management plans for most national parks and wildlife reserves within the target landscape have expired, leaving these sites without valid management instruments. This is the case of the management plan of the Waza National Park that expired in 2020 and has not been updated due to limited financial resources, the Dja Biosphere Reserve's management plan expired in 2025, and the Lobéké National Park management plan is set to expire in 2028, and since its creation in 2007, Bakossi National Park has operated without a formal management plan, illustrating long-standing challenges in mobilizing adequate government funding. The project will therefore support the revision of the communal management plans in line with the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Best Practice Guidelines and the IUCN Green List Standard. Beyond revision, the project will also facilitate the implementation of the updated plan to strengthen conservation outcomes, enhance governance, and improve the long-term protection of biodiversity within the targeted protected area. The project will also support MINFOP in mobilizing additional funds that could be used for subsequent revision of the management plan of the targeted protected area. The revision of the Communal Forest management plans will also include the elaboration of the forest intervention reports (RAIF) for the closure of Annual Cutting Areas (AAC) and annual operation plans (PAO). Implementation of climate-smart management plans reduces ecosystem sensitivity to climate variability and strengthens the capacity of communal forests to provide stable ecosystem services and carbon sequestration under changing climatic conditions

Activity 1.1.4 Create and operationalize multi-stakeholder platforms to strengthen dialogue between sectors or stakeholders with different land use interests. Currently, different land use actors (mining, agriculture, livestock, infrastructure etc.) operating in landscapes do so in silos. The limited sharing of information between these sectors and stakeholders leads to geographical overlap of land use activities with PFAs. Activities under output 1.1 will support the resolution of conflicts related to transhumance (action or practice of moving livestock from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle) identified in the project intervention sites in the Waza and Bakossi-Bamboutous Landscapes. This activity will bring land-use stakeholders together in an organized and structured platform to meet and concert on planned projects and activities from different sectors, understanding how it affects landscape features, and make choices on best options. Improved coordination and land-use dialogue reduce maladaptive land-use practices and enhance climate-informed decision-making, thereby lowering exposure to climate risks and reducing pressures that contribute to deforestation and associated emissions.

Output 1.2 Increased restoration of degraded lands and forests in and around permanent forest areas

This output will address the institutional and governance barriers to restoration and SFM pertaining to unclear land/tree tenure and land use plans. The output will facilitate carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, gender equality and well-being. Landscape restoration has always been a concern for public authorities in Cameroon. Several initiatives have been put in place in the form of reforestation, notably the "Sahel Verts" operation in the far north, which for several decades has been planting trees to cope with the advancing desert and aridity of the soil. However, these initiatives have had mixed success. The reasons for these mixed results are linked to poor coordination amongst institutions, interministerial inconsistencies, poor choice of restoration options, poor involvement of local populations in the process, limitation of restoration to tree planting alone and failure to consider other ecosystem services linked to restoration, insufficient follow-up, poor inter-sectoral coordination, and lack of funding. Since 2019 a national strategic framework for forest landscape restoration has been developed, which provided clear guidelines that frame restoration activities in Cameroon. Cameroon's strong commitment to the Bonn Challenge with a target of restoring more than 12 million degraded lands by 2030 now allows the country to mobilise the full attention of government and various sectors in restoration activities, but also to benefit from technical and technological guidance for better implementation of restoration activities.

To ensure the successful implementation of restoration under this project, the selected activities are based on Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) and will be implemented in accordance with the national strategic framework. This will happen by supporting the enabling environment to catalyze investment and uptake through direct and indirect support to communities and entities (councils) in and around PFA who are interested in restoration. For direct support in terms of hard investments, different restoration models will be implemented based on the biophysical and socioeconomic conditions of the intervention areas (see ROAM phase 1 report, annex 2 of the feasibility study). Restoration interventions will be designed using climate-resilient species and site-specific approaches that account for projected changes in temperature and rainfall. This will enhance ecosystem stability, improve soil moisture retention, and reduce vulnerability to climate-induced degradation. Community engagement will prioritize the direct livelihood and adaptation benefits of restoration, such as improved soil fertility, food security, microclimate regulation, and access to NTFPs, representing tangible and immediate benefits for participating households. These outcomes are complementary to and supportive of the project's mitigation potential and objectives, since sustained community stewardship will contribute to the permanence of enhanced carbon sequestration achieved through the project interventions. Beneficiaries will be educated on the likely direct adaptation and livelihood benefits to smallholders involved which are critical to stakeholder buy-in, rather than the abstract potential for carbon sequestration.

Activity 1.2.1 Develop integrated restoration land use planning and ownership. The project restoration activities will be supported by elaborating integrated land use plans to address key climate vulnerabilities such as drought, rainfall variability, flooding, soil erosion, landslides, and loss of biodiversity. The land use planning for the project restoration activities will be done after or alongside the district FLR Action Plan development under ROAM 2. The focus will be on already earmarked community and communal and other permanent forest areas / lands for restoration activities. The preparation of integrated restoration land use plan will be conducted through participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques and collection of GPS points as part of ground truthing in all the 3 project intervention landscapes. In addition, by-laws will be established and approved by the project in consultation with communities and communes and the key government ministries. This activity will go a long way in paving the path for the issuance of restoration certificates by the project, with the support of the government through MINFOF, MINEPDED, MINEPAT and the Minister of State Property and Land Tenure who will play a key role in engaging with the project and communities in legitimizing the process. This activity will directly support the enabling environment for the operationalization of restoration incentive schemes. By guiding restoration and land management decisions, the activity will help reduce the impacts of drought and rainfall variability through improved soil and water management, soil erosion and landslides through targeted restoration and anti-erosion measures, flooding through integrated riparian and watershed planning, and loss of biodiversity and carbon stocks by restoring degraded or priority forest areas.

Activity 1.2.2 Implement restoration activities in agricultural lands, mountains, degraded park areas, and community forests in the Waza intervention site. In the Sudano-Sahelian Waza landscape, the project will restore about 1,953 ha of degraded agricultural lands, community forests, park buffer zones and riparian areas (agroforestry on cropland: 1,020 ha; community forest reforestation: 516 ha; park and degraded forest reserve restoration: 210 ha; riparian forest and buffer restoration: 207 ha) drought-resistant agroforestry, assisted natural regeneration and silvopastoral systems. This activity shall also target smallholder farmers consulted and identified during the feasibility stage, each having at least an estimated agriculture land size of 2 ha. Existing farmers' cooperatives and associations (both formal and informal) consulted during the feasibility stage, as they will serve as the entry point to engage with interested farmers in forest landscape restoration (FLR) activities. In the case of degraded mountains, the restoration shall be through the establishment of millet plantations with locally adapted species. Millets will be planted and harvested in years 1 and 2 in an agroforestry system. By introducing and maintaining a permanent woody cover layer across agricultural lands currently without significant tree cover, these agroforestry systems incrementally build above-ground carbon stocks over time, contributing to the net carbon sequestration outcomes as quantified in Annex 22. Restoration in the Sudano-Sahelian zone will apply drought-resistant species and water-conserving practices to reduce vulnerability to rainfall variability and heat stress, while increasing vegetation cover and carbon sequestration. Community forests will be restored afterwards, restoration activities will be dedicated to key indigenous species of interest in this area including *Acacias* (*Acacia nilotica*, *Acacia senegal*,

Acacia seyal, *Acacia sieberiana*), *Anacardium occidentale* and *Balanites aegyptiaca*, which are stress-tolerant species (Kengne et al., 2024). These species have been selected also due to their capacity to improve soil fertility, while producing wood, fodder and non-timber forest products, mainly shea butter, baobab leaf and powder, neem balanite oil (Baye-Niwah et al. 2013). In addition, silvopastoral systems will be established in degraded agricultural lands by integrating and conserving fodder trees and grasses to enhance livestock productivity, while water points will also be constructed and rehabilitated in livestock grazing areas to ensure reliable and year-round access to water for livestock. This will mitigate seasonal fodder and water shortages experienced during the dry season, reducing the need for seasonal transhumance – a major driver of deforestation in the landscape. In addition, the project will support SFM governance activities, encompassing management plan development, community patrolling, fire management, and demarcated use zone enforcement, across 20,000 ha of designated Permanent Forest Areas in the Waza landscape, reducing deforestation pressure within the SFM governance boundary.

Key inputs for this activity include GIS mapping tools, GPS/soil kits, monitoring technologies (drones, sensors), nursery equipment, seeds and soil amendments, irrigation systems, and land preparation machinery. These will facilitate precise climate-risk mapping, adaptive management, and enhanced seedling survival under both drier and wetter future conditions. Four nurseries will be established with fencing, shade nets, and water-efficient irrigation to produce drought-, heat-, and flood-tolerant species capable of surviving increased evapotranspiration, hotter dry seasons, nutrient leaching, and waterlogging risks. This activity will therefore address key climate risks, including temperature increases and drought (through drought-tolerant species, agroforestry, and improved soil and pasture management), heat waves (via fire prevention, living hedges, and forest management), rainfall variability (through adjusted cropping calendars and agroforestry), flooding (via watershed protection and reforestation), landslides (through slope stabilization and anti-erosion measures), and erosion (through soil restoration and organic amendments). The expected medium to long term services and benefits from this restoration model are increased soil fertility and water infiltration, protection of watershed and reduction of soil erosion, biodiversity benefits through improved ecosystem health, and eventually, contribution to carbon sequestration.

Activity 1.2.3 Implement restoration activities in degraded agricultural lands, forest reserves and park areas, community, and council forests in the Dja-Lobeke intervention site.

In the humid forest Dja-Lobeke landscape, the project will restore around 748 ha of agricultural land with cocoa–NTFP agroforestry and approximately 3,387 ha of community, council, park and reserve forests (community and council forest restoration: 1,618 ha; park and forest reserve restoration: 706 ha; riparian bamboo buffer restoration: 1,063 ha) using native species and assisted natural regeneration. Restoration efforts across the landscape will be guided by the specific management objectives of the Dja Biosphere Reserve and Lobéké National Park. This activity will target smallholder farmers for the case of agriculture lands, council and community forest entities that are willing to undertake restoration on parts of their lands, and forest reserves and parks experiencing degradation. Restoration on agricultural land will involve transitioning traditional farming systems to cocoa-based agroforestry using locally adapted, drought-tolerant indigenous species such as *Irvingia gabonensis* (bush mango), *Garcinia cola* (bitter cola), *Dacryodes edulis* (safou), *Ricinodendron heudelotii* (djangsang). These tree species provide NTFPs such as bush mango, cola, safou and djangsang essential for poverty reduction and food security in the area (MINFOF and GIZ 2024). Moreover, these NTFPs are one of the main sources of income to Baka indigenous populations and women (FAO 2013). NTFP-Cocoa agroforestry systems would thus contribute to financial and social empowerment of Baka indigenous populations, local women, and the local community at large. It will also contribute significantly to improving shade cover, soil moisture, and microclimate regulation under rising temperatures, while stabilizing yields under erratic rainfall and nutrient leaching conditions. In addition, the restoration activities will contribute to improved soil fertility and carbon stock sequestration in the medium to long term. In addition, the project will support SFM governance activities across 15,000 ha of designated Permanent Forest Areas in the Dja-Lobéké landscape, reducing deforestation pressure through improved management plans, community enforcement, and fire management.

To ensure high-quality and climate-robust restoration, the activity includes significant technical and material inputs and most of the land restoration will be done by the beneficiary communities. GIS mapping tools and soil sampling kits as well as local knowledge will guide site selection and monitoring of landscape conditions, while nursery tools, irrigation systems, and environmental monitoring devices support healthy seedling establishment. The project will invest in seeds, fertilizers, and pest control, complemented by land-preparation equipment to enable clearing, terracing, and sustainable agriculture, soil improvement critical for reducing erosion and increasing infiltration under both drier and wetter conditions. Advanced tools such as drones and CO₂ sensors will strengthen monitoring of vegetation recovery, soil moisture, and climate-related stressors. In addition, construction of climate-resilient nursery shelters, fencing, and associated infrastructure will ensure seedlings survive heatwaves, heavy rainfall, and pest pressures. Together, these integrated restoration and infrastructure investments enhance soil fertility, carbon sequestration, watershed stability, biodiversity, and livelihood resilience, ensuring that restored landscapes in Dja-Lobeke remain functional, productive, and robust across a wide range of future climate conditions. In summary, these interventions will address key climate risks, including temperature increases and drought (through drought-tolerant species and soil improvement), heat waves (reducing bushfire risk and conserving biodiversity), rainfall variability (stabilizing cropping systems and habitats), flooding (through watershed restoration and erosion control), and landslides and soil erosion (via slope stabilization and reforestation), thereby strengthening landscape resilience, ecosystem services, and livelihoods. The benefits under this activity include enhanced soil fertility, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity while improving climate resilience and livelihoods for smallholder farmers, Baka indigenous populations, and women.

Activity 1.2.4 Implement restoration activities in degraded agricultural lands and forest reserves in Bakossi-Bamboutous intervention site.

In the Bakossi-Bamboutous highlands, the project will restore about 3,920 ha of degraded agricultural land and rehabilitate forest reserves and steep slopes (agroforestry on cropland: 333 ha; forest reserve and montane hill restoration: 750 ha; riparian bamboo buffer restoration: 2,837 ha) through agroforestry, silvopastoral systems and reforestation with climate-tolerant tree crops. The restoration of the degraded forests reserves and hill areas (steep slopes) in the Bakossi-Bamboutous shall be done using mainly *Prunus africana* (Rosaceae), an economically important but threatened species listed under CITES Appendix II. Plantations averaging 220 trees per hectare will be established for conservation and sustainable use, supporting ecological recovery and community livelihoods. Another species that will be used for FLR in this landscape will include safou (*Dacryodes edulis*) due to their adaptability and strong market availability. The average productivity of safou is estimated at 8 tonnes per hectare, with total national commercialized production estimated at approximately 11,000 tonnes (CIFOR/ICRAF, 2010). These interventions collectively reduce bushfire risk, stabilize hillsides, improve watershed function, reduce erosion and landslides, and strengthen resilience to both drier conditions and more intense rainfall and flooding. This plantation shall be established only on hillsides for conservation and exploitation purposes with an average of 220 trees per ha. In addition, the project will support SFM governance activities across 15,000 ha of designated Permanent Forest Areas in the Bakossi-Bamboutous landscape, reducing deforestation pressure through management plan operationalisation, patrolling, and fire prevention infrastructure.

To ensure high-quality and climate-resilient restoration, the activity will deliver essential restoration equipment and inputs, including saplings, mulch, pruning tools, nursery tools, irrigation systems, and monitoring devices, alongside digging tools, and maintenance costs. Pest control tools, CO₂ sensors, and drones will strengthen precision monitoring of soil moisture, vegetation recovery, and climate stressors, enabling adaptive management as conditions change. Support will be provided for large-scale procurement of saplings and restoration materials essential for implementation. Climate-resilient nursery shelters and fencing to protect seedlings from heatwaves, heavy rainfall, livestock pressure, and pests will also be provided, ensuring high survival rates. Support for this activity will involve direct input supply or through the creation of nurseries and technical assistance related to agronomic practices. Training will be conducted to build local capacities on agroforestry and degraded land restoration. The key climatic risks this activity will address include temperature

increases and drought (through drought-tolerant species and soil restoration), heat waves (reducing bushfire risk via agroforestry and reforestation), rainfall variability (stabilizing cropping systems and soil moisture), flooding (through watershed protection and reforestation), and landslides and erosion (via slope stabilization, anti-erosion measures, and soil improvement), thereby enhancing landscape resilience, ecosystem services, and livelihoods.

Activity 1.2.5 Develop and disseminate agro-climatic information for increased resilience of agriculture and land use activities in the three landscapes. To effectively address weather and climate-related risks through adaptive management and planning during land restoration activities, farmers require information on available water-related resources (primarily irrigation and rainfall), extreme temperatures and evapotranspiration, as well as the timing of these with respect to the vegetation growth cycle. By providing data on rainfall patterns, water availability, extreme temperatures, evapotranspiration rates, and seasonal timing, farmers will be better equipped to make adaptive decisions on planting periods, crop varieties, input use, and irrigation scheduling. This will address temperature increases and heat waves risks (through early warning and adaptive crop management), rainfall variability and shorter wet seasons (by improving planning for planting and irrigation), drought (through optimized water use and crop selection), and flooding (via timely alerts for land preparation and drainage management). By improving access to reliable climate information, the activity enhances farmers' preparedness, adaptive capacity, and resilience to changing climatic conditions across all interventions. ONACC will be provided with the appropriate resources to produce and disseminate climate information. Dissemination will take all forms that are appropriate, for example, community radio, farmer networks, SMS etc. Access to agro-climatic information will improve adaptive decision-making by farmers and land users, enabling timely responses to climate variability and reducing climate-related production risks.

Output 1.3 Enabling environment for green investment strengthen and REDD+ results-based payment instruments improved

Activities will support the finalization of Cameroon's REDD+ readiness instruments that are relevant to enabling results-based payments across multiple and higher standards including the UNFCCC REDD+ Framework, GCF, FCPF Carbon Fund, and ART-TREES Standards. For example, the National Forest Monitoring System, REDD+ registry and REDD+ safeguard information system (SIS) are important for the full implementation of Cameroon's national REDD+ strategy that was developed in 2018. Progress according to FCPF evaluation report of 2019 shows that additional development is still required for SIS, forest reference level and REDD+ registry. While satisfactory progress has been made in the area of NFMS, improvement is still necessary.

Activity 1.3.1 Support the development/operationalisation of the Warsaw REDD+ instruments - the National Forest monitoring system (NFMS), REDD+ registry and REDD+ safeguard information system (SIS). This activity will involve expert support, stakeholder consultations and validation. Relevant stakeholders will be trained in the use of these instruments under the capacity building component. Furthermore, the private sector leading the management of PFAs such as logging concessions shall be trained and engaged to take advantage of the opportunities offered by REDD+. Strengthened REDD+ systems support mitigation by improving measurement and reporting of emissions reductions, while also enabling better tracking of ecosystem resilience and climate-related forest impacts. The intervention will strengthen the the National Forest Monitoring System by improving data collection, integration, and analysis across national and subnational levels, including the incorporation of data from key forest management systems in the Permanent Forest Areas (council forests, forest concessions and protected areas) and community forests. Attention will be given to harmonizing forest monitoring approaches across institutions (e.g., forestry, environment, land use) and addressing gaps in satellite data use, ground-truthing, and long-term data management. Support to the REDD+ Registry will focus on enhancing transparency and traceability of REDD+ actions and results, including the registration of projects and programs implemented by government, NGOs, and private sector actors. This will help avoid double counting, improve coordination, and facilitate Cameroon's access to results-based climate finance. The Safeguard Information System (SIS) will be strengthened to ensure that

environmental and social safeguards are effectively tracked and reported, in line with national policies and international requirements. This will include reinforcing mechanisms for stakeholder engagement, grievance redress, and the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), particularly in forest-dependent regions.

Activity 1.3.2 Test Forest monitoring system, REDD+ registry and REDD+ safeguard information system and forest reference level. This activity will build on the World Bank FCPF readiness support and the FAO REDD+ Council Forest Project implemented in councils within the intervention landscapes. The FAO project was aligned with national government priorities and the objectives of Cameroonian councils, and it contributed to strengthening capacities in sustainable forest management (SFM) and carbon management. Notably, 9 out of 17 council forest management plans were prepared. However, some cross-cutting dimensions, including gender and Indigenous Peoples (IPs), received limited attention, and restoration outcomes were affected by constraints such as insufficient government co-financing and challenges in restoration monitoring. In addition, implementation faced contextual challenges, including delays and governance-related constraints, which influenced the pace and depth of progress in SFM, restoration, and carbon initiatives. The implementation of this activity will draw on experience working with a wide range of stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples, forest-fringe communities, council forest authorities, and women's groups. The activity will facilitate the documentation of lessons learned to help refine and adapt relevant instruments and to strengthen the capacity of national, subnational, and local stakeholders in operationalising these instruments, particularly within large-scale results-based payment projects and programmes. Training and capacity-building activities will be implemented under Component 3. The testing and operationalisation of these instruments will contribute to enhanced transparency, which is essential for mobilising climate finance for SFM in Cameroon. To ensure their relevance and applicability, the instruments will be tested in a private-sector forestry or agribusiness context, considering the social, economic, and ecological realities of forest management in Cameroon.

Activity 1.3.3. Support the establishment of a legal framework to support green investment in Cameroon. In Cameroon, the climate and investment policy landscape continues to evolve, with opportunities to further strengthen coherence and completeness to better enable private green investment. Improved integration of climate and green investment policies, together with strengthened institutional arrangements, can support the country's transition toward low-carbon, climate-resilient development, and greener economic growth. This activity will support the establishment of foundations for a sustained national commitment to green investment, anchored in a coherent policy framework and clear strategic objectives. Such a framework is expected to provide positive and predictable signals to investors regarding the country's green growth ambitions. The activity will also contribute to increased private sector investment by: (i) stimulating investment opportunities through the development of a pipeline of high-quality green projects; and (ii) contributing to a more robust enabling investment environment by addressing key risk factors, managing costs, and improving the overall attractiveness of green investments. The development of a green investment framework incentivises climate-resilient and low-emission land-use practices, aligning financial flows with adaptation and mitigation objectives. Implementation of the activity will be supported through the mobilisation of relevant national and international expertise. In parallel, the activity will encourage inclusive policy dialogue and knowledge-sharing processes involving environmental civil society organisations and other stakeholders, aimed at informing decision-makers, including parliamentarians, on issues related to climate finance and green investment. The activity will also support analytical and technical inputs that may inform the development of implementing instruments and regulatory measures related to climate finance and green investment, in line with national processes and institutional mandates.

Activity 1.3.4. Support the development of Cameroon's National Forest Reference Emission Level and the finalization of the country's REDD+ MRV system. This activity aims to strengthen Cameroon's capacity to account for its GHG emissions and removals in the forestry sector. This will be achieved by enhancing institutional and technical skills for the measurement and monitoring of GHGs. A key objective will be the development of a robust Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL) compliant with international standards, for

accurate accounting of carbon fluxes by agro-ecological zone. The activity will also optimize the collection, analysis, and integration of forestry data, which will contribute to the development of Cameroon's forest reference emission level (FREL) and hence facilitate access to climate finance (REDD+, GCF, GEF, etc.) and ensure effective integration into national climate change strategies. Furthermore, this activity will also support the country in finalizing its REDD+ MRV system. It will involve the development and implementation of standardized processes and methods to accurately measure greenhouse gas emissions and the resulting reductions. Strengthened MRV systems enhance transparency and accountability for emissions reductions while supporting climate-informed planning and long-term ecosystem resilience. Through the technical assistance provided, calculation tools will be developed to assess carbon stocks and variations due to land use changes. Specific training sessions will also be organized to strengthen the capacities of stakeholders in data collection and reporting, to facilitate the country's access to financing related to carbon markets, whether regulated or voluntary.

Component 2: Value chain development and transformation are operational

This component aims to make selected Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) value chains operational, profitable and climate-resilient so that local producers, cooperatives and small enterprises can access stable markets and decent incomes from restoration-compatible products. It targets key constraints faced by women, youth and forest-dependent communities across Cameroon's agro-ecological zones, including weak market connectivity, low value addition, limited business skills and gender barriers in commercialisation. By supporting climate-smart production, processing and transformation (e.g. improved harvesting, storage, primary and secondary processing) and by strengthening producer organisations, the component will increase product quality, traceability and volumes reaching domestic and regional markets. Tailored training and inclusive business development services will help women and youth move up the value chain—from raw product collection to processing, branding and distribution—thereby enhancing their economic autonomy and role in forest stewardship. Strengthened linkages with buyers, financial institutions and green investment partners will lower transaction costs and risks, enabling producers engaged in FLR and agroforestry to secure contracts, equipment and services that reward sustainable practices and diversify climate-resilient income sources.

Output 2.1: Strengthened non timber forest product (NTFP) Value Chains and Market Linkages

This output will identify, structure and strengthen viable NTFP value chains in each AEZ through market-based business models. It contributes to adaptation by diversifying income sources and reducing reliance on climate-sensitive activities. Climate-resilient value chains and NTFPs provide more stable income streams under conditions of climate variability, thereby reducing household vulnerability to climate shocks.

Activity 2.1.1 Conduct a prioritisation of high-potential NTFPs per AEZ. Drawing on the socioeconomic analysis and the contribution of NTFPs to local livelihoods (Annex 3A), at least one priority species has been identified within each AEZ to support integrated land restoration and sustainable value chain development, thereby providing improved options for sustainable livelihoods and enhanced ecosystem resilience. In the Sudano-Sahelian Zone, gum arabic (*Acacia senegal*) has been targeted due to its adaptability to arid conditions and its high economic potential, which remains largely underexploited in the Waza landscape. According to research conducted by CIRAD and IRAD in 2012, the adaptability of *Acacia senegal* in this arid region ensures high productivity, estimated at 50 to 250 kilograms per hectare per year. The market potential is significant, with substantial exports to Chad and Nigeria and local prices ranging from USD 0.5 to 6 per kg, depending on quality (Mujawamariya et al., 2013). Another species that will also be tested in this landscape is cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*). In the Dja-Lobeke landscape, bush mango (*Irvingia spp.*) and bitter kola (*Garcinia kola*) have been targeted based on their existing market size, and contribution to livelihoods within the landscape. With estimated annual production of 400 to 900 kg/ha for bush mango and 300 to 800 kg/ha for bitter kola, these two species are amongst the most productive NTFPs in the Dja-Lobeke landscape. Market is readily available with average prices at USD 6 per kg for bush mango and USD 7 per kg for bitter kola and both can generate up to USD 2700 complementary annual income to household (MINFOF and GIZ

2024). In the Bamboutos and Bakossi landscape, the focus will be on raffia (*Raphia* spp.) and safou (*Dacryodes edulis*) due to their adaptability and strong market availability. The average productivity of safou is estimated at 8 tonnes per hectare, with total national commercialized production estimated at approximately 11,000 tonnes (CIFOR/ICRAF, 2010). Raffia generally grows in wetlands, where it is tapped to produce palm wine. Its leaves and stems are also used for craftwork. It constitutes an important source of income in this landscape, with palm wine production estimated at 20,000-60,000 liters per hectare. Around 20,000 people in Cameroon depend directly on palm wine production and trade.

TABLE: Summary of Prioritised NTFP Species per Agro-Ecological Zone

Landscape (AEZ)	Prioritised Species	Scientific Name	Estimated Productivity	Market Price (USD)	Market Characteristics	Estimated Household Income Contribution
Waza (Sudano-Sahelian)	Gum arabic	<i>Acacia senegal</i>	50–250 kg/ha/year	0.50–6.00/kg (quality-dependent)	Significant export potential to Chad and Nigeria; largely underexploited in the Waza landscape; Cameroon's Sudano-Sahelian zone is a primary production area	High — gum arabic is one of the most traded commodities in the Sahel with established cross-border trade networks
Waza (Sudano-Sahelian)	Cashew	<i>Anacardium occidentale</i>	250–500 kg/ha/year (current African yields; potential >1,000 kg/ha with improved varieties)	0.50–0.80/kg (raw cashew nut, farmgate); 7.50–10.60/kg (processed retail)	Cameroon has ~15,000 ha under cashew with estimated production of 7,500 t/year; the Sudano-Sahelian and high savannah zones are the two AEZs favourable to cashew; strong regional and international demand	Emerging — cashew generated CFA 363 billion for Ivorian producers in 2022; Cameroon aims to develop 100,000 ha
Dja-Lobéké (Humid bimodal rainforest)	Bush mango	<i>Irvingia</i> spp.	400–900 kg/ha/year	~6.00/kg (dried kernels); average ~2.50/kg (fresh, local market)	Readily available domestic market; one of the most traded NTFPs in Cameroon's humid forest zone; kernels average 1,500 FCFA/kg on local markets	Up to USD 2,700 complementary annual household income (combined with bitter kola)
Dja-Lobéké (Humid bimodal rainforest)	Bitter kola	<i>Garcinia kola</i>	300–800 kg/ha/year	~7.00/kg	Readily available market; among the most productive NTFPs in the Dja-Lobéké landscape; important for Baka Indigenous	Up to USD 2,700 complementary annual household income

						Peoples' livelihoods and women's income	(combined with bush mango)	
	Bakossi-Bamboutos (Western Highlands)	Safou (African plum)	Dacryodes edulis	~8 t/ha (up to 10 t/ha with improved propagation)	2.10–4.45/kg (fresh fruit, Yaoundé market: 1,250–2,667 FCFA/kg); processed safou oil up to 41.70/litre (25,000 FCFA/litre)	National commercialised production ~11,000 tonnes valued at USD 7.5 million; over 20,000 jobs in the value chain; 95% of production from agroforestry systems; significant export market to France, UK and Belgium (~USD 2 million/year)	USD 63–127/year per household from fruit sales; processors earn on average 446,500 FCFA (~USD 745)/year	
	Bakossi-Bamboutos (Western Highlands)	Raffia (palm wine and fibre)	Raphia spp.	20,000–60,000 litres/ha/year (palm wine); leaves and stems harvested year-round for craftwork	0.30–0.85/litre (palm wine retail: 200–500 FCFA/litre); craftwork products (mats, bags, furniture) priced individually	~20,000 people in Cameroon depend directly on palm wine production and trade; >60% of men in raffia-growing communities are involved in tapping; strong local demand; leaves and stems supply a vibrant craftwork sector (furniture, mats, bags, roofing)	Small producers earn USD 71–124/month (20,000–35,000 FCFA); full-time tappers can earn ~5,000 FCFA/day (~USD 8.30)	

The selected species will be further reviewed and prioritised using detailed feasibility profiles, including yield potential, processing and production costs, and investment requirements, to ensure interventions deliver both ecological sustainability and socio-economic benefits. Prioritisation will be based on ecological suitability, production potential, market demand, and relevance to local livelihoods, with particular attention to enhancing women's participation. Consultative discussions will be conducted in each AEZ to validate and refine priorities in collaboration with local stakeholders. The selected species will be promoted for domestication and integration into agroforestry systems. In addition, local communities will be trained in sustainable harvesting, processing, and marketing practices. Support will also be provided for the establishment and strengthening of cooperatives to enhance the effective management and commercialization of NTFPs across the landscapes.

The above table presents the preliminary prioritisation of NTFP species per agro-ecological zone, based on current ecological suitability, production potential, market demand, and relevance to local livelihoods. This prioritisation draws on the socioeconomic analysis conducted during project preparation and available literature and is intended to provide a sound technical basis for the initial phase of Activity 2.1.1.

However, recognising that market conditions, climate dynamics, stakeholder priorities, and value chain opportunities may evolve between the time of proposal approval and the start of implementation, the project has built in an adaptive mechanism. During the inception phase (Year 1), a comprehensive NTFP feasibility

and prioritisation exercise will be conducted in each AEZ in close consultation with local communities, Indigenous Peoples, cooperatives, and relevant government agencies. This exercise will use updated market data, participatory assessments, and detailed feasibility profiles — including yield potential, processing and production costs, investment requirements, and gender-differentiated livelihood impacts — to validate, refine, or update the species selection presented in this table. Species demonstrating stronger potential at the time of implementation will be prioritised accordingly, while species whose viability has diminished may be replaced with better-performing alternatives identified through the updated assessment. This approach ensures that the project remains responsive to changing conditions and maximises the socio-economic and ecological impact of NTFP value chain interventions across all three landscapes. The adaptive prioritisation process is consistent with GCF's emphasis on evidence-based design and responsive project management and will be documented as part of the project's inception report (see Section E, M&E Plan).

Activity 2.1.2 Support the development /upgrading of the NTFPs micro and small enterprises' equipment. Support the establishment or upgrading of small-scale processing, packaging and storage facilities. Provide business development training, financial literacy and cooperative management skills, with emphasis on women and youth entrepreneurs. Upgraded equipment and technical capacity will support climate-resilient production and processing systems, reducing losses associated with climate variability, and enhancing value chain sustainability. Processing units will be established for the value chain development of NTFPs, including, but not limited to, cashew nuts, bush mango, bitter kola, raffia palm, and avocado.

Activity 2.1.3 Support the simplification of policy and regulatory processes. Work with the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) to simplify administrative processes for NTFP commercialisation under the Agroforestry Notebook framework and the development of the Sylviculture booklet, recognized in the 2024 Forestry Law as a new tool for registering private forest plantations to obtain official government recognition. Support dialogue between MINFOF and other sectorial ministries (e.g the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER) and the Ministry of Finance (MINFI), etc) to align taxation, permit and export procedures for certified planted NTFPs. Inter-ministerial discussions will be facilitated for regulatory review and harmonization of procedures to address key administrative bottlenecks related to exploitation, taxation, permitting and exportation of NTFPs. The project will promote the operationalization of the Agroforestry Notebook and/or Sylviculture booklet to improve formal recognition and traceability of private agroforestry and plantation systems. Capacity building for government services and producer organizations, combined with pilot testing and digital tools will also be done to enhance compliance, transparency, and ease of doing business in the sector. These reforms will lower transaction costs, increase investment incentives, and accelerate the adoption of sustainable and climate-resilient NTFP value chains.

Activity 2.1.4 Engage with financial institutions on green investments. Engage at least two microfinance institutions and one commercial bank per AEZ to co-develop financial products for NTFP-based enterprises (such as low-interest credit and guarantee schemes). Letters of engagement for the project have already been signed by La Regionale Bank and Savana Islamic Finance demonstrating commitment to co-finance pilot investments. These financial institutions will play a key role in strengthening NTFP-based enterprises by improving access to tailored financial services. They will support the development of appropriate financial products such as low-interest loans for processing and value addition of targeted NTFPs. Beyond financing, these institutions will support enterprise development and sector formalization by providing financial literacy training, business advisory services, and support for improved financial management systems. Through partnerships such as those already established with La Régionale Bank and Savana Islamic Finance, financial institutions will co-finance pilot investments and help scale innovative green finance models. Partnerships with financial institutions will embed climate risk considerations into financing decisions, supporting long-term resilience and reducing exposure to climate-related economic risks.

Component 3: Stakeholders' capacities are strengthened on climate-resilient land-use practices

This component focuses on building the capacities of key stakeholders, government institutions, local and Indigenous populations (including women and youth), private sector actors, cooperatives and associations,

financial institutions and civil society to understand, design, implement, benefit from and monitor climate-resilient land-use practices across the project landscapes. It will address economic, financial, technical and organisational barriers that currently prevent stakeholders from adopting sustainable forest management, restoration and climate-smart agroforestry, including limited access to climate information, inadequate skills, and weak links with green finance and markets. The component will enhance adaptive capacity at multiple levels and ensure that climate-resilient land-use practices are sustained and scaled beyond the project's lifetime.

Output 3.1 Improved capacity of stakeholders on the use of enhanced SFM instruments, restoration, and climate-friendly livelihood systems

Activities under output 3.1 will be implemented with a view to overcoming the technical challenges to SFM and restoration, including capacity and knowledge gaps that hinder the transfer and adoption of climate-resilient practices in restoration and PFA management. The amount of carbon stocks that will be conserved and/or enhanced through sequestration will depend on how stakeholders are able to get involved and use the improved instruments prepared by Component 1 activities to develop and implement efficient and effective management plans and restoration plans. This will be achieved through the capacity building of stakeholders on these improved instruments. To this effect, stakeholders will continue to use improved management instruments beyond the project implementation period. This output enhances adaptive capacity by strengthening climate information systems, monitoring frameworks, and institutional coordination, enabling more effective planning and response to climate risks.

Activity 3.1.1 Train stakeholders on the use of improved guidelines for the design and implementation of PA and SFM management plans and reduce illegal activities in PA and SFM. This activity will deliver targeted training workshops in each landscape to equip stakeholders with the skills needed to design, implement and enforce climate-resilient protected-area (PA) and sustainable forest management (SFM) plans, and to prepare restoration investment and action plans. Training will target PA managers and staff, deconcentrated services of MINFOF and MINEPDED, local governments, community-based organisations, cooperatives and farmer associations, Indigenous Peoples' networks, CSOs, and private operators managing PFAs (council forests, concessions and other production forests). Participants will learn to apply the improved management guidelines and tools developed under Component 1, integrate carbon-emission reduction and climate-risk considerations into PA and PFA management plans, and formulate bankable restoration investment plans aligned with projected climate risks and ecosystem resilience objectives. In parallel, specialised sessions will train judges, lawyers, police, gendarmes, forest and wildlife officers on forest and wildlife legislation and human-rights-based enforcement to reduce illegal logging, poaching and other crimes that undermine biodiversity, carbon stocks and adaptation benefits.

Activity 3.1.2 Train stakeholders and disseminate information on revised instruments, new restoration, forest monitoring systems, REDD+ registry and REDD+ safeguard information systems to relevant stakeholders. Regarding the revised instruments, new restoration and SFM incentive schemes, information and training workshops will be organised in each of the intervention landscapes. Targeted stakeholders will include small, medium, and large size enterprises involved in logging either in council forests or forest management units, council forest officers, deconcentrated services of MINFOF and MINEPDED in the AEZ where intervention landscapes are located, CSOs, representatives of local communities and IP networks. These first capacity building activities will be carried out together with activities under output 2.1. Overall, six (06) capacity building workshops are envisaged, one at the national level and one in each of the three AEZs to train stakeholders specifically on forest monitoring systems, REDD+ registry and REDD+ safeguard information systems. Workshop participants will be drawn from the administration (MINFOF, MINEPDED, MINADER), specialized institutions (ONACC, IRAD), IP networks, CSOs, representative of local communities, private sector, councils etc. Dissemination of climate-related tools and systems will improve stakeholder awareness and enable more effective adaptation planning and implementation.

Activity 3.1.3 Provide technical capacity to State and non-State actors to prepare a legal framework for green investment. In Cameroon, State and non-State actors often have insufficient technical capacity or resources to advance their green projects, which often aim to mitigate carbon emissions and enhance resilience to climate change. Capacity building in green investment is essential to unlock green investment opportunities to improve the local economy. This capacity building of key actors will consider regulatory,

administrative, legislative and policy aspects, including climate finance instruments, green investments and modelling the socio-economic impacts of green policies that contribute to mitigating carbon emissions and improving the climate change resilience of local economies. In addition, this activity will help establish a national green investment law in the country. Strengthened legal and institutional capacity will support the development of enabling conditions for climate-resilient and low-emission investments.

Activity 3.1.4 Train farmer associations and cooperatives on the monitoring and management of micro-enterprises, notably on agriculture and NTFPs. This activity will strengthen the capacity of producer groups, cooperatives and micro-enterprises to access profitable markets and green finance for NTFP and agroforestry products, while developing climate-resilient business and action plans. Targeted market assessments will identify priority domestic, regional and international buyers and clarify product specifications, quality standards and traceability requirements for selected NTFPs in sectors such as food, cosmetics and nutraceuticals, ensuring compliance with the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit-sharing. Strategic partnerships will be developed with regional value-chain and organic platforms, and digital tools adapted to the Cameroonian context will be used to improve market information, buyer linkages and traceability. Farmer associations, cooperatives and potential micro-enterprises will receive training and tailored coaching on organisation, leadership, governance and micro-enterprise management, including the preparation of bankable business plans, climate-resilient micro-Enterprise Development Plans (EDPs) and credit applications, in collaboration with interested financial institutions. A training-of-trainers approach will be used so that association leaders can subsequently train their members according to an agreed roadmap, covering topics such as group objectives and benefits, estimation of costs, projection of revenues and risk management under climate variability. By combining stronger market linkages with improved organisational, financial and business-planning capacities, the activity will enable well-structured producer organisations to secure buyers and green credits, reduce their vulnerability to climate shocks, stabilise and increase incomes, and reinvest in sustainable, low-emission agroforestry and NTFP production systems.

Activity 3.1.4 Train local artisans in equipment maintenance and repair. The installation of processing equipment shall be accompanied by training in the maintenance and management of the equipment. This training will target not only the members of the beneficiary group but also the local craftsmen and technicians (machine mechanics) identified in rural and urban areas near the installation sites while considering gender and cultural diversity. The objective is to have a pool of craftsmen experienced in the maintenance of the machines and easily mobilized in case of need for the maintenance and repair of the machines. Local technical capacity will improve the maintenance and longevity of equipment, ensuring sustained functionality of climate-resilient value chain infrastructure.

Component 4: Strong project monitoring and knowledge-driven partnerships

This component will facilitate effective and efficient implementation of project activities to achieve the intended outcomes and impacts. It will also create and maintain innovative and strategic partnerships to facilitate implementation, upscaling, and dissemination of results after the project ends. It will also ensure that the project is monitored, evaluated, and audited.

Output 4.1 Project is monitored, evaluated, and audited

This output describes the organization of project monitoring, evaluation, and auditing.

Activity 4.1.1 Update and implement the monitoring and evaluation plan of the project and especially restoration activities. This activity aims at updating and implementing the project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan; and internal monitoring of application of M&E plan, based on results from ROAM 2 about the roles and responsibilities of villages, communities, and communes. For the specific case of monitoring of restoration activities in Waza, Dja-Lobéké and Bakossi-Bamboutous, this activity will use the forest landscape restoration (FLR) blockchain application to allow restoration stakeholders to distribute, track and earn restoration certificates and related funds in a way that minimizes costs and maximizes impact. Effective implementation of the M&E plan will benefit communities and stakeholders by improving transparency,

tracking restoration progress, and ensuring that restoration efforts generate measurable ecological and socioeconomic impacts.

Activity 4.1.2 Provide support on FPIC and safeguards implementation. This activity aims at ensuring that environmental and social safeguards policy, and Cameroon FPIC guidelines are effectively implemented. This activity will also ensure the implementation of FPIC guidelines step 6 to 10. Step 6 relates to negotiating with local stakeholders on specific roles and responsibilities, 7 is about formalizing agreements between different communities and the project, step 8 will develop a roadmap for community led activities, step 9 is about the monitoring of the implementation of the roadmap, while step 10 pertains to the monitoring and verification of FPIC implementation.

Activity 4.1.3 Facilitate and support audit of activities, project and food safety and quality monitoring of value chain products. This activity will prepare terms of reference, launch a call and recruit an external independent third-party expert or firm for MTR. It will also prepare terms of reference, launch a call and recruit an external independent third party for final monitoring and evaluation and auditing of project activities. In addition, this activity will establish NTFP quality and food safety standards; control NTFPs quality and monitor food safety; and support food safety compliance. This activity will benefit the communities by ensuring that their rights, priorities, and participation are respected, fostering equitable and socially responsible restoration outcomes.

Activity 4.1.4 Assess governance and management using the Site Assessment for Governance and Equity (SAGE) tool, and the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) for each of the PAs in the landscape targeted by the project in adherence to the IUCN Green List Standard of Protected and Conserved Areas. The SAGE initiative aims to improve the governance and equity of protected areas, other conservation measures, and conservation-related actions. It is based on the relatively simple SAGE methodology, which enables stakeholders to assess the status of governance, plan actions to improve, and monitor progress. SAGE is fully aligned with IMET. The SAGE activity will be led by an international governance consultant and national governance consultant. The activity will comprise a capacity building session and thereafter a two-day stakeholder workshop in two parts per protected area. In the first part, different stakeholder groups complete the SAGE questionnaire in their separate groups. In the second part these groups come together to share their findings. The SAGE questionnaire is similar to the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) and, like IMET, SAGE also captures qualitative information including specific governance challenges identified by different stakeholders, reasons for differences in perspective, and suggested actions to address the challenges and promote convergence of perspectives. In addition to the actual assessment, and effective communication of the results, SAGE will include planning actions to improve governance and equity and monitoring of progress. SAGE is simpler and less costly than most other methodologies. Although this limits the depth of analysis, this reduces the risk of causing conflict around sensitive issues, which makes SAGE an excellent entry point for work to improve governance and equity. Thereafter, the IMET will be used for each of the PAs targeted by the project to progressively monitor the performance of the sites under the IUCN Green List Standard of Protected and Conserved Areas. This activity will address unsustainable resource use, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem degradation, which can reduce the resilience of protected areas to climate impacts like floods, droughts, and temperature extremes. Improved governance and management will enhance the resilience of IUCN-listed species, supporting both biodiversity conservation and climate adaptation.

Output 4.2 Project results, knowledge, lessons learned, and best practices are consolidated, upscaled and disseminated at the national, sub-regional and local levels

Activity 4.2.1 Prepare and disseminate communication and knowledge management products. This activity is first aimed at preparing knowledge products (books, book chapters, scientific articles, theses) on restoration, SFM, REDD+, value chains, adaptation, and livelihood resilience, organizing national policy dialogue on project activities and results, and translating communication and knowledge products into French and English. Second, this activity is aimed at disseminating lessons learned, best practices and experiences to facilitate replication and capitalization of results, and statutory annual, semesterly and quarterly technical reports as well as policy briefs and to seek feedback from project stakeholders. This activity will disseminate project reports, policy briefs, information briefs, and advocacy materials on restoration, SFM and climate change best practices, and lessons learned. It will support participation of project stakeholders in national,

regional, and international conferences to share experiences and lessons learned (COP, UNFCCC, UNCBD, New-York Climate Week, CBFP, etc.). It will provide knowledge products to the local communities (councils) through community radios, meetings, and other events. Strengthening access to information and fostering knowledge exchange will enhance stakeholder capacity, replication of best practices, and resilience building across landscapes and communities exposed to climate hazards.

B.3. Project/programme description

B.4. Implementation arrangements

For the financing of the Project, GCF will enter into an FAA with IUCN, in the form of a grant agreement, under which IUCN, in its capacity as the Accredited Entity, shall administer the relevant GCF Proceeds to be used for the financing of the Project, in accordance with the AMA and the FAA.

Accredited Entity

As an Accredited Entity, IUCN will administer the transfer of GCF resources to the Republic of Cameroon (RoC) and provide technical and financial oversight, as well as provide implementation support and quality control. IUCN has robust fiduciary and technical oversight and quality assurance systems, and will closely support the RoC and its partners during project implementation. IUCN will provide bi-annual financial reports and progress reports annually to the GCF on the overall implementation of the project based on quarterly reports from the RoC received from the PMU. IUCN as an Accredited Entity will execute a subsidiary contractual agreement with MINFOF as the Executing Entity at the beginning of the project. The agreement will detail the specific roles and responsibilities, expectations, deliverables, reporting frequency and format, among others. IUCN, as an accredited entity, plays a crucial role in overseeing the entire project lifecycle and is accountable for the management, monitoring, and reporting of project progress, as well as engaging with various stakeholders to maintain transparency and inclusivity throughout the project.

Executing Entities

The project is implemented by two Executing Entities (EEs):

- The Ministry of Forest and Wildlife of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon “MINFOF”; and
- IUCN acting through its Cameroon Country Office.

The table below contains the Executing Entity for each Activity.

Activity	Executing Entity
Activity 1.1.1 Integrate climate mitigation and adaptation into the guidelines for improving protected areas (PA) management plans.	MINFOF
Activity 1.1.2 Develop guidelines for preparing and implementing 03 production forests management plans including the integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation, and other improved SFM practices and update the status of illegal logging in Cameroon.	MINFOF
Activity 1.1.3 Implement management plans of 3 Communal forests.	MINFOF
Activity 1.1.4 Create and operationalize multi-stakeholder platforms to strengthen dialogue between sectors or stakeholders with different land use interests.	MINFOF
Activity 1.2.1 Develop integrated restoration land use planning and ownership.	MINFOF
Activity 1.2.2 Implement restoration activities in agricultural lands, mountains, degraded park areas, and community forests in the Waza	IUCN

intervention site	
Activity 1.2.3 Implement restoration activities in degraded agricultural lands, forest reserves and park areas, community, and council forests in the Dja-Lobeke intervention site	IUCN
Activity 1.2.4 Implement restoration activities in degraded agricultural lands and forest reserves in Bakossi-Bamboutous intervention site	IUCN
Activity 1.2.5 Develop and disseminate agro-climatic information for increased resilience of agriculture and land use activities in the three landscapes.	MINFOF
Activity 1.3.1 Support the development/operationalisation of the Warsaw REDD+ instruments - the National Forest monitoring system (NFMS), REDD+ registry and REDD+ safeguard information system (SIS).	MINFOF
Activity 1.3.2 Test Forest monitoring system, REDD+ registry and REDD+ safeguard information system and forest reference level.	MINFOF
Activity 1.3.3. Support the establishment of a legal framework to support green investment in Cameroon.	MINFOF
Activity 1.3.4. Support the development of Cameroon's National Forest Reference Emission Level and the finalization of the country's REDD+ MRV system	MINFOF
Activity 2.1.1 Conduct a prioritisation of high-potential NTFPs per AEZ	MINFOF
Activity 2.1.2 Support the development /upgrading of the NTFPs micro and small enterprises' equipment	MINFOF
Activity 2.1.3 Support the simplification of policy and regulatory processes	MINFOF
Activity 2.1.4 Engage with financial institutions on green investments	MINFOF
Activity 3.1.1 Train stakeholders on the use of improved guidelines for the design and implementation of PA and SFM management plans and reduce illegal activities in PA and SFM.	MINFOF
Activity 3.1.2 Train stakeholders and disseminate information on revised instruments, new restoration, forest monitoring systems, REDD+ registry and REDD+ safeguard information systems to relevant stakeholders.	IUCN
Activity 3.1.3 Provide technical capacity to State and non-State actors to prepare a legal framework for green investment	MINFOF
Activity 3.1.4 Train farmer associations and cooperatives on the monitoring and management of micro-enterprises, notably on agriculture and NTFPs	MINFOF
Activity 3.1.5 Train local artisans in equipment maintenance and repair.	MINFOF
Activity 4.1.1 Update and implement the monitoring and evaluation plan of the project and especially restoration activities	MINFOF
Activity 4.1.2 Provide support on FPIC and safeguards implementation.	MINFOF
Activity 4.1.3 Facilitate and support audit of activities, project and food safety and quality monitoring of value chain products.	MINFOF
Activity 4.1.4 Assess governance and management using the Site Assessment for Governance and Equity (SAGE) tool, and the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) for each of the PAs	MINFOF

Activity 4.2.1 Prepare and disseminate communication and knowledge management products.	MINFOF
PMC Act 1.1 Operationalise the Project Steering Committee.	IUCN
PMC Act 1.2 Project Management Unit (PMU) leads the implementation of activities and use office equipment for project implementation.	IUCN

Project Implementing Partners

During project implementation, Implementing Partners may be engaged by the Executing Entities and shall be selected in accordance with IUCN's Procurement Policy and may receive a portion of GCF Proceeds. The Executing Entities shall remain fully accountable for the implementation of the respective Outputs and Activities they are allocated to, and the use of GCF Proceeds disbursed to or through such Implementing Partners and will report on their performance as part of the Project's regular reporting obligations to the Accredited Entity and the GCF. The Executing Entities will enter into relevant agreements with Implementing Partners procured for the implementation of the Activities under the respective Component.

Service Providers and Consultants

Executing Entities, IUCN and MINFOF may engage service providers and consultants for the delivery of goods and services under the Project, which shall be selected and paid by the respective Executing Entity for service delivery in accordance with the IUCN's Procurement Policy. The Executing Entities may use GCF Proceeds to engage such service providers and consultants for the implementation of the relevant Activities.

Project governance

The Project will have a (i) Project Steering Committee ("PSC") chaired by MINFOF responsible for the overall direction of the Project; (ii) a Project Management Unit ("PMU") recruited and supervised by IUCN, and responsible for the day to day implementation and fiduciary activities of the Project.

- **Project Steering Committee**

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be established to lead project governance and implementation. It will have the following responsibilities: Provides political decision-makers and relevant stakeholders with the most advanced information on the project's progress, results, and impacts; Provides political and strategic guidelines; Approves the Work Plan and Annual Budget (WPAB); Ensures good inter-institutional coordination; Ensures transparency, accountability, and participation.

The PSC will be chaired by the government, MINFOF, with MINEPDED as Vice-Chair, and will be composed of representatives from various government entities who will support execution, development partners, the GCF NDA, IUCN and the Project Coordinator, as well as civil society and indigenous groups' representatives.

However, any other relevant institutes or agencies can be invited when necessary. Decisions and recommendations of the PSC will be based on agreement by a majority of members and be subject to approval by the Accredited Entity. The PSC will hold meetings at least once a year to supervise the effective implementation of the Project, ensure sound management and propose relevant recommendations.

Project Steering Committee

Chair: MINFOF; Vice-Chair: MINEPDED; Secretariat: National Project Coordinator

Members: Representative of the Prime Minister's office (RPM); Director of Forestry (DF-MINFOF); Director of Wildlife and Protected Areas (DWPA-MINFOF); Director of NTFP Promotion and Transformation (DPT-MINFOF); Head of Cooperation and Programming Division (HCPD-MINFOF); NDA; MINADER; MINEPDED; MINEPIA; MINEPAT; MINDEVEL; Ministry of Tourism and Leisure; REDD+ National Coordinator; ONACC; IUCN, FAO, Community representative.

Observers: Representatives of NTFP producers; Representatives of Financial Institutions; Representatives of logging concessions; Representatives of CSOs

Table 4: Composition of the National Project Steering Committee

• Project management Unit

The Project Management Unit will operate under the strategic guidance of the Project Steering Committee and in full compliance with IUCN's fiduciary, safeguard and reporting standards, as well as GCF requirements. The PMU will include professional and technically qualified staff recruited through a competitive process following IUCN procedures and presented to the Ministry for non-objection. The PMU will be supervised by IUCN and responsible for the day-to-day implementation and fiduciary activities of the Project.

The PMU will be composed of a core project team based in the capital and three field teams deployed in each project landscape.

The central project team will include the following key positions:

- **Project Manager:** The Project Manager will be responsible for the overall coordination and day-to-day management of the project. He/she will lead the preparation and implementation of annual work plans and budgets, ensure timely and high-quality delivery of outputs, oversee financial and procurement processes, supervise project staff and consultants, and coordinate reporting to IUCN, the Government and the GCF. The Project Manager will also facilitate the functioning of the Project Steering Committee and ensure effective coordination with ministries, implementing partners and other relevant initiatives.
- **National Forest Specialist:** The National Forest Specialist will provide strategic technical leadership on all forest management and governance aspects of the project, ensuring alignment with Cameroon's national forestry policies, the REDD+ National Strategy, the Forest Investment Plan and the applicable legal and regulatory framework governing Permanent Forest Areas (PFAs). He/she will guide the development and implementation of sustainable forest management plans, support the design of REDD+ payment mechanisms and forest landscape restoration interventions across the three target sites, and ensure that project activities contribute to measurable reductions in deforestation and forest degradation.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Specialist:** The M&E Specialist will design, operationalize and oversee the project's monitoring, evaluation and learning system, fully aligned with the GCF Integrated Results Management Framework and IUCN evaluation policies. He/she will develop indicators and data collection tools, consolidate data from the field teams, ensure data quality and integrity, and produce periodic performance reports. The M&E Specialist will also support mid-term and final evaluations and promote learning and adaptive management throughout the project.
- **Finance and Administration Coordinator:** The Finance and Administration Coordinator will manage the project's financial, administrative and procurement functions in accordance with IUCN rules and procedures and GCF fiduciary standards. Key responsibilities include preparation and monitoring of budgets, management of disbursements and financial records, support to procurement planning and contract administration, supervision of administrative support staff, and preparation of interim and annual financial reports. The position will also support external audits and ensure that robust internal controls are maintained.
- **Safeguard and Gender Specialist:** The Safeguard and Gender Specialist will ensure that environmental and social safeguards, gender equality and social inclusion are fully integrated into project design, implementation and monitoring. He/she will operationalize the project's safeguard instruments and gender action plan, identify and manage environmental and social risks, and support the meaningful participation of women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and other vulnerable groups. The Specialist will provide capacity building to project staff and partners on safeguards and gender, support grievance redress mechanisms, and track safeguard and gender-related indicators.

- **Driver:** A dedicated Driver will provide safe and efficient transportation for the central PMU staff, consultants and official visitors, and support the logistics of missions and events. He/she will be responsible for the proper use, regular maintenance and record-keeping of the project vehicle(s) assigned to the central team, in line with IUCN safety and fleet management procedures.

In each of the three project landscapes, a field project team will be established with the following minimum staffing:

- **Project Field Coordinator:** The Project Field Coordinator will be responsible for the day-to-day coordination and supervision of project activities in the respective landscape. He/she will translate the overall project work plan into detailed field-level plans, coordinate implementing partners and community-based actors, ensure technical quality and timely execution of activities, and consolidate field reports and data for submission to the central PMU. The Field Coordinator will also represent the project at landscape level and maintain close collaboration with decentralized government services, local authorities and community structures.
- **Driver:** Each landscape team will include a Driver responsible for the safe transportation of staff, partners and equipment to and from field sites. The Driver will support the organization of field missions and community events, ensure proper maintenance and cleanliness of vehicles, and keep accurate vehicle and fuel logs, following IUCN's security and operational procedures.

These staffing arrangements will ensure that the project has adequate technical, fiduciary, safeguard, gender and communication capacity at both central and field levels to deliver the expected results and comply with GCF standards.

Flow of Funds

The Accredited Entity, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), may request disbursement of the GCF proceeds in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Funded Activity Agreement (FAA). Upon receipt of such proceeds from the Green Climate Fund, the Accredited Entity shall transfer the relevant GCF proceeds to the Executing Entities as follows: (i) to IUCN, acting through its Cameroon Country Office, in accordance with IUCN's internal financial management procedures; and (ii) to the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOW), in accordance with the terms of the Subsidiary Agreement.

Each Executing Entity shall, in turn, transfer the relevant GCF proceeds to: (i) the Project Management Unit (PMU) to implement the project activities assigned to it; (ii) the relevant Implementing Partners contracted to support the implementation of the Funded Activity, in accordance with the provisions of the applicable Implementation Agreements; or (iii) the relevant service providers and consultants for the delivery of goods and services under the Project.

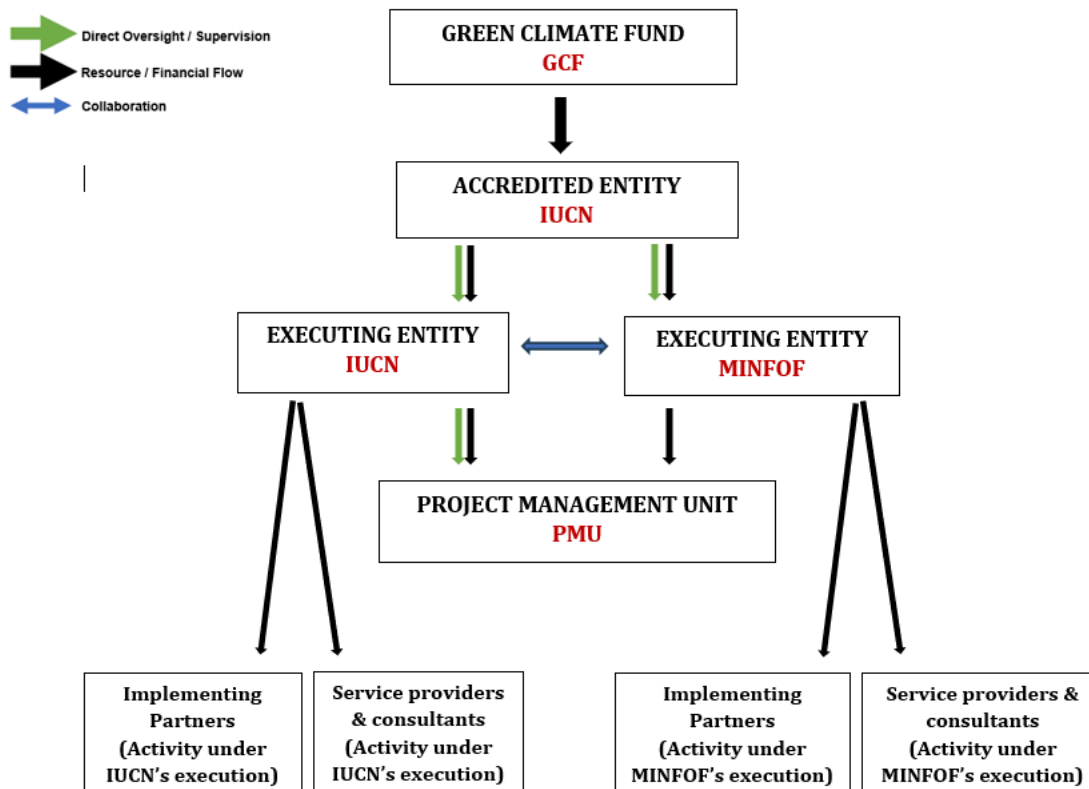


Figure 3. Financial flows of the project

C. FINANCING INFORMATION

C.1. Total financing

(a) Requested GCF funding (i + ii + iii + iv + v + vi + vii)	Total amount			Currency		
	\$29 740 699			million USD (\$)		
GCF financial instrument	Amount		Tenor	Grace period	Pricing	
(i) Senior loans	<u>Enter amount</u>		<u>Enter</u> years	<u>Enter</u> years	<u>Enter</u> %	
(ii) Subordinated loans	<u>Enter amount</u>		<u>Enter</u> years	<u>Enter</u> years	<u>Enter</u> %	
(iii) Equity	<u>Enter amount</u>		<u>Enter</u> years		<u>Enter</u> %	
(iv) Guarantees	<u>Enter amount</u>					
(v) Reimbursable grants	<u>Enter amount</u>					
(vi) Grants	\$ 29 740 699					
(vii) Results-based payments	<u>Enter amount</u>					
(b) Co-financing information	Total amount			Currency		
	\$16 304 936			Options		
Name of institution	Financial instrument	Amount	Currency	Tenor & grace	Pricing	Seniority

Government of Cameroon	<u>Grant</u>	<u>\$15,100,424</u>	<u>million USD (\$)</u>			
IUCN	<u>Grant</u>	<u>\$1,204,512</u>	<u>million USD (\$)</u>			<u>Options</u>
Total financing (c) = (a)+(b)	Amount			Currency		
	<u>\$46 045 635</u>			<u>million USD (\$)</u>		

C.2. Financing by component²⁴

Component	Output	Indicative cost million USD (\$)	GCF financing		Co-financing		
			Amount million USD (\$)	Financial Instrument	Amount million USD (\$)	Financial Instrument	Name of Institutions
Component 1. Climate-smart sustainable forest management and restoration	Output 1.1 Improved governance systems and management plans for SFM of PFAs	5,779,294	<u>1,690,994</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>4,088,300</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>Government of Cameroon</u>
	Output 1.2 Increased restoration of degraded lands and forests in and around permanent forest areas	18,485,251	<u>16,195,751</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>2,289,500</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>Government of Cameroon</u>
	Output 1.3 Enabling environment for green investment and REDD+ results-based payment instruments improved	3,554,400	<u>2,474,000</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>1,080,400</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>Government of Cameroon</u>
Component 2. Value chain development and transformation are operational and accessed	Output 2.1 Strengthened NTFP Value Chains and Market Linkages	<u>9,033,146</u>	<u>5,714,525</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>3,318,621</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>Government of Cameroon</u>
Component 3. Stakeholders' capacities are strengthened on climate-resilient land-use practices	Output 3.1 Improved capacity of stakeholders on the use of enhanced SFM instruments, restoration, and climate friendly livelihood systems	4,331,318	<u>762,000</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>3,569,318</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>Government of Cameroon & IUCN</u>
Component 4. Strong project oversight and knowledge-driven partnerships	Output 4.1 Project is Monitored, Evaluated and Audited	<u>1,487,681</u>	<u>1,487,681</u>	<u>Grants</u>			
	Output 4.2. Project results, knowledge,	<u>1,196,797</u>			<u>1,196,797</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>Government of Cameroon</u>

²⁴ The details of this part are contained in the economic and financial analysis document (ANNEX 3 B)

	lessons learned, and best practices are consolidated, upscaled and disseminated at the national, sub-regional and local levels						
Project Management Component	PMC Output 1. The Project Steering Committee and the Project Management Team are functional	<u>2,177,748</u>	<u>1,415,748</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>762,000</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>IUCN</u>
Indicative total cost (USD)		<u>\$46 045 635</u>	<u>\$29 740 699</u>	<u>\$16 304 936</u>			

C.3 Capacity building and technology development/transfer

C.3.1 Does GCF funding finance capacity building activities?

Yes ☒ No ☐

C.3.2. Does GCF funding finance technology development/transfer?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Capacity building is a central pillar of the SPEFOCE project, embedded across all four components and directly funded by GCF resources. The project addresses critical capacity and knowledge gaps that are hindering the transfer and adoption of climate-resilient practices in forest management and restoration in Cameroon. Component 3 (Stakeholder Capacity Strengthening) is entirely dedicated to capacity building. Under Output 3.1, the project will strengthen the capacities of at least 2,000 stakeholders (30% women) on climate-resilient land-use practices, including government officials at national and decentralised levels, community forest managers, indigenous peoples, women's groups, and private sector actors. Under Component 1, GCF funds support extensive capacity building for restoration at scale, including farmer field schools on agroforestry and assisted natural regeneration techniques across the three landscapes (Waza, Dja-Lobeke, Bakossi-Bamboutous), training of nursery operators and community restoration brigades on seed collection, nursery management, planting, and maintenance, and capacity building of communal councils and community forest committees on governance, participatory mapping, SFM practices, and fire management. Under Component 2, GCF resources finance capacity building of NTFP micro and small enterprises on the use and maintenance of improved processing equipment, food safety and HACCP standards, business development, and market access strategies. Financial institutions are also engaged through training and awareness programmes on green investment opportunities in the forestry sector. Under Component 4, the project strengthens institutional M&E capacity within MINFOF and other government agencies through training on GIS/remote sensing, results-based monitoring, and data management systems. Across all components, the project applies a gender-responsive approach to capacity building, ensuring a minimum of 30% women's participation and designing training content to address the specific needs and constraints of women, youth, and indigenous peoples.

The SPEFOCE project finances the transfer, adaptation, and deployment of climate-relevant technologies across its target landscapes. The project addresses the barrier that "technologies and practices needed for low-emission and climate-resilient forestry in Cameroon are still at an infancy stage" and that communities rely on "rudimentary processing techniques, equipment and facilities." Technology transfer occurs in the following areas:

- Forest monitoring and spatial planning technologies (Component 1 and 4): The project procures and transfers GIS and remote sensing hardware, software, and technical skills to MINFOF and partner institutions, including high-performance workstations, GIS software licences, and climate-risk analysis tools. These technologies enable spatial analysis, deforestation monitoring, land-use change detection, and forest inventory data processing. The project strengthens the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) and supports ONACC's GHG accounting system using IPCC Tier 2 methodology, satellite imagery (Landsat/Sentinel-2), and allometric equations calibrated to Cameroon's forest types. Equipment

investments include GPS units, diameter tapes, and field measurement tools for permanent sample plots across the three landscapes.

- Climate-smart restoration technologies (Component 1): GCF funds support the establishment of 15 permanent nurseries across the three landscapes, equipped with shade structures, water supply systems, irrigation infrastructure, and associated tools. The project transfers improved restoration techniques, including assisted natural regeneration protocols, agroforestry models (shaded cocoa systems in Dja-Lobeke, parkland agroforestry in Waza, highland agroforestry in Bakossi-Bamboutous), enrichment planting designs, and riparian restoration methods. Species selection, planting densities, and management regimes are informed by the ROAM analysis and adapted to each agro-ecological zone with support from international technical experts.
- NTFP processing and value-addition technologies (Component 2): A core investment of approximately USD 2,000,000 in GCF funds (Activity 2.1.2) finances the procurement, delivery, and installation of improved processing, packaging, and storage equipment for approximately 25–30 decentralised NTFP processing and aggregation units across the three landscapes. These include cleaning and sorting tables, shelling and cracking machines, oil presses, dryers, mills and grinders, filling and sealing machines, and packaging equipment tailored to priority NTFPs (cashew nuts, bush mango, bitter kola, raffia, safou). Auxiliary equipment includes scales, moisture meters, stainless-steel utensils, and food-grade containers. The technology transfer is accompanied by international expertise in food safety and HACCP standards, energy-efficient processing, and maintenance systems to ensure sustained operation beyond the project period.
- REDD+ results-based payment instruments (Component 1): The project tests and develops REDD+ instruments (Activity 1.3), including MRV methodologies, carbon accounting systems, and results-based payment mechanisms. These represent the transfer of international best practices in REDD+ implementation to Cameroon's institutional context, with a target of three REDD+ instruments tested by the end of the project.
- Digital and information management platforms (Components 1 and 4): The project finances the development and hosting of online platforms for sharing guidelines, climate-risk information, market data, and knowledge products. These tools support long-term institutional memory and continued technology use beyond the project lifecycle.

All technology transfer activities are accompanied by training and capacity building to ensure effective adoption, maintenance, and sustainability. The project follows a South-South and North-South technology transfer approach, combining international expertise with national and local knowledge to ensure context-appropriate solutions.

EXPECTED PERFORMANCE AGAINST INVESTMENT CRITERIA

D.1. Impact potential

The SPEFOCE project has strong potential to contribute to the GCF's objectives by delivering both mitigation and adaptation outcomes within the forestry and land use mitigation result area and the adaptation result areas of most vulnerable people and communities, ecosystems and ecosystem services, and health, well-being and food and water security. By transforming forest governance systems, restoring degraded landscapes and strengthening climate-resilient livelihoods around Permanent Forest Areas (PFAs), the project will generate measurable climate benefits for both ecosystems and forest-dependent populations while supporting Cameroon's transition toward climate-resilient and low-emission development.

In mitigation terms, the project contributes through two pathways: (i) avoided emissions through reduced degradation and deforestation pressures on forested PFAs; and (ii) enhanced sequestration through the introduction of agroforestry systems on cropland and active restoration of community forests, parklands, reserves and riparian buffer zones. Over the 20-year accounting lifetime, the combined portfolio mitigation potential is estimated at approximately 2,467,777 tCO₂e, comprising 1,589,313 tCO₂e from avoided emissions and 878,464 tCO₂e from enhanced sequestration, across approximately 60,008 ha of forest and agricultural landscapes. Full methodology and calculations are provided in Annex 22.

At a total mitigation budget of USD 22,495,915 for the relevant output activities, this yields a cost-effectiveness of approximately USD 9.12/tCO₂e against the 20-year portfolio total. This figure is within the GCF AFOLU portfolio cost-effectiveness range, where land use mitigation projects typically range from approximately USD 5 to USD 30 per tCO₂e, with projects combining governance-intensive SFM components and active restoration in complex multi-landscape contexts tending toward the lower-middle of this range.

The project also generates substantial **adaptation benefits** by strengthening the resilience of ecosystems and forest-dependent communities exposed to increasing climate risks. Through ecosystem restoration, climate-smart agricultural practices and diversified forest-based value chains, the project will reduce vulnerability and strengthen adaptive capacity for approximately 197,669 direct beneficiaries and 1,346,605 indirect beneficiaries living in and around the Waza, Dja-Lobeke and Bakossi-Bamboutous landscapes. These populations rely heavily on climate-sensitive livelihoods such as rain-fed agriculture, livestock grazing and non-timber forest product harvesting, which are increasingly threatened by rising temperatures, rainfall variability, droughts, floods, erosion and wildfires. In addition, approximately 60,008 ha of vulnerable ecosystems, including forest and agricultural landscapes will be brought under improved low-emission and climate-resilient management practice, contributing to ARA4.

Restoration and sustainable land management interventions will enhance ecosystem resilience by stabilizing soils, increasing water infiltration, protecting watersheds and reducing erosion, flooding and landslide risks. Agroforestry systems and assisted natural regeneration will improve soil fertility, enhance microclimate regulation and increase landscape connectivity, strengthening the capacity of ecosystems to withstand increasing climate variability and extreme events. Protection and restoration of riparian forests and watershed areas will also contribute to improved water regulation and reduced climate-related damage to agricultural lands and settlements.

At the livelihood level, diversified income opportunities based on agroforestry and non-timber forest product value chains will strengthen household resilience by reducing dependence on climate-sensitive agricultural practices while generating more stable and diversified income sources for smallholder farmers, women and Indigenous Peoples. Climate-resilient production systems will also help stabilize agricultural yields under conditions of increasing temperature and rainfall variability, contributing to improved food security and household income stability.

The project will further strengthen institutional and regulatory systems for climate-responsive planning and development. Climate-smart management plans for protected areas, production forests and communal forests will be revised and operationalized to integrate climate risk considerations into forest governance and land-use planning. Multi-stakeholder land-use coordination platforms will improve dialogue and decision-making across forestry, agriculture, livestock and infrastructure sectors, helping prevent the lock-in of climate-vulnerable land-use practices.

In addition, the project will enhance the generation and use of climate information by improving access to agro-climatic services such as seasonal forecasts, weather advisories and early warning information for droughts and floods. These services will enable farmers, pastoralists and forest-dependent communities to better anticipate climate shocks, adjust agricultural practices and manage natural resources more sustainably.

Through these combined interventions, the project will increase adaptive capacity, reduce climate vulnerability and strengthen awareness and adoption of climate-resilient land-use practices among communities and institutions, contributing to long-term climate-resilient development in Cameroon.

D.2. Paradigm shift potential

The project is designed to catalyse a paradigm shift in Cameroon's forest and landscape management systems by transitioning from fragmented, sectoral, and reactive approaches toward an integrated, climate-resilient and low-emission development pathway. It does so by simultaneously addressing the underlying

drivers of forest degradation, climate vulnerability, and limited access to climate-aligned finance, while establishing institutional, financial, and technical systems that can sustain and scale impacts beyond the project lifecycle.

The paradigm shift potential of the project lies in its ability to combine climate-resilient sustainable forest management (SFM), large-scale restoration, climate-resilient livelihood development, and innovative financing mechanisms into a coherent, scalable model that aligns ecological sustainability with economic incentives. By embedding climate risk considerations into planning, governance, and investment systems, the project moves beyond site-specific interventions to enable systemic transformation across Cameroon's forest landscapes.

Potential for scaling up and replication

The project adopts a landscape-based and systems-oriented approach across three ecologically distinct regions, Sudano-Sahelian (Waza), humid rainforest (Dja-Lobéké), and highland ecosystems (Bakossi-Bamboutous) providing a robust demonstration of climate-resilient and low-emission land-use models under different climatic and socio-ecological conditions. This diversity enables the development of tested, context-specific models that can be replicated across other forest landscapes in Cameroon and the Congo Basin.

Scaling is further enabled through the integration of restoration planning tools (ROAM 2), sub-district action plans, and standardised climate-smart management guidelines, which provide replicable frameworks for implementation. The project's financial mechanisms, including green financing instruments are specifically designed to mobilise additional public and private investment, thereby enabling expansion beyond the initial project footprint. By aligning financial incentives with sustainable land-use practices, the project creates conditions for long-term scaling of both adaptation and mitigation outcomes.

Potential for knowledge sharing and learning

The project will generate and disseminate knowledge on climate-resilient SFM, restoration approaches, climate-smart value chains, and innovative financing mechanisms. Through structured knowledge management systems, including monitoring platforms, policy briefs, and participation in national and international fora (e.g. UNFCCC, CBD, Congo Basin Forest Partnership), the project will contribute to broader learning and replication. Lessons learned from implementation across diverse ecological zones will inform national and regional policy processes and contribute to global knowledge on ecosystem-based adaptation and climate-resilient land-use systems.

Contribution to enabling environment

The project contributes to a paradigm shift by strengthening the enabling environment required for climate-resilient and low-emission development. This includes enhancing institutional coordination, improving access to climate information, and building technical and operational capacity across government, communities, and private sector actors. By integrating climate considerations into forest management systems, restoration planning, and investment decision-making, the project embeds climate resilience into core development processes rather than treating it as an external add-on. Capacity building across stakeholders—including forest managers, local communities, financial institutions, and micro-enterprises—ensures that adaptation and mitigation practices are sustained and scaled beyond the project lifetime.

Contribution to regulatory frameworks and policies

The project supports the development and operationalisation of key policy and regulatory frameworks that are essential for long-term transformation. This includes strengthening REDD+ systems (NFMS, MRV, registry, safeguards), supporting the development of a national green investment framework, and integrating climate change considerations into forest and land-use planning guidelines. By aligning project interventions with Cameroon's NDC, NAP, and REDD+ strategy, the project reinforces national climate policy objectives while providing practical implementation pathways. The development of policy instruments and regulatory frameworks for green finance and climate-resilient land use creates the conditions for sustained investment and institutionalisation of project approaches.

Contribution to climate-resilient development pathways

The project contributes to a structural shift toward climate-resilient and low-emission development by simultaneously addressing ecosystem degradation, livelihood vulnerability, and financial barriers to

sustainable investment. Through restoration and climate-resilient SFM, the project enhances ecosystem integrity and stabilises critical ecosystem services, including water regulation, soil fertility, and microclimate buffering. At the same time, the promotion of climate-resilient value chains and diversified livelihoods reduces dependence on climate-sensitive and unsustainable practices, thereby lowering vulnerability and reducing pressure on forest resources. The integration of financial mechanisms ensures that these practices are economically viable and scalable.

By combining these elements, the project establishes a model for development that is both climate-resilient and economically sustainable, contributing to long-term transformation in land-use systems and supporting Cameroon's transition toward a low-emission, climate-resilient development pathway.

D.3. Sustainable development

The project will make a significant contribution to improving sustainable climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies for Cameroon's forest sector. While working towards improving SFM instruments of PFAs, enhancing forest restoration activities, and improving the livelihood support systems and resilience of communities, the project additionally contributes to sustainable development through significant environmental, economic, and social co-benefits.

Environmental: The use of agroforestry to restore degraded land, hills, slopes, riparian forests in parks and production forests could provide benefits in terms of erosion control, regulation of water quantity and quality, increased groundwater recharge, creation of riparian buffer zones, enhancement of biodiversity including forest ecosystem health and improved agricultural yields. Successful application of this approach in the different landscapes of the project could provide potential for scaling up to benefit many communities and ecosystems at national and regional levels.

Social: The success of nature-based solutions in improving forestry production, incomes and community well-being can be replicated at scale to benefit many communities in the region. By investing in sustainable forestry and agricultural practices, promoting the conservation of natural resources and integrating ecosystems into production systems, it is possible to improve food security, livelihoods, the equity and participation of local people in all project activities and the resilience of communities to climate challenges. This model can then be widely disseminated and adopted for positive impact at scale.

Economic: Mobilizing banks for green LOC represents a major opportunity for the production, processing and marketing of forest and agricultural products, including VCD. This will improve the incomes of local communities through increased access to markets. The regional / African coverage of some banks could encourage learning and replication of green financing models in other countries. This would stimulate the adoption of more sustainable financing and investment practices across the sub-region, helping to promote sustainable development at a more global level.

Gender-sensitive development: The Gender Action Plan developed could help to ensure gender mainstreaming in all project activities, as well as increased participation of women in green initiatives and climate solutions at national and regional levels. This would promote gender equality and increase women's participation in climate-smart sustainable development initiatives on a wider scale.

The project contributes directly to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by promoting climate-resilient and low-emission land-use systems in and around Cameroon's PFAs. It supports SDG 13 (Climate Action) through large-scale forest restoration, sustainable forest management and strengthened climate governance that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while enhancing adaptation capacity. The project advances SDG 15 (Life on Land) by restoring degraded landscapes, conserving biodiversity and improving ecosystem services critical for watershed protection and soil stability. By strengthening climate-resilient livelihoods, agroforestry systems and non-timber forest product value chains, the project contributes to SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) through improved incomes, food security and diversified livelihood opportunities for rural communities, including Indigenous Peoples and women. The project also supports SDG 5 (Gender Equality) by promoting the participation and economic empowerment of women in forest value chains and local governance processes, and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) through the development of sustainable green businesses linked to restoration and forest-based value chains. Together,

these outcomes support inclusive, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable development pathways in Cameroon.

D.4. Needs of recipient

Cameroon faces a structurally high level of climate vulnerability, compounded by persistent rural poverty and limited fiscal space, which severely constrains its capacity to undertake the scale of investments required for climate-resilient land-use transitions in high-vulnerability, low-adaptive-capacity contexts. Climate change is already degrading forests, soils and water resources in the targeted landscapes, undermining the livelihoods and food security of smallholders, women, youth and Indigenous Peoples who depend on climate-sensitive sectors. At the same time, these populations often lack secure access to productive assets, climate information, technical support, markets and finance, leaving them with very limited options to adjust their practices, diversify income sources or invest in long-term resilience.

Domestic public resources are insufficient to address these challenges at the necessary scale and speed, and are further constrained by competing development priorities, debt pressures and the lingering socio-economic impacts of recent crises. Commercial finance is scarce and risk-averse in rural areas, particularly for long-tenor investments in adaptive forest management, large-scale restoration and climate-smart agroforestry systems that have long payback periods and diffuse benefits. As a result, there is little incentive or capacity for households, communities, cooperatives and local enterprises to mobilize the upfront capital needed to shift towards low-emission, climate-resilient production systems. This structural financing gap is particularly acute in and around Permanent Forest Areas, where climate risks are rising but local economic opportunities remain limited and highly exposed to weather variability.

In parallel, institutional and technical capacity constraints significantly limit Cameroon's ability to operationalize its NDC, REDD+ strategy and forest landscape restoration commitments at the landscape level. Line ministries and decentralized services responsible for forestry, environment, agriculture and land-use planning often lack the staff, tools and resources necessary to integrate climate risk into planning, enforce sustainable forest management, and design bankable, integrated investment programmes that can attract public and private co-finance. Policy and regulatory frameworks are evolving but are not yet fully equipped to steer land-use decisions in and around PFAs towards climate-resilient, low-emission trajectories, nor to ensure the effective and equitable participation of women, Indigenous Peoples and other vulnerable groups in decision-making and benefit-sharing.

Against this backdrop, concessional GCF funding is essential to address the combined challenges of high climate vulnerability, institutional and capacity gaps, and structural barriers to finance, and to maximise adaptation and mitigation impact per GCF dollar invested. The proposed project will use GCF resources to de-risk and crowd in green investment in climate-resilient forest and land-use systems, strengthen the institutional and policy framework for climate-informed forest and land governance, and build the technical and organizational capacities of local communities, women, youth and Indigenous Peoples. By targeting highly vulnerable landscapes and population groups, and by unlocking investments that would not materialize at the required scale, speed or level of ambition through domestic budgets or commercial finance alone, the project directly responds to the "needs of recipient" and "country ownership" investment criteria of the GCF, and positions GCF support as a critical catalyst for Cameroon's transition towards climate-resilient, low-emission development pathways.

D.5. Country ownership

Alignment with the National Determined Contributions: The project will contribute to the implementation of the NDC in Cameroon, particularly the contributions that seek to address emission reduction in the forestry and land use sector. Project activities align with key forestry sector actions of the NDC such as (i) SFM through the exploitation and development of production forests, (ii) Contribution to economic growth and the fight against poverty through job creation, and (iii) Conservation of biodiversity.

Alignment with the National REDD+ Strategy: The project will contribute to the implementation of the REDD+ strategy in Cameroon. By enhancing the enabling environment for REDD+ implementation and by

implementing direct forestry and land use activities (restoration, protection, climate smart agriculture etc.) the project will contribute to (i) the reduction of GHG emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, (ii) help conserve and increase forest carbon stocks, (iii) improve SFM, and (iv) improve livelihoods.

Alignment with National Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) Strategic Framework: The FLR strategy has made commitments to restore about 12 million hectares of degraded forest and land. This will require a combination of actions on the ground, policy, and institutional change. The project direct investment in restoration activities will contribute to the objectives of the strategy.

Alignment with the 2030 National Development strategy: The strategy stresses the need to (i) strengthen actions for the sustainable management of natural resources; and (ii) adapt and mitigate effects of climate change. Concerning flora, the Government intends to: (i) create and use seed banks of forest species and the establishment of reference nurseries; (iii) promote reforestation; and (iv) improve forest resource information. The project activities related to SFM and restoration will contribute to achieving these objectives.

Alignment with Rural Sector Development Strategy and the National Investment Plan: It includes four priority areas: (i) development of production systems and improvement of food and nutrition security; (ii) modernisation of rural infrastructure and improved access to financing; (iii) sustainable natural resource management and value addition; and (iv) governance and institutional development.

Alignment with Cameroon's Climate Change National Adaptation Plan (NAP): The NAP addresses the impacts of climate change in the country by proposing actions such as reducing population vulnerability by increasing the resilience and quality of life, as well as, increasing adaptive capacity to new opportunities for the country's development. The project will contribute to the objectives of the NAP through promoting access to sustainable livelihoods and project activities that will enhance the climate change resilience of local forest-dependent communities and forest ecosystems.

Alignment with the GCF Country program: Six out of the 12 priority programs of the GCF Cameroon country program are linked to forests and land use. These include the protection, conservation, SMF, and emissions reduction from deforestation and forest degradation, resilience of forest ecosystems to climate change, development of integrated, and resilient agriculture in response to the effects of climate change. Project interventions are directly aligned and will contribute to these priority areas.

Capacity of accredited entity: IUCN, GCF Accredited Entity since 2016 has the capacity to facilitate and support the design and implementation of medium-sized projects up to \$250 million, and projects with medium environmental and social risks. IUCN is active in Cameroon, through its country office, and under the West and Central African regional program where it is implementing projects covering forest and ecosystem protection, protected area, and climate mitigation and adaptation.

Role of the NDA: The NDA office was heavily involved in the project formulation process, from the concept note to the funding proposal. The NDA was involved in all the meetings that took place throughout the design process and provided strategic guidelines on the project scope and interventions along the way. Observations and comments from the NDA were incorporated in the final version of the funding proposal. The NDA will be closely involved in implementing project activities and will be part of the steering committees.

Engagement with civil society, IPs, Women, and other groups: The project development process conducted two rounds of consultations at the national, sub national and local levels. The consultations engaged with sectoral ministries, development partners, FIs, CSO, local communities, women groups, traditional authorities, IPs etc. These stakeholders were involved in defining and identifying the problems, interventions, activities, ongoing and planned activities, and roles and responsibilities. They were involved in the ESIA, IP and gender assessments that facilitated the elaboration of the ESMP, the gender action and IP plan. Stakeholder engagement (operations under ROAM 2) will continue during project implementation.

D.6. Efficiency and effectiveness

The economic efficiency of the project considered the incremental benefits and costs from the implementation of project activities while the financial analysis was conducted from the point of view of the private sector (entrepreneurs and smallholders).

Cost-effectiveness: Project design and implementation strategies are based on experience and lessons learned from similar previous and ongoing projects in Cameroon and Central Africa. Additionally, project frameworks have been designed from primary and secondary literature and data collection from sites where similar projects have been implemented. Analysis of the project was identified and built around best practices, thereby ensuring solutions identified are to be completed with a high level of confidence in their outcome and cost-effectiveness. The project's financial and economic approach entails the training of a critical mass of smallholders, especially women, to ensure up-scaling through farmer-to-farmer interactions and knowledge exchange on technical issues, value chain, management, and financing.

Financial viability: The Government of Cameroon is requesting US\$29.7 million in GCF grant finance, with US\$15.1 million in confirmed co-financing (co-financing ratio 1.97:1), to implement the proposed project's interventions. This seven-year investment will secure household incomes/food security and long-term ecosystem services critical to climate adaptation in Cameroon's landscapes. The financial analyses show that the results of the planned interventions (with grant) are sufficiently high to justify the project's investment. With a grant, using a financial discount rate of 9.43%, the Project becomes particularly important from a financial point of view with a net present value (NPV) of US\$ 32 million and a FIRR of 7%. The payback period is approximately 10 years. Moreover, the economic benefits that will be generated by the project are expected to be significantly high with the project economic cost-benefit ratio of 5.8, meaning for every US\$1 invested, it will expect to generate US\$5.80 in economic benefits. This shows that the project is financially viable while also expecting to provide exceptional indirect benefits. Although the NPV is positive for this model, a grant to cover part of the investment cost is necessary as credit is not currently available. Smallholders are not bankable in Cameroon, even for large landowners, only a small fraction of loans is provided by banks and microfinance institutions for forestry and agricultural purposes. Based on the concerns that smallholders in Cameroon are having difficulties to access loans, traditional financial institutions do not take sufficiently into account their rural context. Consequently, grants have been selected as the most appropriate support to cover the project costs focusing on smallholders, women, and IPs. This choice of support is intended to minimize risk of failure of the project from liquidity issues and repayment obligations while also act as a catalyst to mobilize financial institutions to provide green LOC to support the replication and scaling up. To this end, project activities are well designed to encourage financial institutions to develop and operationalize new green financial products, specifically in component 2. The activities conducted under Component 2, including adoption of a legal framework for green investment in Cameroon, technical assistance to FIs in the creation of green LOC and definition of access criteria, are expected to ease credit constraints, and access to LOC by creditworthy smallholders, and entrepreneurs. Regarding the actual economic context, the option of a loan is likely not feasible. Additional parameters preventing the use of a loan is that it can result in the failure of the project in the following ways: i) The poverty level of beneficiary communities: it would be unrealistic to require repayment from communities struggling to meet their basic needs; and ii) The non-continuation and unsustainability of restoration activities without a grant support. From a financial perspective, analysis of the results indicates that the figures for the proposed interventions (with grant) are sufficiently high to justify financing the project's activities.

From an economic perspective, with a grant and over a 20 years period, the Economic Rate of Return is 34% with an ENPV of US\$ 196 million when carbon benefits are taken into account at a social cost of carbon at \$44 per tonne CO₂eq and a social discount rate of 6%. Without carbon emission benefits, ENPV falls to \$85 million. This implying that the project is still recommendable even without carbon emission benefits in terms of its contribution to the local and national economies, under the assumption that in the BB Landscape, the total surface area of restoration activities is estimated at 15,075 ha, at 16,524 ha in the DL Landscape, and at 158,730 ha for Waza Landscape. The inclusion of incentive schemes makes the results significantly more interesting. This can only be achieved by funding from an institution such as the GCF, which provides grants, as it is necessary to provide grants to the small farmers in their first few years to motivate them to adopt the agroforestry and forestry systems. Once these become established and financial institutions, helped by the project, develop appropriate products for such activities, sustainability will follow.

E. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

E.1. Project/Programme Focus

- ☒ Reduced emissions (mitigation)
- ☒ Increased resilience (adaptation)

E.2. GCF Impact level: Paradigm shift potential

Assessment Dimension	Current state (baseline)	Potential target scenario (Description)		How the project/programme will contribute (Description)
	Description	Rating		
Scale	Improved SFM practices are not being applied at scale in production forests, protected areas, due to low uptake of improved management instruments. Efforts to replicate SFM and restoration practices beyond pilot sites remain fragmented due to limited coordination among stakeholders, insufficient documentation of best practices, and weak institutional frameworks for scaling. Cross-landscape policy integration and private sector incentives are underdeveloped, limiting systemic adoption. Landscape restoration is not being scaled up because of low uptake and involvement of stakeholders. Multi-stakeholder platforms for knowledge-sharing and adaptive governance—critical for paradigm shifts—are absent, leaving replication dependent on ad hoc donor funding rather than systemic institutionalization. Value chain actors are not well organized, structured to enhance product value addition and market access.	<u>Low</u>	Increase in the number of PFA types applying improved management practices. Increase in the surface area for restored forest and degraded lands Increase in the number of structured and organised group of stakeholders involved in product value chain	The project will demonstrate how mixed and sustainable agroforestry can reconcile objectives of livelihoods and conservation / prevention of deforestation and land degradation. Output 1.1 relates directly to improve uptake of SFM practices with activities that support the preparation of the improved management instruments and an approach to incentivise uptake in logging concessions. Output 3.1 on capacity building will contribute to build capacity of relevant stakeholder's concern with the management of PFAs. On restoration, output 1.2 will contribute to upscaling restoration by supporting restoration actions, creating incentive approaches, improving the enabling environment (e.g. preparing restoration investment plans). Upscaling of restoration will also benefit from capacity building under output 3.1 that relates to improved capacity of stakeholders on approaches and instruments to enhance restoration. Value chain organisation and structuring will benefit from output 2.1 that organises and strengthens priority agriculture and NTFPs value chains. Output 3.1 will strengthen the capacity of stakeholders on market and VCD will also contribute to upscaling VCD activities.
Replicability	The project activities will target intervention areas with the intentions for replication throughout the impact areas and beyond. Unsustainable practices	<u>Low</u>	Improved SFM practices applied to production forest types in the project impact area and beyond. Management plans of protected	Output 1.1 relates directly to improve uptake of SFM practices with activities to incentivise the uptake in logging concessions in and out of the project impact areas. Output 3.1 on capacity building will contribute to build capacity of relevant stakeholder's concern with the management of PFAs

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	Dominate: outdated forest plans, weak enforcement, and low stakeholder capacity drive degradation. Communities lack long-term incentives (e.g., tenure security) and rely on deforestation-prone livelihoods. Green finance access is minimal, value chains are informal, and institutions lack tools to monitor REDD+ or illegal logging.		areas out of the intervention areas and beyond the impact areas will be revised. Restoration activities to be carried out in and around PFAs in the project impact areas and beyond. Experiences from the targeted value chain commodities will be applied to other relevant commodities in and out of the intervention areas.	that are out of impact areas. On restoration, output 1.2 will contribute to the replication of restoration by creating incentive approaches, improving the enabling environment (e.g. preparing restoration investment plans). Replication of restoration will also benefit from capacity building activities under output 3.1, that relates to the improved capacity of stakeholders on the approaches and instruments to enhance restoration. Value chain organisation and structuring of stakeholders in other commodity value chains or same structured and organised stakeholders will be pick-up on other commodities following activities in output 2.1 that organises and strengthens priority agriculture and NTFPs value chains. The cross-cutting activities under output 4.2 will disseminate project results, knowledge, lessons learned, and best practices at the national, sub-regional and local level will contribute immensely to replication. Similarly, activity 1.3.4 will contribute to helping the country finalize both its FREL and its MRV system. This will ensure that international standards and quality are integrated into these processes, which would help attract carbon compensation funding, whether regulatory or voluntary
Sustainability	The project is responding to gaps and barriers identified by PFAs managers, technical and financial partners, and beneficiaries with the objectives to enhance long-term adaptive and sustainable management of PFAs. Unsustainable practices dominate: outdated forest plans, weak enforcement, and low stakeholder capacity drive degradation. Communities lack long-term incentives (e.g., tenure security) and rely on deforestation-prone livelihoods. Green finance access is minimal, value chains are informal, and institutions lack tools to monitor REDD+ or illegal logging.	<u>Medium</u>	All eight barriers identified will be addressed to the benefit of public institutions, communities, private sector, and development partners. Green finance and capacity building will ensure ownership. Legal frameworks (REDD+ registries, green laws) and certified NTFP value chains will stabilize incomes. Financial institutions will offer low-risk green credits with blockchain monitoring. Multi-stakeholder platforms and government adoption of project tools (NFMS/SIS) will institutionalize climate-smart practices.	Sustainability of the project will be based on activities under outputs 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 related to improving the enabling environment for SFM, restoration and REDD+ implementation. All activities under output 2.1 will contribute to build a long-term business environment related to value chain and market access. For example, the development of viable business plans, access to credits, platforms to bring stakeholders together (buyers-producers-investors). In addition, all outputs under the capacity building component will contribute immensely to project sustainability including output 4.3 activities

E.3. GCF Outcome level: Reduced emissions and increased resilience

GCF Result Area	IRMF Indicator	Means of Verification (MoV)	Baseline	Target		Assumptions / Note
				Mid-term	Final ²⁵	

²⁵ The final target means the target at the end of project/programme implementation period. However, for core indicator 1 (GHG emission reduction), please also provide the target value at the end of the total lifespan period which is defined as the maximum number of years over which the impacts of the investment are expected to be effective.

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MRA4 Forestry and land use	Core 1: GHG emissions reduced, avoided or removed/sequestered	Project-level MRV system	0 tCO ₂ eq	604,946 tCO ₂ eq	2,467,777 tCO ₂ eq	No implementation delay which results in lower GHG abatement. Accounting period: 20 years 20-year target of mitigation potential: 2,467,777 tCO ₂ eq. Yearly average over accounting period) 123,389 tCO ₂ eq
ARA1 Most vulnerable people and communities	Core 2: Direct beneficiaries reached. Number of beneficiaries (% women): Investing in agriculture and forestry commodities and value chains; Trained on: approaches and instruments to enhance SFM and restoration; socio economic and climate resilience; livelihood systems; VCD, market, micro- enterprise	Annual reports from project Total number of individuals benefiting from better access to food through improved management practices Total number of new practices or options adopted by beneficiaries that contribute to food security	0	98 835	197 669	Project anticipates 197 669 direct beneficiaries within the intervention sites
	Suppl. 2.1: Number of beneficiaries (% women) adopting improved CR livelihood options.	Annual reports from project Study report on beneficiaries' perception of the effectiveness of improved livelihood options Total number of individuals who have adopted improved livelihood options	0	40 256	80 515	
	Suppl. 2.2: Number of beneficiaries (% women) taking advantage of the food security effect of sustainable management and restoration, as well as better livelihood options.	Annual reports from project Total number of individuals benefiting from better access to food through improved management practices Total number of new practices or options adopted by beneficiaries that contribute to food security	0	40 256	80 515	
	Core 2: Indirect beneficiaries reached.	Annual project reports	0	673,303	1,346,605	Project anticipates reaching 1,346,605 indirect beneficiaries
ARA4 Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Core 4: Hectares of natural resources brought under improved low-emission and/or climate-resilient management practice	Report on the evolution of forest Cover and land restoration Annual reports from project, decentralised regional and municipal authorities in charge of forestry	0	Total: 17,446 ha In Waza Landscape:	Total: 21,739 ha In Waza Landscape:	Beneficiaries have secured land access and / or tenure rights. Beneficiaries engage in restoration activities covering 7,509 ha in Waza; 6,917 ha in DL;



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			Agroforestry on farms/ hillsides = 408 ha Community forest restoration (forest) = 206 ha Riparian restoration (forest) = 82 ha Degraded parkland restoration (forest) = 84 ha SFM governance = 20,000 ha In Dja-Lobéké: Cocoa agroforestry on farms = 299 ha Community forest restoration (forest) = 647 ha Council/ parks/ reserves restoration (forest) = 282 ha Riparian buffer restoration (forest) = 425 ha	Agroforestry on farms/ hillsides = 1,020 ha Community forest restoration (forest) = 516 ha Riparian restoration (forest) = 207 ha Degraded parkland restoration (forest) = 210 ha SFM governance = 20,000 ha In Dja-Lobéké: Cocoa agroforestry on farms = 748 ha Community forest restoration (forest) = 1,618 ha Council/ parks/ reserves restoration (forest) = 706 ha Riparian buffer restoration (forest) = 1,063 ha	and 7,312 ha in BB. Restoration activities will include agroforestry, reserve and park areas, reforestation. See annex 24, ROAM methodologies.
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			SFM governance = 15,000 ha In Bamboutos- Bakossi: Agroforestry on farms = 133 ha Forest reserve/ hills restoration (forest) = 300 ha Riparian protection/ restoration (forest) = 1,135 ha SFM governance = 15,000 ha	SFM governance = 15,000 ha In Bamboutos- Bakossi: Agroforestry on farms = 333 ha Forest reserve/ hills restoration (forest) = 750 ha Riparian protection/ restoration (forest) = 2,837 ha SFM governance = 15,000 ha	
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E.4. GCF Outcome level: Enabling environment (IRMF core indicators 5-8 as applicable)					
Core Indicator	Baseline context (description)	Rating for current state (baseline)	Target scenario (description)	How the project will contribute	Coverage
Core Indicator 5: Degree to which GCF investments contribute to strengthening institutional and regulatory frameworks for low emission climate-resilient development pathways in a country-driven manner	Current regulatory instruments for the management of PFAs do not take into consideration climate change mitigation and adaptation explicitly, in addition to other gaps related to institutional technical capacity in the forestry and related sectors. Institutional capacity gaps also exist in relation to engagement in REDD+ RBP activities	low	High Regulatory instruments for production forests improved. Regulatory instruments for protected areas management revised. Institutional capacity on revised instruments improved. Institutional capacity on REDD+ results -based instruments improved	The project will provide technical assistance to revise regulatory instruments and developed guidelines for integrating mitigation and adaptation in the management of PFAs. This will be followed by capacity building of stakeholders from the local to the national level to enhance uptake.	National level (one country)
Core indicator 7: Degree to which GCF Investments contribute to market development/transformation at the sectoral, local, or national level	Value chain and market development is faced with barriers in different sub national areas in relation to the organization and structuring of actors, their interactions and networking for better market access and development	medium	Increase in the number of structured and organised stakeholders (micro-enterprises) with business development ideology. Platforms created to federate organisations in the value chain and to enhance market access and development.	The project will contribute to provide technical assistance and capacity building to help structure and organise local stakeholder groups into viable micro-enterprises involve in targeted commodities. Technical assistance will be provided to create and enhance stakeholder networks to enhance market access, mobilise investors and access to micro-credits	Multiple sub-national areas within a country
Core indicator 8: Degree to which GCF investments contribute to effective knowledge generation and learning processes, and use of good practices, methodologies and standards	Insufficient knowledge, lessons, and experiences have been generated on low emission / resilient forestry and land use practices at scale, including adapted methods and approaches.	medium	Project results, knowledge, lessons learned, and best practices are consolidated, upscaled and disseminated at the national, sub-regional and local levels	The project has three major activities that will contribute to achieving this target related to knowledge management. They will be generated from the intervention and impact areas, but will be disseminated throughout the national territory	National level (one country)



E.5. Project/programme specific indicators (project outcomes and outputs)

Project/programme results (outcomes/ outputs)	Project/programme specific Indicator	Means of Verification (MoV)	Baseline	Target	Assumptions / Note	
				Mid-term	Final	
Component 1. Climate-smart sustainable forest management and restoration						
Output 1.1 Improved governance systems and management plans for SFM of PFAs	Number of sustainable forest management policy instruments for permanent forest areas revised or created (% participation of women) Forest area regenerated or restored in permanent forest areas (PFAs), deforestation rate in permanent forest areas (PFAs) and rate of reduction of illegal logging	MINFOF records Management plan for the permanent forest concerned Project monitoring report	TBD	1 additional (With 30% participation of women) 0.2 % rate of deforestation	3 additional (With 30% participation of women) 0.1 % rate of deforestation	The revision or creation process shall be participatory involving ONACC, MINFOF, MINEPDED, CSOs, logging concessions, council forests managers, representatives of local communities and IP groups, financial and technical partners.
Output 1.2 Increased restoration of degraded lands and forests in and around permanent forest areas	Number of hectares of degraded forests / lands restored by means of agroforestry, assisted natural regeneration, and reforestation (% participation of women)	Tree planting, forest cover Monitoring and annual reports by PMU, WRI, MINFOF, MINEPDED	0 ha	95 165 ha (With 30% participation of women)	190 330 ha (With 30% participation of women)	Tenure rights are secured and respected. (See SG-ROAM) Beneficiaries engage in restoration activities covering 158 730.3 ha in Waza; 16 524.6 ha in DL; and 15 075.1 ha in BB. See annex 24, ROAM methodologies.
Output 1.3 Enabling environment for green investment strengthen and REDD+ results-based payment instruments improved	Number of REDD+ instruments tested with (% participation of women)	Documents and reports detailing the REDD+ instruments tested, including statistics on women's participation in annual reports	0	1 (With 30% participation of women)	3 (With 30% participation of women)	Scientifically sound IPCC and UNFCCC protocols for REDD+ are used



Component 2. Value chain development and transformation are operational						
Output 2.1: Strengthened non timber forest product (NTFP) Value Chains and Market Linkages	Number of beneficiaries (% women) integrating into equitable supply agreements	Project monitoring report. Financial institutions records.	0	5,000 producers (With 30% participation of women)	10,000 producers (With 30% participation of women)	Consistent technical and extension support is provided to beneficiaries and FIs. No major climate disruption of agricultural and NTFPs production calendar
	Area of degraded forest and agroforestry landscape restored using climate-resilient practices that enhance ecosystem services critical for climate adaptation (ha)	Remote sensing analysis Forest restoration monitoring reports Field verification surveys	0 ha restored under climate-resilient management	10,000 ha restored	21,738 ha restored	Restoration improves soil moisture retention, micro-climate regulation and erosion control, strengthening ecosystem resilience to drought and extreme rainfall. Assumes land tenure agreements and community participation remain stable.
	Number of beneficiaries (% women) trained on market, value chain and micro-enterprise development	Project monitoring report. Participants survey after training sessions	0	300	Number of beneficiaries (% women) trained on market, value chain and micro-enterprise development	Project monitoring report. Participants survey after training sessions
Component 3: Stakeholders' capacities are strengthened on climate-resilient land-use practices						
Output 3.1 Improved capacity of stakeholders on the use of enhanced SFM instruments, restoration, and climate-friendly livelihood systems.	Number of stakeholders demonstrating improved capacity to implement climate-resilient land management and livelihood practices (disaggregated by gender)	Project monitoring report Training completion records Post-training knowledge assessments Field adoption verification	0	600 (With 30% participation of women)	2,000 (With 30% participation of women)	Consistent technical support is provided to beneficiaries. Capacity building improves adaptive capacity of communities, government agencies and value chain actors to respond to climate variability.
	Percentage of trained stakeholders applying climate risk management practices	Follow-up surveys Field verification visits	0%	50%	70%	Measures actual adaptation impact through behavioural change and adoption of

	within one year of training	Extension service reports				climate-resilient practices.
	Number of operational multi-stakeholder coordination platforms supporting climate-resilient value chain development	Meeting minutes Platform governance documents Annual platform activity reports	0 platforms	3 platforms	6 platforms	Coordination improves adaptive governance, enabling faster response to climate-related shocks affecting forest landscapes and value chains.
Component 4. Strong project oversight and knowledge-driven partnerships						
Output 4.1 Project is monitored, evaluated, and audited	Number of effective MEL systems in place	Project monitoring report	0	1	2	IUCN and GCF guidelines and procedures will be used
Output 4.2 Project results, knowledge, lessons learned, and best practices are consolidated, upscaled and disseminated at the national, sub-regional and local levels	Percentage of project results, knowledge, lessons learned, and best practices consolidated, upscale and disseminated	Published knowledge products Project monitoring report	0	25%	75%	The remaining 25% will be finalised with partners and publishers, disseminated and upscaled after the end of the project.
Project/programme co-benefit indicators						
Co-benefit 1: Social	Core 2: Direct and indirect beneficiaries reached. Number of beneficiaries (% women) trained on SFM, restoration, market value chains through their social / community groups	Project monitoring reports: annual, mid-term, final reports	0 male 0 female	1,500 (With 30% participation of women)	3,000 (With 30% participation of women)	Consistent technical support is provided to beneficiaries
Co-benefit 2: Economic	Core 2: Direct and indirect beneficiaries reached. Number of beneficiaries (% women) who got new and enhanced job / business opportunities	Project monitoring reports: annual, mid-term, final reports	0 male 0 female	2,500 (With 30% participation of women)	5,000 (With 30% participation of women)	Consistent technical and extension support is provided to beneficiaries and financial institutions

Co-benefit 3: Environmental	Core 4: Ha of natural resource areas brought under improved low-emission and /or climate-resilient management practices Number of ha of degraded forests / lands restored to: boost watershed functions around Mt Bamboutous; improve health of dry forests and arid environmental conditions in Waza and conserve biodiversity in DL. (% of women participation)	Project monitoring reports: annual, mid-term, final reports	0 ha	10,000 ha	21,738 ha	Targeted restoration Land available in the project areas: Waza total 7,509ha Dja-Lobéké total 6,917ha Bakossi-Bamboutos total 7,312ha Portfolio total 21,738 ha
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E.6. Project/programme activities and deliverables

Activities	Description	Sub-activities	Deliverables
Output 1.1 Improved governance systems and management plans for SFM of PFAs			
Activity 1.1.1	Integrate climate mitigation and adaptation into the guidelines for improving PA management plans.	SA1. Assess past, present and future climate in and around PAs SA2. Analysis of impacts of climate change in and around PA SA3. Vulnerability analysis of socio-ecological systems SA4. Identification and prioritization of adaptation options SA5. Revision of the strategic axes of PA management plan by integrating the adaptation options	Updated PA management plan, guidelines that integrate climate change, SFM considerations and IUCN best practices prepared, and validated
Activity 1.1.2	Develop guidelines for preparing and implementing 03 production forests management plans including the integration of climate change mitigation, and other improved SFM practices and update the status of illegal logging in Cameroon.	SA1. Assess climate gaps/options in management plan SA2. Stakeholder consultations SA3. Revise guidelines for PA management plans SA4. Raise awareness and validate updated guidelines SA5. Monitor state of illegal logging in project sites	Updated production forest management plan guidelines Illegal logging trend update

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Activity 1.1.3	Implement management plans of 3 Communal forests.	SA1. Integrate CC into council forest management plans SA2. Stakeholder engagement SA3. Implementation council forest management plan SA4. Monitor management plan implementation	At least 3 Climate-smart council forest management plans, implemented and monitored
Activity 1.1.4	Create and operationalize multi-stakeholder platforms to strengthen dialogue between sectors or stakeholders with different land use interests.	SA1. Engage inter-sectoral land use stakeholders SA2. Bring land use stakeholders together for dialogue SA3. Create dialogue platform, organize meetings SA4. Engage people affected by human-wildlife, agropastoral conflicts SA5. Collaborate with ministries on land use planning SA6. Support transhumance related conflict resolution SA7. Identify and agree on corridors for transhumance SA8. Map grazing areas, enhance pasture production SA9. Monitor illegal logging, wildlife poaching in project	Dialogue and stakeholder engagement reports Maps of corridors for transhumance Maps of grazing areas Illegal logging and wildlife poaching reports
Output 1.2 Increased restoration of degraded lands and forests in and around permanent forest areas			
Activity 1.2.1	Develop integrated restoration land use planning and ownership.	SA1. PRA in 3 Waza Landscape districts and implementation of SG-ROAM SA2. Land use planning in 3 Waza Landscape districts SA3. PRA in 3 Dja-Lobeke Landscape districts and implementation of SG-ROAM SA4. Land use planning in 3 Dja-Lobeke districts SA5. PRA in 3 Bakossi-Bamboutous Landscape districts and implementation of SG-ROAM SA6. Land use planning in 3 BB Landscape districts	Restoration land use maps the project restoration intervention sites
Activity 1.2.2	Implement restoration activities in agricultural lands, mountains, degraded park areas, and community forests in the Waza intervention site	SA1. Select healthy climate-resilient planting materials SA2. Implement restoration with NTFPs species SA3. Identify and select nursery management experts SA4. Identify suitable sites and create nurseries SA5. Purchase of seeds and inputs SA5. Prepare planting fields (clearing, pecking, digging) SA6. Transport seedlings and plants SA7. Manage planting: irrigation, weeding, dead plants SA8. Monitor seedlings/trees and forest growth	05 Nursery plots of 20 000 seedlings capacity per landscape 73 937.50 ha of agroforestry and assisted natural regeneration (ANR) established 26 925.4 ha of community forests 16 315.7 ha of riparian forest and buffers of water bodies 41 551.7 ha of restoration of degraded parks
Activity 1.2.3	Implement restoration activities in degraded agricultural lands, forest reserves and park areas, community, and council forests in the Dja-Lobeke intervention site	SA1. Select healthy climate-resilient planting materials SA2. Implement restoration with Cocoa agroforestry and NTFPs species SA3. Identify and select nursery management experts SA4. Identify suitable sites and create nurseries SA5. Purchase of seeds and inputs SA5. Prepare planting fields (clearing, pecking, digging) SA6. Transport of seedlings and plants SA7. Manage planting: irrigation, weeding, dead plants SA8. Monitor seedlings/trees and forest growth	Nursery plots (05 nurseries of 20 000 seedlings capacity per landscape) 1 457 ha of agroforestry and ANR established 8 970.5 ha of community forests restored 1 524ha of council forests, parks and reserves restored 4 573.1 ha of protective forests areas of buffer of water bodies

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Activity 1.2.4	Implement restoration activities in degraded agricultural lands and forest reserves in Bakossi-Bamboutous intervention site	SA1. Select healthy climate-resilient planting materials SA2. Implement restoration SA3: Identify and select nursery management experts SA4. Identify suitable sites and create nurseries SA5. Purchase of seeds and inputs SA5. Prepare planting fields (clearing, pecking, digging) SA6. Transport of seedlings and plants SA7. Manage planting: irrigation, weeding, dead plants SA8. Monitor seedlings/trees and forest growth	05 Nursery plots 20 000 seedlings capacity landscape 8 569.1 ha of agroforestry and ANR established 3 006 ha of restoration of degraded forest reserve and hills areas 3 500 ha of protection forests on riparian areas and buffers of water bodies Degraded mount Bakossi-Bamboutous site restored with 220 trees per ha (number of ha to be determined)
Activity 1.2.5	Develop and disseminate agro-climatic information for increased resilience of agriculture and land use activities in the three landscapes.	SA1. Produce climate information –with ONACC SA2. Disseminate climate information through radio, farmers' network, and mobile message	Timely climate information resources disseminated to farmers including women,
Output 1.3 Enabling environment for green investment and REDD+ results-based payment instruments improved			
Activity 1.3.1	Support the reporting on the Warsaw REDD+ instruments - the National Forest monitoring system (NFMS), REDD+ registry and REDD+ safeguard information system (SIS).	SA1. Expert support on NFMS, SIS, REDD+ registry, RL SA2. Organize 3 National validation workshops SA3. Finalize the legal framework for carbon SA4. Finalize definition of forest in REDD+ context	01 NFMS REDD+ SIS, Forest definition, Carbon legal framework
Activity 1.3.2	Test Forest monitoring system, REDD+ registry and REDD+ safeguard information system and forest reference level.	SA1. Identify REDD+ pilot initiative SA2. Develop and implement forest monitoring system SA3. Develop and implement a REDD+ registry SA4. Develop and implement a REDD+ SIS SA5. Private sector forestry/agri-business REDD+ pilot SA6. ONNAC GHG accounting and certification system SA8. Monitor the implementation of REDD+pilot	01 REDD+ pilot initiative is established in one project site
Activity 1.3.3	Support the establishment of a legal framework to support green investment in Cameroon.	SA1. Prepare advocacy materials for decision makers SA2. Elaborate legal framework for adoption SA3. Elaborate text of application to implement SA4. Validation of the legal framework by lawmakers	1 legal framework is prepared, and submitted to Parliament for adoption by lawmakers
Activity 1.3.4	Support the development of	SA1. Prepare and collect data for FREL SA2. Updated the national FREL for adoption	1 FREL updated and validated

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	Cameroon's National Forest Reference Emission Level and the finalization of the country's REDD+ MRV system	SA3. Validation of the FREL SA4. Prepare and collect data for MRV system REDD+ SA5. Updated the national MRV system REDD+ SA6. Validation of MRV system REDD+	1 MRV system updated and validated
Output 2.1: Strengthened non timber forest product (NTFP) Value Chains and Market Linkages			
Activity 2.1.1	Conduct a prioritisation of high-potential NTFPs per AEZ	SA1. Expert to support identification of NTFPs SA2. Procurement of equipment SA3. Training sessions, workshops, and consultations	02 to 03 promising NTFPs selected
Activity 2.1.2	Support the development /upgrading of the NTFPs micro and small enterprises' equipment	SA1. establishment or upgrading of small-scale processing, packaging and storage facilities SA2. Provide business development training, financial literacy and cooperative management skills, with emphasis on women and youth entrepreneurs.	Establishment or strengthening of 25 processing or aggregation units;
Activity 2.1.3	Support the simplification of policy and regulatory processes	SA1. Organize discussion regards simplify administrative processes for NTFP commercialisation SA2. Support dialogue between MINFOF, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER) and the Ministry of Finance (MINFI) to align taxation, permit and export procedures for certified planted NTFPs. SA3. Expert to support the process	Integration of producers (50 % women) into equitable supply agreements;
Activity 2.1.4	Engage with financial institutions on green investments	SA1. Engage microfinance institutions and commercial bank per AEZ to co-develop financial products for NTFP-based enterprises (such as low-interest credit and guarantee schemes). SA2. Explore public-private partnerships where verified restoration records serve as collateral enhancers for access to credit.	Engagement of 2 to 4 financial institutions in green investment partnerships
Output 3.1 Improved capacity of stakeholders on the use of enhanced SFM instruments, restoration, and climate-friendly livelihood systems.			
Activity 3.1.1	Train stakeholders on the use of improved guidelines for the design and implementation of PA and SFM management plans and reduce illegal activities in PA and SFM.	SA1. Conduct needs assessments SA2. Develop training tools /manuals SA3. Select participants including at least 30% women SA4. Organize capacity building workshops SA5. Monitor application of knowledge	02 needs assessment report 01 training manual on PFAs M+A 20 Training reports
Activity 3.1.2	Train stakeholders and disseminate information on revised instruments, new restoration	SA1. Conduct needs assessment. SA2. Develop training tools /manual. SA3. Select participants, at least 30% of women. SA4. Organize capacity building workshop.	02 needs assessment report 02 training manual 19 Training reports

	schemes, forest monitoring systems, REDD+ registry and REDD+ safeguard information systems to relevant stakeholders.	SA5. Monitor application of knowledge	
Activity 3.1.3	Provide technical capacity to State and non-State actors to prepare a legal framework for green investment and support the initiation, adoption and implementation of a national green investment law.	SA1. Conduct needs assessment. SA2. Develop training tools/manual, SA3. Identify participants with at least 30% women, SA4. Training workshop on preparing green investment. SA5. Monitor application of knowledge3.1	1 Capacity building workshop organised
Activity 3.1.4	Train farmer associations and cooperatives on the monitoring and management of micro-enterprises, notably on agriculture and NTFPs	SA1. Conduct targeted market and capacity needs assessments	01 needs assessment report 01 training manual 15 Training reports
Activity 3.1.5	Train local artisans in equipment maintenance and repair.	SA1. Define local context SA2. Conduct capacity need assessment SA3. Develop training tools /manual SA4. Select participants including at least 30% women SA5. Organize capacity building workshop SA6. Monitor application of knowledge	01 needs assessment report 01 training manual 10 Training reports per landscape
Output 4.1 Strong project monitoring and knowledge-driven partnerships			
Activity 4.1.1	Update and implement the monitoring and evaluation plan of the project and especially restoration activities..	SA1. Conduct ROAM 2 to finalise village, community and commune roles and responsibilities. SA2. Develop and implement project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan. SA3. Internal monitoring of application of M&E plan SA4 Monitor implementation of restoration in Waza landscape. SA5 Monitor implementation of restoration in Dja-Lobeke landscape. SA6 Monitor implementation of restoration in Bakossi-Bamboutous landscape.	ROAM 2 report M&E plan developed Annual M&E report Internal mid-term M&E report Internal final M&E report Digitally driven restoration M&E
Activity 4.1.2	Providesupport on FPIC and safeguards implementation.	SA1. Recruit and manage consultants as necessary for carrying out assessments SA2. Implement ESMP, SEP, GAP and SG-ROAM SA3. Implement FPIC where identified as per ESMP	ESMP, GAP, SG-ROAM, SEP, Grievance Register updated annually with implementation status;

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		SA4. Provide annual reports on implementation status of ESMP, SEP and SG-ROAM SA5. Set up project-level grievance mechanism and handle grievances received	FPIC implementation report and evidence of FPIC as relevant
Activity 4.1.3	Facilitate and support audit of activities, project and food safety and quality monitoring of value chain products.	SA1. Prepare terms of reference, launch a call and recruit an external independent third-party expert or firm for MTR SA2. Prepare terms of reference, launch a call and external independent third-party for final monitoring and evaluation of project activities SA3. Establish NTFP quality and food safety standards. SA4. Control NTFP quality and monitor food safety. SA5. Support food safety compliance	Mid-term M&E, auditing report Final M&E, auditing report Food safety, quality monitoring and compliance system
Activity 4.1.4	Assess governance and management using the Site Assessment for Governance and Equity (SAGE) tool, and the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) for each of the PAs	SA1. Assess governance and management in Waza landscape PA using SAGE and IMET SA2. Assess governance and management in Bakossi-Bamboutous landscape PA using SAGE and IMET SA3. Assess governance and management in Dja-Lobeke-Ngoyla landscape PA using SAGE and IMET SA4: Facilitate the compensation for ecosystem services rendered through restored PF activities. SA5. Operationalize PA governance and management that align with SAGE and IMET tools in each of the 3 landscapes. SA6: Monitor implementation in each landscape	Enhanced adherence to the IUCN Green List Standard of Protected and Conserved Areas IMET and SAGE reports for each PA, report on PA performance
Output 4.2 Project results, knowledge, lessons learned, and best practices are consolidated, upscaled and disseminated at the national, sub-regional and local levels			
Activity 4.2.1	Prepare and disseminate communication and knowledge management products.	SA1. Prepare knowledge products (books, book chapters, scientific articles, theses) on restoration, SFM, REDD+, value chains, adaptation, and livelihood resilience, climate change best practices, and lessons learned SA2. Organize national policy dialogue on project activities and results, and participate in national, regional, and international conferences to share experiences and lessons learned (COP, UNFCCC, UNCBD, New-York Climate Week, CBFP etc.) SA3. Translate communication and knowledge products into French and English, and Provide knowledge products to the local communities (councils) through community radios, meetings. SA230. Prepare project reports and policy briefs	Knowledge products Project technical reports, briefs National policy dialogue (15)
PMC Output 1. The Project Steering Committee and the Project Management Team are functional			
PMC Activity 1.1	Operationalize the Project Steering Committee	SA1. Identify and establish project steering committee members SA2. Define and finalize modalities for operations SA3. Monitor applications of modalities SA4. Facilitate and support audit of project activities	Steering committee annual report

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PMC Activity 1.2	Project Management Unit lead the implementation of activities and use office equipment for project implementation	SA5. Define project positions and their roles and responsibilities SA6. Launch and finalise staff recruitment SA7. Management of project SA8. Define project office equipment SA9. IUCN Cameroon office consultant cost, travel costs, administrative expenses SA10. Prepare and sign purchase agreements SA11. Purchase project office equipment SA12. Maintain project office equipment SA13. Monitor the use of project equipment	Project staff recruited (07) Annual project management report Project office equipment purchased (Number to be determined)
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E.7. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation arrangements

Project-level monitoring and evaluation (M&E) will be undertaken in compliance with the GCF Integrated Results Management Framework (IRMF), the GCF Monitoring and Accountability Framework (MAF), the GCF Evaluation Policy, and the Evaluation Policy of IUCN. The M&E system is anchored in the project's Theory of Change and structured around the three-level IRMF results architecture — GCF impact level (paradigm shift potential), GCF outcome level (core and supplementary indicators), and project/programme level (outputs and activities). A comprehensive M&E Plan is provided as Annex 11 of this Funding Proposal.

The project monitors six GCF Core Indicators: CI1 (GHG emissions reduced, avoided, or removed/sequestered), CI2 (direct and indirect beneficiaries reached — 197,979 direct, 50% female, and 1,346,605 indirect), CI4 (190,330 hectares of natural resource areas under improved management), CI5 (institutional and regulatory frameworks strengthened), CI7 (market development and transformation), and CI8 (knowledge generation and learning). Three supplementary indicators are also tracked: SI 2.1 (beneficiaries adopting climate-resilient livelihoods), SI 2.2 (beneficiaries with improved food security), and SI 4.1 (hectares under restoration). In addition, project-level output indicators are monitored for each of the four components, along with co-benefit indicators covering social, economic, and environmental dimensions. All indicators are mapped to baselines, mid-term targets (Year 3.5), and end-of-project targets (Year 7) in the Results Framework presented in Annex 11.

Each indicator is supported by a rigorous data collection methodology. GHG emissions are measured using IPCC Tier 2 methodology with Cameroon-specific emission factors, forest inventories through permanent sample plots, satellite remote sensing (Landsat/Sentinel-2), and allometric equations calibrated to the country's forest types, in collaboration with ONACC and WRI. Hectares under management and restoration are tracked through GIS/remote sensing platforms operated by WRI, complemented by field surveys, GPS mapping, and integration with MINFOF's National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS). Beneficiary data is collected through registration databases with unique identification codes, household surveys at baseline, mid-term, and project end, and community-level focus group discussions. All beneficiary data is sex-disaggregated as a default standard. Institutional indicators are assessed through capacity scorecards and SAGE/METT tools, while market and knowledge indicators are tracked through surveys, value chain analysis, and publication/dissemination analytics. Data quality is ensured through double-entry verification, range and consistency checks, field supervision by the M&E Specialist, inter-rater reliability testing, and external verification for GHG data. In landscapes where indigenous peoples (Baka, Bagyeli) are present, all data collection follows FPIC-compliant protocols.

The primary responsibility for day-to-day project monitoring rests with the Project Coordinator (PC), supported by a dedicated M&E Specialist and a Gender and Safeguards Specialist within the Project Management Unit (PMU). The PC develops annual work plans, validated by the Project Steering Committee (PSC) at the beginning of each year, and ensures timely monitoring of all indicators. The PMU prepares quarterly progress reports identifying emerging risks, implementation challenges, and opportunities for adaptive management. Annual monitoring of each IRMF core and supplementary indicator is conducted well in advance of reporting deadlines. Risk monitoring is integrated into the quarterly cycle through an updated risk register that tracks identified risks, mitigation measures, and residual risk levels. Monitoring of environmental and social safeguards, the Gender Action Plan, the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, and FPIC compliance is conducted on an ongoing basis with quarterly reporting. An environmental and social grievance mechanism is maintained throughout the project lifecycle.

IUCN Cameroon Country Office provides M&E oversight through annual supervision missions, quality assurance of reports before GCF submission, and coordination of NDA and stakeholder input. IUCN Headquarters (PPME unit) provides technical M&E support, quality assurance of evaluation processes, and IRMF compliance review. MINFOF, as Executing Entity, provides government forest monitoring data, participates in joint monitoring missions, validates restoration and management data, and facilitates access to national forest inventory data. WRI operates GIS monitoring systems and conducts remote sensing analysis, while ONACC manages the GHG accounting system and provides national emission factors. The

GCF Secretariat receives and reviews Annual Performance Reports and provides feedback on project performance.

A project inception workshop will be held within the first three months of project effectiveness to: (i) re-orient stakeholders to the project strategy and discuss any contextual changes; (ii) clarify roles, responsibilities, reporting lines, and conflict resolution mechanisms; (iii) review the Results Framework, confirm baselines, and finalize M&E protocols and data collection tools; (iv) review financial reporting and audit arrangements; and (v) finalize the first-year annual work plan and schedule PSC meetings. The PC will prepare the inception report within one month of the workshop. The report, including the finalized M&E Operations Manual, will be cleared by IUCN Cameroon Country Office and approved by the PSC.

An Annual Performance Report (APR) will be prepared for each year of implementation, reporting progress against all IRMF indicators, financial expenditures, risk updates, and ESS/gender/FPIC monitoring results. The IUCN Cameroon Country Office will provide objective input and coordinate NDA and stakeholder contributions. APRs will be shared with the PSC and submitted to the GCF Secretariat. The quality rating of the previous year's APR will inform the preparation of the next. In addition, the PMU prepares quarterly progress reports for IUCN, and the Project Completion Report at operational closure will consolidate final results, lessons learned, and sustainability assessments.

An independent Mid-Term Review (MTR) will be conducted at the end of Year 3 / beginning of Year 4. The MTR will provide a comprehensive assessment of progress, relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency; review all IRMF indicator achievements; assess paradigm shift potential (scale, replicability, sustainability); evaluate ESS, gender, and FPIC compliance; and inform adaptive management decisions for the remaining implementation period. The MTR will employ mixed methods — quantitative analysis of monitoring data and household surveys, qualitative key informant interviews and focus group discussions at national, landscape, and community levels, and in-depth case studies. The evaluation will apply six assessment criteria: Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability. The terms of reference, process, and final report will follow IUCN and GCF standard templates. The final MTR report will be cleared by IUCN Cameroon Country Office, quality-assessed by the IUCN internal Independent Evaluation system, and approved by the PSC. Within 30 days of receiving the report, the PMU and IUCN will prepare a formal management response with an action plan that is tracked through the quarterly reporting system.

Terminal Evaluation. An independent Terminal Evaluation (TE) will be conducted no later than three months before operational closure. The TE will assess the full achievement of project objectives, outcomes, and outputs; evaluate sustainability of results and paradigm shift contribution; assess IRMF outcomes; and document lessons learned and best practices for replication. The TE will follow the same mixed-methods approach, assessment criteria, and quality assurance procedures as the MTR. The final TE report will be available in English, cleared by IUCN Cameroon Country Office, quality-assessed by IUCN's Independent Evaluation system, and approved by the PSC.

Adaptive management and sustainability. M&E data feeds into project management through structured feedback loops: quarterly reports provide early warning of implementation challenges, APRs inform annual work plan adjustments, and the MTR informs strategic course corrections approved by the PSC. The M&E system is designed for sustainability beyond the project period. Throughout implementation, MINFOF staff receive training on M&E methodologies, GIS/remote sensing, and results-based management. M&E tools, databases, and GIS platforms are developed for integration with the National Forest Monitoring System. A comprehensive handover plan is prepared in the final year, including data migration, system transfer protocols, and documentation of all methodologies and standard operating procedures.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

F.1. Risk factors and mitigation measures

The risks below have been identified and mitigation measures developed to allow for effective implementation of the project activities. The risks listed refer to project and contextual/external risks as

defined by IUCN's Enterprise Risk Management Policy²⁶. Environmental and social risks (ESS risks) are addressed in the following section. A project risk register will be used monitor and mitigate risks.

Selected Risk Factor 1: Insufficient land available for large-scale restoration

Category	Probability	Impact
<u>Technical and operational</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>

Description

ROAM phase 1 has identified areas including the different restoration options to be implemented in the intervention areas. Annex 24 describes the process by which opportunity areas were identified.

Mitigation Measure(s)

The project includes different land categories to be restored, including: degraded protected areas, community forests, council forests, degraded agricultural land, riparian zones, degraded mountain slopes, etc. Based on the analysis conducted in ROAM 1, there is already sufficient public land that meets the criteria of ROAM and is eligible for restoration, such as degraded protected areas (Annex 0 Agreement land tenure arrangements). This land is also largely free from tenure disputes as it is under the ownership and governance of the government of Cameroon. Access restrictions due to project activities on such land will be addressed as laid out in the Access Restriction Mitigation Process Framework, described in the Safeguards-enhanced ROAM. Stakeholder consultations have also demonstrated that there is interest in agroforestry and other restoration options on community forests and private land. Such land parcels will be identified during the implementation of ROAM II using the methodology described in Safeguards-enhanced ROAM. SG-ROAM incorporates community engagement and FPIC processes in site selection, ensuring that communities have full understanding of the benefits and restrictions involved in the restoration process and that they have the right to accept or refuse participation. This process will ensure community level sensitization on the social, economic, and environmental benefits of restoration, and be a criterion in site-selection.

Selected Risk Factor 2 Risks of pre-existing conflicts between stakeholders at the community level interfering with the achievement of project objectives related to restoration

Category	Probability	Impact
<u>Technical and operational</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Medium</u>

Description

Conflicts between farmers and herders in Bakossi-Bamboutous and Waza landscapes are mainly due to competition over access to and use of grazing land for livestock, freshwater resources as well as due to the setting of bush fires by livestock owners to regenerate fodder grass. In the Dja-Lobeke Landscape, conflict is common between communities and their respective councils regarding exploitation of forest resources, mainly around logging interests. Such conflicts may complicate the implementation of project activities related to restoration, delaying or disrupting them.

Mitigation Measure(s)

Specific project activities e.g. Activity 1.1.4. Create and operationalise multi-stakeholder platforms to strengthen dialogue between sectors or stakeholders with different land use interests'interests will focus on addressing such risks as well as attempt to reduce the conflict levels. The safeguards-enhanced ROAM will be applied during the operationalisation of ROAM II to conduct land use planning for restoration activities. SG-ROAM engages different community stakeholders working with local partners with an understanding of local dynamics and power relations in order to identify areas for the implementation of restoration activities. Only land free of disputes will be chosen for restoration to avoid exacerbating conflicts. An equitable benefit sharing plan as drafted in the ESMP and implemented after community consultations will reduce insecurities and competition among various community groups..

²⁶ <https://iucn.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/iucn-enterprise-risk-management-policy-2022.pdf>

Selected Risk Factor 3 Ambiguity between statutory and customary regulatory frameworks		
Category	Probability	Impact
<u>Legal</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Medium</u>
Description		
This risk is specific to Waza Landscape where the population was settled in the park even before its creation.		
Mitigation Measure(s)		
Although this is a sensitive and long-standing issue, Activity 1.1.4. 'Create and operationalise multi-stakeholder platforms to strengthen dialogue between sectors or stakeholders with different land use interests' will attempt to build consensus. Customary regulatory frameworks will be equally respected in all project activities, with traditional elders and customary community representatives consulted on activities relevant to them. An agreed approach to plan access to land and tree resources will be elaborated during safeguard-enhanced ROAM building on the ProPFR GIZ funded project ²⁷ .		
Selected Risk Factor 4 Risks related to climate variability and change		
Category	Probability	Impact
<u>Technical and operational</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Low</u>
Description		
The rainfall and temperature patterns in Cameroon in general are indicating a decrease in average rainfall and an increase in temperature. Restoration and agriculture related activities of the project will depend on the seasonal availability of rainfall. Currently, the seasonal calendar and distribution of rainfall is becoming irregular. This might affect timing for land preparation and planting of trees and crops, and productivity. Furthermore, climate hazards such as droughts and floods may damage project interventions such as agroforestry or restoration stands, slowing their implementation and maturation.		
Mitigation Measure(s)		
To mitigate this risk, agroclimatic information will be monitored regularly and made available to relevant stakeholders. Different communication means will be used to disseminate agroclimatic information in the intervention sites. This will help to inform farmers' and PMU's decision-making processes regarding farm management and on-the-ground activities. This measure will keep the impact low. Project interventions such as agroforestry and restoration will be implemented in consideration of climate hazards, such as droughts and floods, with measures being taken to protect them as needed. Such as the provision of water during droughts and not planting in flood prone areas during the rainfall season.		
Selected Risk Factor 5 Development of the capacities of members of beneficiary groups could be slow and difficult, particularly for women and vulnerable groups		
Category	Probability	Impact
<u>Governance</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Medium</u>
Description		
The level of capacity required by the Project for selected beneficiaries of micro-enterprise development initiatives in particular could prove to be a barrier to participation if applications are poorly mastered and requirements not met technically by the beneficiaries. For example, the preparation of business plans, which women and other vulnerable groups may not be equipped to meet. Vulnerable groups are also generally less likely to have access to information and may be less willing to participate in capacity building activities due to linguistic barriers or other forms of systemic discrimination. Management capacity limitations may also affect project planning.		

²⁷ <https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2025-en-factsheet-ProPFR-CM.pdf>

Mitigation Measure(s)		
The Project will aim to accurately match capacity building needs with training and other technical assistance through capacity needs assessments tailored to different stakeholder groups (Component 3). The Project will assign mentors with established experience to each group of beneficiaries for mentoring support in respect to the development and implementation of their respective business plans. The gender analysis and action plan lays out specific measures for the inclusion of women, as well as strategies for capacity building and equitable benefit sharing.		
Selected Risk Factor 6 Private sector entrepreneurs could decline to participate in Platforms as they perceive risks in terms of potential costs of time and effort to outweigh potential benefits		
Category	Probability	Impact
<u>Technical and operational</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Medium</u>
Description		
The creation and operationalization of platforms can be a lengthy process from the perspective of private entrepreneurs. Thus, they might see it as a waste of time with little benefits.		
Mitigation Measure(s)		
Platforms ²⁸ will be designed to reach consensus around the development of specific value chains by involving all stakeholders . Private sector stands to gain from stable markets for inputs and outputs based on reliable production volumes. By entering formal or semi-formal partnerships with smallholder organizations for production, together with technical assistance agencies and others, entrepreneurs can mitigate uncertainty in the supply of produce and augment the possibilities of significant returns on investments in production or post-harvest handling. The collaboration of government agencies and NGOs in these partnerships will reduce risk to entrepreneurs and smallholders by providing diverse technical and marketing support.		
Selected Risk Factor 7: The possibility of insecurity, political instability, armed conflicts and terrorism in the project sites		
Category	Probability	Impact
<u>Legacy and contextual</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>low</u>
Description		
Waza, and the other two sites (Southern Cameroon and along the border with Central African Republic) could be subject to insecurity, political volatility, armed conflict and terrorism.		
Mitigating measures		
In all three landscapes, project intervention will take place on sites with no security concern. The Dja-Lobeke site is not near the conflict zone in Central African Republic (CAR) as Cameroon has secured its borders with CAR. Because the Dja Lobeke site is free from armed conflict and insecurity many projects have been implemented in this site. An example includes the GEF project entitled “Conservation and sustainable use of the Ngoyla mimtom Forest” that was implemented by the World Bank from 2012 – 2019.		
In the Waza site, concerns about Boko Haram insecurity, armed conflict and terrorism are mostly in the northern frontier of Cameroon with Nigeria around Lake Chad, as well as in the Mora district which is not part of the project site. Furthermore, the Waza region is also free from insecurity, political volatility, armed conflict, and terrorism as IUCN is currently implementing a project in the region entitled “Increasing local communities’ resilience to climate change through youth entrepreneurship and integrated natural resources management” that is funded by the Adaptation Fund.		
With regards to the Bakossi-Bamboutos Landscape, most activities of the project will be carried out in the Bamboutous side of the Landscape which is free from any insecurity, armed conflict, and political instability. Results from field work indicated that there are some internally displaced people coming from the anglophone regions of Southwest and Northwest regions to resettle in the Bamboutous region. This is		

²⁸ Annex 0_Letters of intent

concrete evidence that the region is safe from insecurity, political volatility, and armed conflict and therefore can accommodate most activities of the project.

The project activities (restoration, value chain, etc.) cut across the three landscapes so in situations of prolonged insecurities, they will be transferred to secured sites within the same landscape or to other more secured landscapes while meeting the expected results or targets for the activities concerned.

A conflict sensitivity analysis is presented in Annex 22E and details how risks will be identified, anticipated and mitigated. The safeguard-enhanced ROAM process builds in a site-specific conflict assessment where assessments a high probability of conflict will lead to rejection of the site with a preference for alternate sites.

GCF POLICIES AND STANDARDS

G.1. Environmental and social risk assessment

The project was categorised as “**moderate risk**” at the screening stage, based on IUCN’s ESMS policy.

Based on IUCN and GCF requirements, and Cameroonian legislation (the 1996 law relating to the environment), an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) was carried out. The ESIA focused on the pre-identified environmental and social risks and impacts. Following the ESIA, a management plan was designed, including designed a safeguard instrument for finalising the assessment of restoration opportunities at the community level, called the Safeguard-enhanced ROAM (SG-ROAM). Below is a summary of the results of the ESMS screening. The full ESMS Screening Report is attached as an Annex to the ESMP.

The **Standard on Access Restrictions** is triggered due to the high likelihood of use and access restrictions resulting from both restoration activities and the updating of management plans. Restoration activities may prevent communities from using forests, buffer zones, council and community forests, and even some agricultural lands while restoration is ongoing. Similarly, the revision of management plans in the three landscapes may lead to changes in access to forest products, increased enforcement, and temporary or seasonal restrictions. These impacts are likely to cause short- and medium-term economic displacement, reducing food and income sources even though long-term outcomes may be positive.

Risks related to access restrictions are therefore central to the project. The safeguards-enhanced ROAM process includes an integrated situation analysis and stakeholder engagement to assess potential impacts of restrictions. In the absence of community consent or where appropriate mitigation cannot be identified, alternate sites will be selected. While agroforestry schemes, NTFP value chain development and other livelihood measures are embedded in the project design, and access restriction mitigation process framework is part of the ESMP. The safeguards-enhanced ROAM integrates safeguard measures from the outset, beginning with site selection, and the final ROAM action plans will include both restoration and livelihood components developed at subdistrict or district level to align with government development plans.

The **Indigenous Peoples Standard** is triggered due to the presence of Bantu and Baka communities in some landscapes and the seasonal or permanent use of the Waza landscape by the Mbororo pastoralist community. These communities may be significantly impacted by access restrictions arising from project activities. One of the key risks identified is that Indigenous Peoples could be excluded from the project benefits due to the socioeconomic context and the design of the project activities. This issue is exacerbated by the limited representation of Indigenous Peoples in formal natural resource management committees and forums. The safeguards-adapted ROAM will address these risks by including an FPIC protocol, site-level assessment of restrictions and restoration options, and a clear consultation process with Indigenous Peoples for the development of market and livelihood interventions to ensure that these are fit for purpose. The safeguard-adapted ROAM will also include community-validated action plans at sub-district level.

FPIC must be sought where activities take place on indigenous territories or where these communities may be negatively affected. Although preliminary consultations have been held, an FPIC plan has been prepared as part of the Indigenous Peoples’ Planning Framework that sits within the ESMP. It should be implemented alongside the ROAM process during site selection. A further safeguard concern is that the scale of the

landscapes may impede meaningful stakeholder engagement, requiring careful planning. It is also necessary to clarify project partners and roles to ensure that those implementing ROAM 2 and providing extension services have adequate expertise and understanding of local social dynamics.

The **Cultural Heritage Standard** is triggered as the Dja Biosphere Reserve is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, inhabited by Baka communities whose traditional way of life forms part of its cultural value. Project activities may disturb cultural sites such as temples, burial grounds, sacred trees, or groves. Communities may also lose access to such sites during restoration or construction of nurseries, NTFP facilities, or access roads. Intangible cultural heritage may be affected, including customary practices and traditional knowledge, particularly in activities such as NTFP value chain development. The SG-ROAM site selection process therefore includes a cultural heritage mapping to avoid or minimize such impacts. A Chance Find Procedure as described in the ESMP will be launched in the event of the project encountering buried tangible cultural resources.

The **Biodiversity Standard** is triggered because the three project landscapes include protected areas and regions of high ecological value. Restoration activities, land preparation, construction, or increased human presence may disturb wildlife, including sensitive species and ground-nesting birds. There is a risk of non-native species used for restoration developing invasive characteristics; to address this, an assessment and clearance process for species selection is included in the ESMP. There is also a risk of unsustainable NTFP harvesting, particularly of *Prunus Africana*, a CITES II species. Restoration may cause erosion or degradation if improperly implemented on steep slopes or riparian zones, and inaccurate ecological baselines could lead to ineffective or harmful restoration.

Beyond the Standards, several additional environmental and social risks are relevant. **Gender-related risks** arise from the possibility that women, who rely heavily on forest resources, may be disproportionately affected by access restrictions. They may need to travel farther for resources and may face safety risks while doing so. In some areas, cultural norms restrict their ability to produce or sell agricultural goods, to own land, or to participate in decision-making. Women may also lack access to project information, including weather or early warning information. These adverse gender impacts can be managed through the safeguards-adapted ROAM process, which will include a focus on participation of vulnerable groups, including women from both local and Indigenous communities as well as through the ESMP.

Risks to **vulnerable groups** extend beyond gender. Pastoralists, Indigenous Peoples, migrants, landless households, the elderly, internally displaced people and women-headed households may all be excluded from project benefits if the design does not deliberately address barriers such as lack of land rights, literacy, or financial inclusion. Detailed benefit-sharing criteria have been drawn up to ensure equitable distribution of project benefits.

There is a moderate risk of community harmony being compromised if project activities exacerbate existing social conflicts, particularly if benefits are perceived to be unfairly distributed. **Community health risks** also stem from potential pesticide exposure, human–wildlife conflict linked to increased forest cover, and possible clashes with forest authorities due to stricter enforcement. Mitigation will include applying the safeguard-adapted ROAM to conduct careful land use planning, mapping human-wildlife conflict hotspots, and involving local stakeholders with knowledge of social dynamics and power relations.

Human rights risks may arise from overlapping customary and formal tenure systems. Strengthened enforcement following updated management plans may restrict access to land traditionally used by local or Indigenous communities. Without adequate community engagement, strengthened rules could undermine procedural rights such as participation and consultation.

Labour risks include hazardous working conditions in steep or forested areas, exposure to wildlife, operation of machinery, and potential child labour among partners or vendors. Pollution and resource-efficiency risks arise from nursery waste, the use of chemicals, or improper waste disposal.

Taken together, these risks require coordinated safeguards instruments, the most central of which is the safeguards-enhanced ROAM, ESMP, Process Framework, FPIC plan, Species Management protocols, and Chance Find Procedures. The safeguards-adapted ROAM will be the core mechanism through which participation, access rights, site selection, IP inclusion, gender equity, conflict avoidance, cultural heritage protection, and biodiversity considerations are systematically integrated into restoration activities.

G.2. Gender assessment and action plan

A gender assessment and action plan have been developed following GCF guidelines. The process involved a combination of secondary and primary data. The desk review of secondary data involved policy and strategy documents, national and international development reports. Existing national legal frameworks, policies, mechanisms, and institutional initiatives were reviewed to reveal those relevant to the environment (particularly around forests,) and climate change and promotion of gender equality and equity, supporting assessment of each and their capacity to integrate gender. The desk review also included gathering of statistical data and evidence at a national (and sometimes subnational) level on the current state of gender (in) equalities. This information was supplemented with interviews with stakeholders' risks and impacts from forest management. Group discussions were held with women from the local community and indigenous community in their localities. Data was collected from 3 villages from the BB Landscape, 3 villages in DL and 4 villages in the Waza area (The ESIA Report provides details on the general field methodology). Differences exist between men and women regarding access, use and benefits related to natural resources exploitation. The assessment identified risks for both the local and indigenous communities related to: (i) Discrimination against women or other groups based on gender with regards to access to resources, services, or benefits provided by the project, (ii) Gender related inequalities, (iii) Gender-based violence including risks of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, (iv) Restrictions on women's ability to use, develop or protect natural resources, taking into account different roles and positions of women and men in accessing environmental goods and services. For each category of risk, specific and separate mitigation measures are provided for local and indigenous peoples (see annex 8). A Gender Action Plan is proposed that provides a gender-balanced and responsive approach to the Project. It identifies gender equality issues, activities and measures and targets. It also takes into consideration risks/impacts and mitigation actions and other relevant issues identified during the E&S and ESIA (more in annex 8). Implementation of the plan will build on the vast experience of the country and project partners. In this context, women's active participation will be ensured during the project implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, according to the IUCN Policy on Gender Equality and the Stakeholder Engagement Plan of the Project. The gender-related indicators will be integrated in the monitoring and evaluation plan of the project.

G.3. Financial management and procurement

In terms of purchases/acquisitions, fiduciary responsibility will be assumed by IUCN in line with its standards and procedures, as well as with the terms of the Accreditation Master Agreement (AMA) with the GCF. As the AE and fiduciary agent with the GCF and IUCN will therefore be responsible for the disbursement of Project funds, as well as accounting and production of financial reports on the use of funds. Further to approval of the Project by the GCF, IUCN will disseminate its Operations Manual and Procurement Procedure Manual among the members of the Project Management Unit, the Steering Committee, and other relevant stakeholders prior to the start of the Project's activities. During implementation of the Project, IUCN will support and build the capacities of the PMU and SC in the areas of strategic planning, technical control, financial management and procurement. Finally, the PMU will be first in line to determine and control effective use of funds. This PMU will be made up of personnel recruited by IUCN and personnel assigned by the government (MINFOF), including environmental and social safeguard and gender experts and a qualified public accountant. The procurement and financial management standards will comply with IUCN standards and procedures. Monitoring and evaluation missions will be conducted to ensure effective implementation of the Project in compliance with the procurement plans and procedures, as well as budgetary monitoring. This monitoring and evaluation report will be presented to the SC during biannual meetings. The acquisition of goods or services necessary for Project implementation, training, consultation,

as well as financial services, will be governed by the applicable IUCN guidelines in accordance with IUCN Operations Manual and Procurement Procedure Manual. All procurement will be carried out by the PMU.

G.4. Disclosure of funding proposal

- ☒ **No confidential information:** The accredited entity confirms that the funding proposal, including its annexes, may be disclosed in full by the GCF, as no information is being provided in confidence.
- ☐ **With confidential information:** The accredited entity declares that the funding proposal, including its annexes, may not be disclosed in full by the GCF, as certain information is being provided in confidence. Accordingly, the accredited entity is providing to the Secretariat the following two copies of the funding proposal, including all annexes:
- full copy for internal use of the GCF in which the confidential portions are marked accordingly, together with an explanatory note regarding the said portions and the corresponding reason for confidentiality under the accredited entity's disclosure policy, and
 - redacted copy for disclosure on the GCF website.
- The funding proposal can only be processed upon receipt of the two copies above, if containing confidential information.

ANNEXES

H.1. Mandatory annexes

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

H.2. Other annexes as applicable

- ☐ Annex 15 Evidence of internal approval
- ☒ Annex 16 Map(s) indicating the location of proposed interventions
- ☐ Annex 17 Multi-country project/programme information
- ☐ Annex 18 Appraisal, due diligence or evaluation report for proposals based on up-scaling or replicating a pilot project
- ☐ Annex 19 Procedures for controlling procurement by third parties or executing entities undertaking projects financed by the entity
- ☒ Annex 20 First level AML/CFT (KYC) assessment
- ☐ Annex 21 Operations manual (Operations and maintenance)
- ☒ Annex 22 Assessment of GHG emission reductions and their monitoring and reporting (for mitigation and cross cutting-projects)²⁹
- ☒ Other Annexes
 - Annex A Acronym table
 - Annex B Land tenure arrangements
 - Annex C Agroforestry notebook
 - Annex D Host agreement
 - Annex E Letters of intent/interest bank
 - Annex F Minis dec Agroforestry notebook
 - Annex G Baseline Assessment
 - Annex H Restoration Opportunities Assessment Report
 - Annex I Grievance Mechanism
 - Annex J Beneficiaries Calculation
 - Annex K Eligibility Criteria
 - Annex L Project Theory of change

²⁹ Annex 22 is mandatory for mitigation and cross-cutting projects.

No-objection letter issued by the national designated authority(ies) or focal point(s)

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
PAIX-TRAVAIL-PATRIE

MINISTERE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT,
DE LA PROTECTION DE LA NATURE ET
DU DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE

SECRETARIAT GENERAL



MINEPDED

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROUN
PEACE-WORK-FATHERLAND

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT,
PROTECTION OF NATURE AND
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

N° _____/MINEPDED/SG/CS

Yaoundé, 24-02- 2025.

THE NDA

To

Ms. MAFALDA DUARTE

Executive Director

Secretariat of Green Climate Fund
175 Art Center-Daero Yeongsu-gu, Incheon 22004
Republic of Korea

Subject: *Funding proposal for the GCF by IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) regarding Securing Permanent Forests to Combat Climate Change and Enhance Sustainable National and Local Economies in Cameroon (SPEFOCE)*

Dear Ms. Duarte,

We refer to the project titled ***Securing Permanent Forests to Combat Climate Change and Enhance Sustainable National and Local Economies in Cameroon (SPEFOCE)*** in Cameroon as included in the funding proposal submitted by IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) to us on 16 December 2022.

The undersigned; **Prof Paul TCHAWA** is the duly authorized representative of the National Designated Authority of Cameroon.

Pursuant to GCF decision B.08/10, the content of which we acknowledge to have reviewed, we hereby communicate our no-objection to the project as included in the funding proposal. By communicating our no-objection, it is implied that:

- (a) The government of Cameroon has no-objection to the project as included in the funding proposal;
- (b) The project as included in the funding proposal is in conformity with the national priorities, strategies and plans of Cameroon;
- (c) In accordance with the GCF's environmental and social safeguards, the project as included in the funding proposal is in conformity with relevant national laws and regulations.

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

We acknowledge that this letter will be made publicly available on the GCF website.

Kind regards,



Prof. Paul TCHAWA

Environmental and social safeguards (ESS) report disclosure form

Basic project or programme information	
Project or programme title	Securing Permanent Forests to Combat Climate Change and Enhance Sustainable National and Local Economies in Cameroon (SPEFOCE)
Potential sub-project(s) anticipated after GCF Board approval	No
Sector (public or private)	Public
Accredited entity/Project-specific Assessment Approach (PSAA) applicant	International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
Environmental and social safeguards (ESS) category	Category B
Location – specific location(s) of project or target country or location(s) of programme	Republic of Cameroon: Landscapes of Waza, Dja- Lobeke, Bakossi- and Bamboutous, Cameroon
Safeguard Documents: Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs), Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS), Environmental and Social Due-Diligence (ESDD) report, Land Acquisition and/or Resettlement Action Plan (LARAP), Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP), Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF), Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) etc. (as applicable)	
Date of disclosure on entity's website	Friday, September 11, 2026
Language(s) of disclosure	English and French
Explanation on language	English and French are the official languages of Cameroon, and two of the most widely spoken languages in the country.
Link(s) to disclosure	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) English and French: https://iucn.org/our-work/gef-and-gcf-implementation/iucn-and-green-climate-fund/iucns-gcf-projects/securing
Other link(s)	
Remarks on compliance with GCF policies	An ESIA, ESMP and IPPF consistent with the requirements for a Category B project is contained in Annex 6 of (ESIA)” of the Funding Proposal. The ESMP and IPPF are annexes to the ESIA.
Disclosure in locations convenient to affected peoples (stakeholders)	
Date(s)	Friday, September 11, 2026
Place(s)	Printed copies of the safeguard documents (ESIA, ESMP which includes an IPPF, and safeguards-enhanced ROAM) are available at the MINFOF district offices covered by the three project landscapes at the addresses provided below. 1. Waza Landscape: Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) – Regional Delegation for the Far North, Pitouaré Quarter, near the Carrefour of Collège de l’Espoir, City of Maroua, Far North Region, Cameroon 2. Dja-Lobeke Landscape: Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) – Regional Delegation for the East, Poklota Quarter,

	opposite the Technical High School of Poklota, City of Bertoua, East Region, Cameroon. 3. Bakossi-Bamboutos Landscape: Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) – Regional Delegation for the West, Administrative Quarter, opposite the Tennis Club of Bafoussam, City of Bafoussam, West Region, Cameroon
Date of Board meeting in which the FP is intended to be considered	
Date of entity's Board meeting	N/A
Date of GCF's Board meeting	Monday, October 26, 2026

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

Secretariat's assessment of FP312

Proposal name:	Securing Permanent Forests to Combat Climate Change and Enhance Sustainable National and Local Economies in Cameroon (SPEFOCE)
Accredited entity:	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)
Country:	Cameroon
Project size:	Small

I. Overall assessment of the Secretariat

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

Strengths	Points of caution
<i>Global.</i> GHGs. Approximately <u>2.47 Mt CO₂e</u> will be avoided and sequestered. This represents an abatement cost of slightly over \$10/ton for GCF USD 30M funding. Biodiversity. The project will include activities in the Congo Basin; there will be substantial global public goods biodiversity co-benefits.	Cameroon does not yet have an effective national MRV (Measurement, Reporting, Verification) system in place. The project will help to develop Cameroon's national capacity to do so, but this will take time. Accordingly, a project specific MRV system is likely required.
<i>National.</i> National <u>forestry climate policy</u> architecture (e.g. FREL, MRV) strengthened to international standards, in order to attract regulated/ voluntary climate finance	Considerable cooperation between the Ministry of Environment & Ministry of Forestry will be required. As with many countries, this could be a challenge.
<i>Local:</i> Increased <u>climate resilient</u> livelihoods (forestry, agriculture) of 197K people (direct), 1,346K (indirect)	Difficulties in Securing Land for Large-Scale Restoration: The Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) Phase 1 has identified suitable public areas, under government ownership, for project implementation to occur. However, some lands may have <i>de facto</i> community and private land access that pre-dates formal government classification. To address this, the project will conduct a second phase (ROAM II), focusing on mobilizing land users through community sensitization on the benefits of restoration. The AE plans to secure formal agreements with landowners, which will be required as evidence for GCF disbursements to occur.

2. The Board may wish to consider approving this funding proposal in accordance with the term sheet agreed between the Secretariat and the accredited entity (AE) and, if considered appropriate, subject to the conditions set out in annex II of document GCF/B.46/02.

II. Summary of the Secretariat's assessment

2.1 Project background

3. Cameroon faces significant challenges with deforestation and forest degradation, particularly within its Permanent Forest Areas (PFAs), where 2.2 million hectares of tree cover were lost between 2001 and 2024. This loss threatens biodiversity and exacerbates climate change, as forests are crucial for carbon sequestration. Illegal logging and agricultural expansion continue to undermine conservation efforts, necessitating urgent intervention to preserve ecosystems and support community livelihoods.

4. The management of PFAs is hindered by climate change impacts, such as altered rainfall patterns and rising temperatures, alongside anthropogenic pressures like unsustainable harvesting and population growth. These factors limit the ability to keep carbon stocks safe in PFA and enhance the resilience of forest-dependent communities.

5. The proposed project, "*Securing Permanent Forests to Combat Climate Change and Enhance Sustainable National and Local Economies in Cameroon (SPEFOCE)*," aims to address these issues by promoting sustainable forest management, restoring degraded lands, and increasing resilience in surrounding communities. This will be achieved through climate-smart sustainable forest management and land restoration practices; value chain development; and capacity building for stakeholders involved in restoration and livelihood support systems.

6. Targeted interventions will take place across three agroecological zones: the Sudano Sahelian zone (Waza Landscape), the Bimodal rainforest zone (Dja-Lobeke Landscape), and the Western Highlands zone (Bakossi-Bamboutous Landscape). The project aims to restore 10,000 hectares and sustainably manage 50,000 hectares, directly benefiting 197,979 people and indirectly benefiting 1,346,605 individuals.

7. The total project financing is USD 46,045,635, with a GCF grant of USD 29,740,699 requested. The Government of Cameroon will provide in-kind co-financing of USD 15,100,424 and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) will also provide in-kind co-financing of USD 1,204,512. The project is submitted under environmental and social safeguards category B, and the total duration of the project is seven years.

2.2 Component-by-component analysis

Component 1: Climate-smart sustainable forest management and land restoration (total cost: USD 27.8 million; GCF cost: USD 20.4 million)

8. Component 1 will enhance the governance and institutional frameworks needed for climate-smart sustainable forest management (SFM) and restoration in Cameroon's Permanent Forest Areas (PFAs). It will update outdated management plans and integrate climate adaptation and mitigation strategies to address deforestation and improve ecosystem resilience. A participatory approach will ensure these plans are practical and context-specific.

9. The component will create new governance systems, revise SFM policies, and establish guidelines for forest restoration, helping to scale up sustainable practices. These guidelines will ensure that future forest management strategies are based on solid, evidence-backed principles that balance environmental sustainability with socio-economic needs.

10. Multi-stakeholder platforms will be established to improve coordination across land-use sectors, addressing conflicts like illegal logging and land tenure issues. Water management committees will play a central role in ensuring long-term success by facilitating collaboration among local communities, government, and private stakeholders.

Component 2. Strengthening value chain development (VCD) and transformation (total cost: USD 9.0 million; GCF cost: USD 5.7 million)

11. This component will focus on making selected Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) value chains operational, profitable and climate-resilient so that local producers, cooperatives and small enterprises can access stable markets and decent incomes from restoration-compatible products. The component aims to strengthen linkages with buyers, financial institutions and green investment partners. This will enable producers engaged in Forest Landscape Restoration and agroforestry to secure contracts, equipment and services that reward sustainable practices.

12. The component will identify, structure and strengthen viable NTFP value chains in each AEZ through market-based business models. It will provide NTFP micro and small enterprises' equipment support, as well as relevant policy and regulatory support related to the 2024 Forestry Law.

13. Financial institutions will be engaged to provide improved access to tailored financial services. The financial institutions will support the development of appropriate financial products such as low-interest loans for processing and value addition of targeted NTFPs. Beyond financing, these institutions will support enterprise development and sector formalization by providing financial literacy training, business advisory services, and support for improved financial management systems. Letters of engagement have been signed by La Regionale Bank and Savana Islamic Finance, demonstrating commitment to co-finance pilot investments.

Component 3. Capacity building of stakeholders (total cost: USD 4.3 million; GCF cost: USD 0.8 million)

14. Component 3 will focus on building the capacity of key stakeholders involved in sustainable forest management (SFM) and restoration efforts. This component will address knowledge and skills gaps by providing targeted training to local communities, government agencies, and private sector actors, ensuring they have the tools and expertise to implement climate-smart practices effectively.

15. The component will develop and deliver training programs on sustainable forestry techniques, agroforestry, market access, and the effective use of green financing mechanisms. It will also strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders to manage forest resources, participate in restoration activities, and access climate finance, thereby enhancing their ability to engage in long-term sustainable development.

Component 4. Project monitoring, partnership, and Knowledge management (total cost: USD 2.7 million; GCF cost: USD 1.5 million)

16. This component will ensure that all project activities are effectively monitored and evaluated to track progress, measure outcomes, and identify lessons learned for continuous improvement. The component will establish robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to assess the impact of forest restoration and sustainable management activities. It will also facilitate knowledge sharing among stakeholders, ensuring that best practices, challenges, and successes are documented and disseminated to inform future interventions.

17. The primary responsibility for day-to-day monitoring and implementation rests with the Project Coordinator (PC). The PC will develop annual work plans, which will be validated by the Project Steering Committee (PSC) at the start of each year. A detailed M&E budget, monitoring plan, and evaluation plan has been included in the Funding Proposal.

Project management (total cost: USD 2.2 million; GCF cost: USD 1.4 million)

18. The project will be implemented through two key executing entities: IUCN Cameroon and MINFOF (Ministry of Forests and Wildlife). A Project Management Unit (PMU) will be established and will be hosted by MINFOF. The PMU will oversee the day-to-day implementation of activities and ensure that annual work plans are developed and approved by the National Project Steering Committee (NPSC). The PMU will also coordinate with local implementing partners and ensure the project is in alignment with national policies.
19. The NPSC, chaired by MINFOF, will provide strategic direction and oversight, ensuring the project aligns with national priorities. It will consist of representatives from various government entities, development partners, and IUCN, as well as civil society groups. The committee will approve key documents such as the annual work plan and budget and hold meetings at least annually to monitor the project's progress. The NPSC will ensure that the project is transparent, accountable, and that inter-institutional coordination is maintained.
20. The project will also engage other national and international partners to assist in the implementation of specific activities, such as technical consultancies, NGOs, and financial institutions. This will ensure local-level implementation and community engagement, particularly in ecosystem restoration, livelihood improvement, and capacity building.
21. The GCF portion of the project management cost is less than 5 per cent of the total requested GCF funding and is compliant with the GCF Policy on Fees.

III. Assessment against investment criteria

3.1 Impact potential

Scale: Medium to high

22. This is a cross-cutting project which focuses on reducing deforestation and enhancing resilience to climate change through sustainable forest management and restoration activities. The project is expected to reduce 2.47 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions by restoring 165,941 hectares of land and adopting climate-smart forestry practices across three key landscapes (Waza, Dja-Lobeke, and Bakossi-Bamboutous). It will directly benefit 197,979 people and indirectly help 1,346,605 by improving access to climate-resilient livelihoods, promoting sustainable agriculture, and strengthening forest governance. Approximately 60,008 hectares will be placed under sustainable management. This multi-faceted approach ensures long-term environmental and community resilience to climate impacts in Cameroon.

3.2 Paradigm shift potential

Scale: Medium to high

23. The paradigm shift potential of the SPEFOCE project is significant, as it aims to transform forest management and land-use practices in Cameroon by integrating climate-smart forestry and restoration into national policies and local practices. Through the creation of multi-stakeholder platforms, the development of climate-resilient forest management guidelines, and the implementation of incentive schemes for sustainable land use, the project fosters collaboration among government bodies, local communities, and the private sector. These efforts can lead to the institutionalization of climate-resilient practices across Cameroon's forestry sector, ensuring that sustainable forest management (SFM) and restoration activities are integrated into long-term development plans. The incentive schemes will directly encourage local communities and private stakeholders to adopt improved SFM and restoration practices.
24. The scalability of these changes across Cameroon and beyond depends on several factors, including policy adoption at the national level and the availability of continued funding. While the project's interventions can serve as a model for other regions, their broader

replication requires strong political support and integration into national policies like Cameroon's REDD+ strategy and climate action plans. The success of these systemic changes will depend on continued institutional engagement, the availability of financing mechanisms, and the government's commitment to sustaining and scaling up the project's results.

3.3 Sustainable development potential *Scale: High*

25. The project aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals including SDGs 1 (No poverty), 2 (Zero hunger), 5 (Gender equality), 13 (Climate action), and 15 (Life on land). It will foster job creation and capacity-building by training local communities in sustainable forest management, agroforestry, and restoration techniques. This training, especially for women and indigenous populations, enhances their skills and increases their income opportunities, contributing to local economic resilience. In terms of social co-benefits, the project improves community health and well-being by reducing deforestation and forest degradation, which can help mitigate air and water quality issues, particularly in areas dependent on forest resources. Additionally, the restoration of degraded lands and sustainable land-use practices will lead to improved food security, and less reliance on harmful practices like slash-and-burn farming, which disproportionately affect women and children. The project's focus on sustainable management of forest resources will reduce the pressures that lead to forest loss and habitat destruction, thus supporting biodiversity conservation and ecosystem health. Women will be actively engaged in the decision-making processes related to forest management and restoration. They are given leadership roles in community committees, and targeted interventions, such as agroforestry and sustainable livelihood programs, focus on increasing their access to economic resources. This empowerment not only promotes gender equality but also strengthens the resilience of local communities by ensuring equitable access to resources.

3.4 Needs of the recipient *Scale: High*

26. The project addresses key barriers to climate-related finance in Cameroon, including limited access to green finance, high-risk perceptions, and high interest rates on forestry investments. It tackles these by establishing partnerships with financial institutions, enabling smallholders and local businesses to access green finance to adopt more climate-resilient practices. Additionally, the project strengthens value chain development and provides technical support. Institutionally, the project addresses outdated forest management plans, and poor governance, which hinder sustainable practices. It aims to improve climate-resilient management and enhance institutional coordination, reducing illegal activities like logging. Through capacity-building initiatives, the project also empowers local stakeholders to effectively implement climate actions and access financial resources. Overall, the project removes financial and institutional barriers, facilitating access to climate finance and promoting sustainable forest management in Cameroon.

3.5 Country ownership *Scale: High*

27. The project aligns with Cameroon's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), supporting the country's efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and enhance climate resilience through SFM and restoration. It contributes to Cameroon's Bonn Challenge commitment to restore 12 million hectares of degraded land by 2030 and supports national climate strategies by improving forest cover and increasing carbon sequestration. The project also addresses national development goals by promoting climate-resilient livelihoods, such as agroforestry, and improving economic resilience in forest-dependent communities. It supports Cameroon's focus on poverty reduction and green job

creation. The project benefits from strong support from MINFOF (the EE) and MINEPDED, ensuring institutional alignment with national policies. Stakeholder engagement, including consultations with designated authorities and local communities, ensures that the project is rooted in Cameroon's policy framework and meets local and national needs for sustainable land management and climate resilience.

3.6 Efficiency and effectiveness

Scale: High

28. The proposal demonstrates efficiency and effectiveness of the project by presenting a well-structured and thorough economic and financial analysis (EFA). The EFA of the project demonstrates that the planned interventions deliver high returns across multiple benefit streams, while justifying the use of grant financing given the structural constraints faced by target beneficiaries in Cameroon. The EFA has been conducted across each of the three targeted landscapes (Waza, Dja-Lobeke and Bakossi-Bamboutous), consolidated for program level results and covers a modelled period of 20 years.

29. The financial analysis confirms that GCF grant support is necessary and effective in transforming the financial viability of interventions. Without the project (i.e. 'baseline scenario'), the interventions (inc. NTFP value chains) would not be financially viable (Equity IRR <0) for the target beneficiary group (rural farmers/households) who lack access to credit and operate near subsistence levels. The financial analysis also confirms declining income levels/revenues, driven by ecosystem degradation, for farmers and value chain participants across the three landscapes in the baseline scenario, a trajectory that is envisaged to be reversed with the project interventions (particularly agricultural intensification, increasing yields, and streamlined value chains). Under the 'project scenario', the Equity IRRs increase to 7%, reflecting the project's ability to generate positive and increasing net cash flows. While modest, this return is meaningful in the smallholder context as it provides a tangible financial incentive for farmers and community-based enterprises to contribute their own equity and to sustain investments in climate-resilient NTFP production systems beyond the period of GCF grant support. The use of grant financing is justified by the poverty profile of direct beneficiaries, the non-commercial nature of ecosystem service benefits and the structural absence of alternative financing mechanisms in the target landscapes.

30. The economic analysis indicates strong long-term economic viability. The analysis captures both market and non-market benefits, including NTFP production, wood collection, groundwater recharge and carbon sequestration. Using a social discount rate of 6% over the 20-year modelling period, the project yields a benefit-to-cost ratio of 5.8 and an EIRR of 32-34%. This implies that every USD 1 invested yields USD 5.80 of economic benefits for the broader economy, indicating high efficiency of the project. The sensitivity analysis further reinforces the economic efficiency of the project, with the economic case being strong under adverse assumptions (e.g., +20% cost and -20% benefit). Even without considering the carbon benefits (valued at social cost of carbon of USD 44 per tCO₂eq), the EIRR of the project is 17% (higher than the social discount rate). Although the additional economic benefits have not been quantified, the project also builds up long term systemic foundations (such as institutional strengthening, policy reforms and capacity development) that are crucial for improving the enabling environment for commercial financing in value chain infrastructure investments, delivering wider cross-cutting benefits.

31. The mitigation cost (considering total GCF grants) is estimated at USD 12.05 per tCO₂eq over the 20-year project lifespan, indicating a cost-effective contribution relative to the GCF portfolio. The adaptation cost (considering total GCF grants) is USD 150.2 per direct beneficiary and USD 19.3 per total beneficiary, placing it at the lower bound of GCF adaptation cost benchmarks for Africa. The strong integration of economic and financial modelling, covering NTFP value chain analysis, ecosystem service valuation and carbon benefit quantification, as

well as a well-articulated concessionality rationale, demonstrates value for money in deploying grant-based GCF resources.

IV. Assessment of consistency with GCF safeguards and policies

4.1 Environmental and social safeguards

32. **Environmental and Social Risk Categorization:** The AE has shared an ESIA, ESMP, ROAM, SEP and GAAP as part of the funding proposal to manage potential environmental and social risk that may arise on the project, with the ESIA being the overarching instrument. Risk screening was achieved by applying the IUCN ESMS policy which is consistent with the requirement of GCF's revised Environmental and Social Policy (ESP). In terms of location, the project will be implemented in sites situated in Dja-Lobéké in South-East Cameroon, Bamboutos Highlands in West and North-West of the country, and Waza in the Far North of Cameroon.

33. In terms of environmental and social risks, the project will operate in areas with existing conflict between upholding people's human rights and the management of permanent forest areas, as in the southeast of the country, access restrictions affecting the Baka communities and incidents related to human and customary user rights in targeted areas. In relation to Community Health and Safety, there are contextual risks including security issues at sites, and pre-identified conflicts over forest and water resources, between arable and pastoral farmers, which could be exacerbated in any land use planning and change. However, project risks related to labour, resource efficiency, biodiversity and sustainable use, are envisaged to be low.

34. The project has further conducted a climate vulnerability assessment, and the identified risks have been integrated into the project design. The ROAM developed by IUCN will be applied during implementation to ensure a systematic and rigorous assessment and quantification of restoration opportunities available in the target landscapes. The project has been assigned an overall moderate environmental and social risk categorization and the secretariate agrees with this categorization and confirms that the risk category B is within the AE's safeguards risk accreditation level and consistent with the requirement of the GCF revised ESP.

35. **Biodiversity & Sustainable Use Natural Resources:** Potential negative impacts on sensitive biodiversity in protected areas in the three landscapes are anticipated such as disturbance during restoration, construction of access roads leading to clearing/cutting of trees or preventing movement of wildlife, disturbance to wildlife from machinery and personnel involved in restoration, disturbance of ground nesting birds or other wildlife currently using degraded areas, these pose a moderate risk.

36. **Involuntary Resettlement & Access Restrictions:** The project is likely to pose risks associated with access restrictions, but these are not expected to result in involuntary resettlement. Restoration activities will target degraded protected areas, forest reserves, as well as in agricultural land, community and council forests. While restoration is ongoing, and during the initial subsequent years, communities that are dependent on these areas will face temporary access restrictions to prevent disturbance to restored areas. This may result in reduced access to natural resources, reduction in quality or quantity of natural resources utilized by households, or seasonal disruption. The ROAM which delineates the process of site-selection and restoration activities, will be fortified with safeguard measures, ensuring that safeguards are systematically built into the site-selection process and the development of FLR (Forest Landscape Restoration) Action Plans.

37. **Labor and working conditions:** The project may pose a risk to community members, project personnel including MINFOF and MINEPDED staff by exposing them to hazardous

working conditions while carrying on restoration activities on mountain slopes. Other elements such as harsh weather conditions, wildlife, disease-bearing vectors are likely to affect workers. The use of machinery such as earth movers and construction equipment for nurseries or NTFP processing machinery may prove hazardous if improperly used. The ESMP has provided mitigation measures that will ensure these risks are mitigated or eliminated.

38. **GCF Indigenous Peoples Policy & ESS7 (Indigenous Peoples).** The Funding Proposal meets the requirements of the GCF Indigenous Peoples Policy and includes an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF). Affected Indigenous Peoples have been consulted in the development of the proposal and regular engagement is foreseen throughout the project duration. The project selection prioritizes sites where IPs could benefit from project activities and includes clear provisions for FPIC provision and withdrawal. There are specific mechanisms to deal with potential conflict and resolution, including the identification of Contact Persons in each project village and respecting customary conflict resolution mechanisms. The project will promote the integration of traditional knowledge as well as the establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms to strengthen dialogue between different stakeholders. In line with their roles and functions, the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group is available to provide advice to the accredited entity and executing entities. In line with the GCF Indigenous Peoples Policy, the GCF Indigenous Peoples focal point will be available for assistance at any stage, including before a claim has been made.

39. **Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse, and Sexual Harassment (SEAH).** The Secretariat finds that the AE's funding proposal is in compliance with the revised GCF Environmental and Social Policy. The Project's objective is to reduce GHG emissions from deforestation through sustainable forest management, including a range of land-use restoration initiatives. It seeks to strengthen women's agency over the management of natural resources management in their community's forest governance and expand economic opportunities through a focus on resilient value chains. The funding proposal notes in its ESS and gender documents that SEAH risk rating is moderate and includes measures to safeguard women from SEAH risks in GCF-financed activities by addressing water access, a critical SEAH risk in the country's rural areas, and improving community forest governance systems through gender integration.

40. The Project will ensure that it does not reinforce or exacerbate women's limited role in formal natural resource management decision making or excludes women from Project benefits related to both forest conservation and livelihood activities. The Project will apply a gender-sensitive approach to addressing cultural barriers such as the lack of women's participation in decision-making, or designing and developing community forest restoration plans, by applying a culturally sensitive approach to mitigating SEAH within these contexts. The Secretariat notes positively that the project will designate SEAH focal points for each landscape within the project footprint, with defined responsibilities that include facilitating safe and accessible community channels to the project's grievance redress mechanism (GRM). The Secretariat further notes that the Project's monitoring and reporting framework incorporates specific SEAH- and gender-related indicators and targets, providing an adequate basis for ongoing supervision and performance monitoring.

4.2 Gender policy

41. The Secretariat finds that the AE's funding proposal is in compliance with the GCF Updated Gender Policy. The Project's gender assessment provides contextual gender analysis, climate vulnerabilities, and differentiated impacts. The Project includes a mainstreaming effort related to REDD+ by enabling women's capacity to negotiate opportunities and benefits surrounding the program.

42. The Project's gender mainstreaming approach is embedded across all components under the gender action plan (GAP) outcome area on the empowerment of women and girls. It

prioritizes their participation, capacity development, strengthening of institutional systems, and integration of gender-responsive planning and development, with the objective of improving forest management and contributing to emissions reductions and enhanced climate resilience.

43. To operationalize this approach, the AE will inter alia (i) organize and support community-based micro-enterprises and network mobilization that integrates women and Indigenous peoples, including facilitating the identification and engagement of relevant associations with a focus on women, (ii) ensure women's effective engagement and provide targeted support to enhance their access to and utilization of green financial products and services, and (iii) provide micro-level support, including grants, to establish small-scale processing units led by women and youth-based micro-enterprises. organize and structure community based micro-enterprises and mobilization of networks integrating women and IPs where they will identify and engage potential associations with a focus on women; ensure that women are engaged and support in access and use of new green financial products and services; provide micro support in setting up of small processing units for women/youth led micro-enterprises through grants.

4.3 Risks

4.3.1. Overall programme assessment (high risk)

44. The Secretariat assesses overall programme risk as high.

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

45. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) will serve as the accredited entity (AE) for this project. IUCN has experience in implementing climate projects of this nature; it has in its portfolio 6 active GCF approved FPs with GCF approved funding of \$164.65 million. The project will involve two executing entities (EEs): the IUCN country office and the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon (MINFOF). However, the AE has not yet demonstrated the capacity of MINFOF to implement the project. A capacity assessment of MINFOF will be included in the Term sheet/FAA as a condition precedent to the execution of the FAA.

4.3.3. Programme-specific execution risks (high risk)

46. Difficulties in Securing Land for Large-Scale Restoration: The project targets the restoration of 10,008 hectares across three landscapes, and 50,000 ha under SFM governance. There is sufficient public land, which is under the formal ownership and governance of the government of Cameroon, for the project to be implemented. However, in some areas – such as Waza – community use and *de facto* ownership has preceded the existence of national government land classification. There is also agroforestry restoration interest from private and community forest land owners. It will thus be important to obtain long-term commitments from land users to integrate trees into farmlands and other spaces. The Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) Phase 1, carried out by the AE, has identified suitable areas, but firm commitments from all stakeholders is needed. The project plans to conduct a second phase of ROAM (ROAM II) with a focus on mobilizing land users through community-level sensitization efforts to highlight the social, economic, and environmental benefits of restoration. The AE will secure formal agreements with landowners to ensure sufficient land availability. GCF will require the AE to provide evidence of these agreements as a condition for disbursements.

47. **Stakeholder Conflicts:** In the project's intervention areas, particularly the Waza and Dja-Lobeke landscapes, conflicts between different community stakeholders (such as farmers and herders) are a concern. These conflicts often revolve around access to land, water resources, and the exploitation of forest resources. The project includes extensive stakeholder consultations and awareness-raising campaigns to enhance buy-in.

48. **Co-Financing Shortfalls:** The project's total financing is USD 46,045,635, with USD 29,740,699 from GCF and the remainder (35% of project financing) from co-financiers, including the Government of Cameroon and IUCN. Failure to secure the full co-financing could limit the resources available for restoration, value chain development, and capacity-building activities, potentially reducing the project's scope and impact. The AE has provided co-financing commitment letters from the government showing that co-financing will be sourced from ongoing projects funded by third parties such as the Adaptation Fund, the Global Environmental Facility, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). GCF will require the AE to report on co-financing disbursed and applied to project implementation.

4.3.4. Compliance risk (medium-high risk)

49. The project's proposed activities pose varying levels of money laundering/terrorist financing (ML/TF) risk. For example, components relating to sustainable forest management and restoration, stakeholder capacity building, and knowledge management present relatively lower ML/TF risks, while activities relating to the strengthening of green investment financing and value chain development pose relatively higher risks, though as the AE notes, GCF funds will not be used for on-lending but rather, to support capacity building of local financial institutions.

50. The AE, through its Cameroon office, will act as EE, alongside MINFOF. Per its internal due diligence procedures, the AE will conduct a capacity assessment of MINFOF once the project becomes operational.

51. The AE has assessed ML/TF risk as low due to its existing internal controls which will be applied during project implementation such as anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) training and capacity-building for all project personnel, twice yearly risk assessments, and regular project monitoring.

52. However, based on the relatively elevated compliance risks associated with some of the proposed project activities and as MINFOF's AML/CFT internal controls and capacity to identify and manage ML/TF risk has not been assessed at this time, the compliance risk is determined to be medium-high.

4.3.5. GCF portfolio concentration risk

53. In the case of approval, the impact of this proposal on the GCF portfolio concentration in terms of result area, AE and single proposal is within monitoring threshold.

4.3.6. Recommendation

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

Summary risk assessment	
Overall project/programme	High
Accredited entity/executing entity capability to implement the project/programme	Medium
Project-specific execution	High
Compliance	Medium-High
GCF portfolio concentration	Within monitoring threshold

4.4 Fiduciary

55. The project will be implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as the Accredited Entity (AE), with both IUCN and the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife of Cameroon (MINFOF) serving as co-Executing Entities. IUCN will be responsible for the overall financial and technical quality assurance of the project and for disbursing GCF funds. MINFOF, as the national Executing Entity, will lead implementation of key field activities and coordinate with other national institutions. A subsidiary agreement between IUCN and MINFOF will define respective roles, deliverables, and fiduciary responsibilities.

56. A Project Management Unit (PMU) will be established within MINFOF, staffed jointly by IUCN-hired personnel and seconded government staff. The PMU will manage daily implementation, technical coordination, and financial administration. Oversight will be provided by a National Project Steering Committee (NPSC), co-chaired by MINFOF and the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature, and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED), and composed of key ministries and stakeholders. The NPSC will meet biannually to review progress, approve annual work plans and budgets, and provide strategic direction.

57. IUCN will retain fiduciary responsibility for the overall management of GCF funds, including fund transfers, accounting, and reporting to the GCF. The PMU will be responsible for reviewing and authorizing expenditures in line with approved budgets. Financial reports will be prepared quarterly by the PMU and submitted to IUCN for consolidation. IUCN will submit biannual and annual financial and narrative reports to the GCF. In addition, IUCN will provide training and capacity-building support to the PMU and Steering Committee members to strengthen compliance with GCF fiduciary standards. Annual audits will be conducted in accordance with international standards and IUCN's internal controls.

58. Procurement will follow IUCN's Operations Manual and Procurement Procedure Manual. Monitoring and evaluation missions will be conducted to assess procurement and financial performance, and findings will be shared with the Steering Committee to enhance oversight and accountability.

4.5 Results monitoring and reporting

59. The proposed project aims to achieve results that cut across mitigation and adaptation. It has selected the appropriate results areas to represent this objective, specifically, forestry and land use (67% of GCF's contribution, 44% of co-financiers' contributions), increased resilience of most vulnerable people and communities (3% of GCF's contribution, 25% of co-financiers' contributions), health and water and food security (21% of GCF's contribution, 23% of co-financiers' contributions) and of ecosystems and ecosystem services (9% of GCF's contribution, 8% of co-financiers' contributions). Given this focus and as part of the proposal, the AE provided a calculation for both reduced GHG emissions and direct and indirect beneficiaries, which included clear definitions and conservative assumptions.

60. The theory of change has evolved throughout the review process as it progressed to articulating the results pathways that lead to the mitigation and adaptation outcomes. It posits that addressing the constraints around land tenure/land use, institutional capacities, management practices and knowledge of low emission and resilient restoration, and private sector access to markets would lead to a reduction in carbon emissions from land use change and enhance livelihood resilience of communities.

61. To monitor and report on its mitigation and adaptation results, the proposed project included the relevant indicators in its logical framework, such as Core 1: GHG emissions reduced, avoided or removed/sequestered, Core 2 Direct beneficiaries reached, Suppl. 2.1:

Number of beneficiaries (% women) adopting improved CR livelihood option, Suppl. 2.2: Number of beneficiaries (% women) taking advantage of the food security effect of better management and restoration, as well as better livelihood options, Core 4: Hectares of natural resources brought under improved low-emission and/or climate-resilient management practice, and Suppl. 4.1: Hectares of terrestrial forest, terrestrial non-forest, freshwater and coastal marine areas brought under restoration and/or improved ecosystem.

62. The M&E Plan has been revised and strengthened iteratively to ensure that it incorporates various sources of data and information for improved credibility and robustness. It incorporates field observations, GIS mapping, focus group discussions, and government data. The evaluation budget is on the low side and could be a risk to its quality and therefore the AE will need to ensure that the data collected by routine monitoring would be robust to ensure compliance with the requirements of the IRMF and Evaluation Policy.

4.6 Legal assessment

63. The Accreditation Master Agreement was signed with the Accredited Entity on 11 October 2016, and became effective on 11 January 2017, which was amended and restated pursuant to a first amendment and restatement agreement dated 10 January 2022, and which became effective on 12 January 2022 (the “AMA”).

64. The Accredited Entity has not provided a legal opinion/certificate confirming that it has obtained all internal approvals, and it has the capacity and authority to implement the project.

65. The proposed project will be implemented in the Republic of Cameroon, country in which GCF is not provided with privileges and immunities. This means that, amongst other things, GCF is not protected against litigation or expropriation in this country, which risks need to be further assessed. Moreover, the ability of GCF to undertake redress activities and/or investigations in the country may be hindered due to the absence of privileges and immunities for relevant GCF personnel.

66. Therefore, it is recommended that the Board considers whether disbursements of GCF proceeds should only be made after GCF has obtained satisfactory protection against litigation and expropriation in the country or has been provided with appropriate privileges and immunities for GCF and its personnel.

67. To address the matters raised in this section, it is recommended that any approval by the Board is made subject to the following conditions:

- (a) Submission by the Accredited Entity to the Fund of a certificate or legal opinion, in form and substance satisfactory to the GCF Secretariat, within 120 days after Board approval, confirming that the Accredited Entity has obtained all final internal approvals needed by it and has the capacity and authority to implement the proposed project;
- (b) Signature of the funded activity agreement in a form and substance satisfactory to the GCF Secretariat within 180 days from the date of Board approval, or the date the Accredited Entity has provided a certificate or legal opinion confirming that it has obtained all final internal approvals, whichever is later; and
- (c) Completion of the legal due diligence to the satisfaction of the GCF Secretariat.

Independent Technical Advisory Panel's assessment of FP312

Proposal name:	Securing Permanent Forests to Combat Climate Change and Enhance Sustainable National and Local Economies in Cameroon (SPEFOCE)
Accredited entity:	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)
Country:	Cameroon
Project size:	Small

I. Assessment of the independent Technical Advisory Panel

1.1 Overview

1. This is the second submission of the funding proposal entitled "*Securing Permanent Forests to Combat Climate Change and Enhance Sustainable National and Local Economies in Cameroon (SPEFOCE)*" submitted to the independent Technical Advisory Panel (iTAP) under the standard proposal approval process. The accredited entity (AE) is the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The executing entities (EEs) are the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) and IUCN.
2. The iTAP did not recommend that the Board approve the first submission owing to shortcomings related to: the demonstration of adaptation and mitigation impact potential; the weak design of the green investment financing mechanism for restoration; the lack of clarity regarding promising and climate-resilient non-timber forest products (NTFPs) to be promoted; the limited share of the budget dedicated to measurable and transformative results; and insufficient clarity on how local actors, especially local authorities, civil society organizations and research institutions, would participate in project implementation. In the current submission, some of these issues have been considered and addressed.
3. The goal statement of this cross-cutting funding proposal states that:

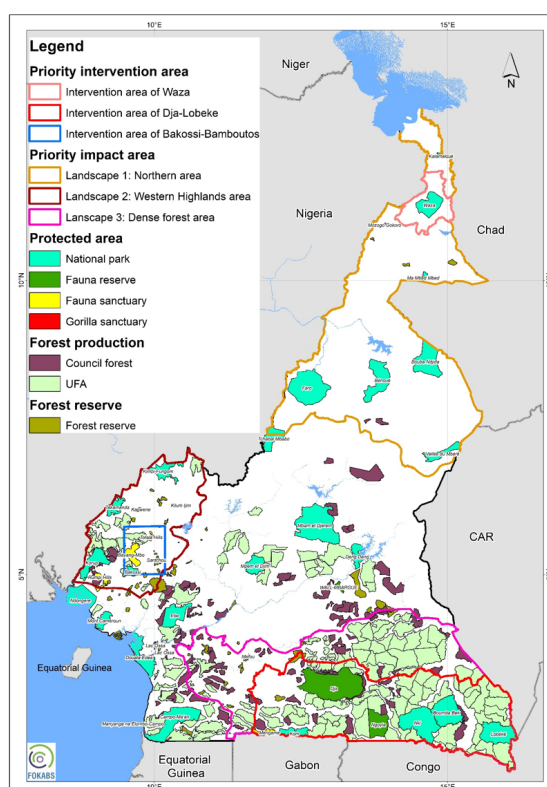
"If, land tenure and land-use planning around Permanent Forest Areas (PFAs) are clarified and operationalised; institutional inertia is addressed through revised, climate-smart Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and protected area management systems; coordination across land-use sectors is strengthened; large-scale restoration is implemented using climate-resilient and locally adapted models; national REDD+ MRV, registry and safeguard systems are operational and trusted; and stakeholders, including public institutions, communities, Indigenous Peoples, private sector actors and financial institutions, are equipped with the capacities, climate information, market access and financing needed to invest in low-emission and climate-resilient forest and land-use practices;

THEN, Carbon emissions from land-use change and forest degradation in PFAs will be sustainably reduced; carbon stocks in degraded forests and lands will be enhanced; biodiversity and critical ecosystem services will be restored; climate-resilient livelihood systems based on sustainable forestry, agroforestry and Non-

Timber Forest Product (NTFP) value chains will be adopted by communities, Indigenous Peoples and smallholders; and public and private actors will mobilize and sustain investment in restoration and SFM beyond the project lifetime;”

4. The funding proposal is structured around four components: i) climate-smart sustainable forest management (SFM) and restoration practices for the targeted forest landscapes; ii) value chain development and transformation; iii) stakeholders’ capacities on climate-resilient land-use practices; and iv) monitoring and knowledge-driven partnerships. The project will be implemented in three different agroecological zones (AEZs): the Sudano Sahelian AEZ, with the Waza landscape as the intervention area; the bimodal rainforest AEZ, with the Dja-Lobéké landscape as the intervention area; and the Western Highlands AEZ, with the Bakossi-Bamboutous landscape as the intervention area (see the figure).

Figure: Forestry map of Cameroon showing project intervention areas



Source: funding proposal, annex 16.

5. Over the 20-year lifespan of the project, the expected mitigation outcome is 2.47 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (t CO₂ eq) of emission reductions and carbon enhancement within the GCF forestry and land use results area (MR4).
6. The expected adaptation outcome includes nearly 200,000 direct and more than 1.3 million indirect beneficiaries, for which the project focuses on three adaptation results areas: most vulnerable people and communities (ARA1); health and well-being, and food and water security (ARA2); and ecosystems and ecosystem services (ARA4).
7. The overall budget is USD 46,045,635, with a funding request to GCF of USD 29,740,699 in the form of a grant. The Government of Cameroon will contribute USD 15,100,424 as co-financing, while IUCN will provide USD 1,204,512 in co-financing, both in the form of grants.
8. In its assessment, the iTAP considered all documents submitted as at 20 April 2026, including the main document and 40 annexes, the written response to iTAP questions received on 6 May 2026, the online session with the AE held on 13 May 2026 and additional clarifications provided on 18 May 2026.

1.2 Impact potential

Scale: N/A

9. The iTAP is aware of the widely recognized potential of forest landscape restoration, SFM and agroforestry to contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation, while also generating significant environmental, social and economic co-benefits. The iTAP also recognizes the importance of using contextualized information when designing management practices, restoration activities and agroforestry systems aimed at achieving climate adaptation and mitigation outcomes. In this context, during the first submission of this funding proposal, the iTAP recommended key improvements to better demonstrate the adaptation and mitigation impact potential of the proposed activities following the principles agreed by the Board in decision B.33/12.

1.2.1. Adaptation impact potential

10. The funding proposal presents the geographic and socioeconomic context of the three AEZs in Cameroon and identifies the area-specific drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. This provides an adequate overview of the vulnerability context of the target areas. The proposal further explains the institutional, technical and economic barriers that have thus far constrained the deployment of SFM, forest landscape restoration and the sustainable use of NTFPs.

11. Building on this contextual analysis, the funding proposal explains how climate risks overlap with, and increasingly exacerbate, challenges in the agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forestry and wildlife sectors across the three AEZs. The proposal further presents how projected climate change scenarios may increase the vulnerability of both people and ecosystems in Cameroon, thereby demonstrating the urgency of climate adaptation interventions. In doing so, the proposal differentiates the analysis for each AEZ. This information subsequently serves as the basis for presenting forest landscape restoration and agroforestry as climate action options across the three AEZs. Detailed analyses of historical and current climate vulnerability, as well as projected climate change scenarios, are included in annexes 2, 22C, 22D and 22H to the funding proposal.

12. The funding proposal identifies specific forest landscape restoration strategies, including activities related to assisted natural regeneration, reforestation and agroforestry systems, and specifies the species proposed for use. The iTAP questioned the AE regarding whether and how the future climate resilience of these systems has been, or will be, assessed. In its written responses, the AE clarified that such an assessment has not yet been conducted but indicated that it plans to undertake one using existing tools. During the call, the AE further clarified that, among the tools mentioned, it only has experience with the CRiSTAL tool.¹ While the CRiSTAL family of tools has the advantage of facilitating participatory climate risk screening with local stakeholders, it is not designed to assess how future climate scenarios will affect the performance of specific forestry or agroforestry systems.

13. The suitability of some of the proposed species under projected future climate conditions is supported in the literature, including species such as *Irvingia gabonensis* and *Faidherbia albida*. However, the absence of a systematic assessment of how future climate change may affect the proposed agroforestry and restoration systems is concerning, particularly because some of the proposed species may create trade-offs related to water use, biodiversity, invasiveness and ecosystem functioning, thereby increasing the risk of maladaptation. This concern is particularly relevant for species such as *Prosopis juliflora*, *Persea americana*, *Dacryodes edulis*, bamboo and *Eucalyptus* spp., which, depending on the ecological context and

¹ See <https://www.iisd.org/cristaltool/>.

management approach, may behave as fast-growing and/or alien, potentially invasive, species and are explicitly included in the funding proposal package.

14. An additional concern, already expressed by the iTAP in its first assessment, is the absence of livestock-related activities within the proposed adaptation measures, even though the AE acknowledges the importance of livestock for local livelihoods, as well as its linkages to forest degradation and overall vulnerability, as reflected in various annexes to the funding proposal package.

15. Although annex 11 to the funding proposal does not include provisions for directly monitoring changes in exposure or vulnerability to climate hazards over time, it does include the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries as a core adaptation indicator. In addition, the project is built on the assumption that restored forest landscapes and the livelihoods depending on them will become better prepared to cope with climate hazards over time. Therefore, improvements in adaptive capacity may also be indirectly monitored through other indicators included in the monitoring framework and used as proxies, such as the area restored or planted, the area under SFM or the number of beneficiaries integrated into equitable value chains.

16. The iTAP acknowledges the improvements made in clarifying the forest landscape restoration systems proposed as adaptation options under the project, the strengthening of the climate vulnerability assessment and the inclusion of a monitoring approach aligned with the relevant principles agreed by the Board in decision B.33/12. However, the iTAP's concern regarding the assessment of how future climate risks may affect these potential adaptation options remains unresolved. The limited consideration of how projected climate change may affect the design and long-term performance of the restoration and agroforestry systems proposed under the project may jeopardize the achievement and sustainability of the intended adaptation outcomes.

1.2.2. Mitigation impact potential

17. The funding proposal includes two main forestry-related activities: SFM in permanent forest areas (PFAs) and forest landscape restoration. SFM is expected to be achieved through the strengthening of governance systems and the implementation of management plans agreed with local communities across 50,000 hectares. Forest landscape restoration will be implemented through assisted natural regeneration, agroforestry and reforestation activities covering 95,165 hectares by the end of the implementation phase.

18. The funding proposal includes the quantification of the mitigation impact potential resulting from the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions² from deforestation within the total area under SFM, as well as the quantification of carbon sequestration through climate-resilient agroforestry systems across 10,000 hectares. Annex 22A to the funding proposal provides a detailed description of the methodology used to calculate the mitigation impact potential, while annex 22B to the funding proposal contains the underlying calculations. In addition, annex 22B to the funding proposal presents an analysis of the drivers and agents of deforestation and forest degradation across the three AEZs. These documents are clear, internally coherent and consistent with one another, and the iTAP acknowledges the significant improvement compared with the previous submission.

19. However, the approach used for the quantification of the mitigation impact potential may lead to an overestimation due to the following issues:

- (a) Two key drivers of deforestation are largely outside the sphere of influence of the AE and the EEs: first, mining activities, often enabled through licences or authorizations

² The term used in the funding proposal package is avoided emissions. In this assessment, the iTAP uses emission reduction because this term is more commonly used within GCF.

issued by sectoral authorities outside the forestry sector; and second, the current national development plan of Cameroon, which foresees a significant increase in national cotton production. As reported in annex 22B to the funding proposal, this is particularly relevant in the Waza landscape, where the proposal foresees the largest area under SFM. The iTAP acknowledges that most of the SFM activities are planned within PFAs; however, these external development dynamics are expected to substantially increase pressure on forests that are already highly affected by illegal use, including fuelwood collection;

- (b) The reported deforestation rate for Waza is 4.6 per cent, whereas the proposal applies a rate of 6.6 per cent in the mitigation calculations. When questioned, the AE explained that this reflects a dynamic approach whereby the deforestation rate increases as the remaining forest area decreases. While this approach is methodologically acceptable, it requires annual adjustments to both variables: an increase in the deforestation rate and a corresponding reduction in the remaining forest area. In the calculations by the AE, however, the reduction in forest area was incorporated into the quantification only once;
 - (c) In Waza, which is primarily characterized as a dryland degradation hotspot, the avoided emissions calculations presented in annex 22 to the funding proposal are made for avoided deforestation, defined as the prevention of complete land-use conversion from forest to non-forest within the SFM governance boundary. Forest degradation, defined as a partial reduction in carbon stock density within areas that remain classified as forest, was not quantified, despite being highly relevant across the 20,000 hectares considered. The AE clarified that this was a methodological choice based on the availability of standardized and nationally validated data for deforestation. However, quantifying greenhouse gas emissions from forest degradation using a deforestation-based approach, without the application of an additional conservativeness discount, may lead to an overestimation of the mitigation impact potential;
 - (d) As noted above, the project proposes SFM activities across 50,000 hectares. Annex 22A to the funding proposal states that “the SFM component does not introduce alternative livelihood options to the same extent as agroforestry, making the displacement risk relatively higher per unit area”. This is particularly relevant in areas where current livelihood activities are among the main drivers of forest degradation. The annex further refers to evidence from Central African landscapes indicating that leakage rates, whereby activities causing forest degradation merely shift to another area, may range from 5 to 42 per cent. However, the proposal applies leakage discounts of only 15 per cent in Waza and 10 per cent in Dja-Lobéké and Bakossi-Bamboutous; and
 - (e) As noted above, the funding proposal provides only limited assessment of how future climate scenarios may affect the proposed agroecological systems across the 10,000 hectares of climate-resilient agroforestry. Under some future scenarios, climate change may have negative effects on tree survival rates and growth performance, thereby reducing the expected mitigation impact potential.
20. The iTAP acknowledges that the AE applied a 20 per cent uncertainty reduction to the estimated mitigation impact potential and that potential sequestration from assisted natural regeneration was not included in the calculations. To some extent, the uncertainty reduction may partially compensate for the methodological weaknesses identified above. However, considering the significance and cumulative effect of the five issues described above, the iTAP does not consider these adjustments sufficient to fully address the risk of overestimation of the mitigation impact potential.
21. Regarding the monitoring of mitigation impacts, it is important to highlight that Cameroon currently does not have a fully operational measurement, reporting and verification

(MRV) system in place. Therefore, the project has been designed, in part, to support the development and testing of the national MRV system. This is deemed as a positive approach. Furthermore, annex 11 to the funding proposal presents a clear and comprehensive approach for monitoring and reporting progress on climate mitigation outcomes.

22. This second submission has addressed several recommendations made by the iTAP during the first assessment, including the clearer identification of adaptation measures and improvements in the demonstration of mitigation impact potential in line with the principles agreed by the Board. However, the proposal still does not include, or clearly outline, a process for assessing the potential impacts of future climate hazards on the proposed restoration, agroforestry and reforestation systems. In addition, the mitigation impact potential may be overestimated due to the methodological issues identified above. In consideration of the above, the iTAP assesses the climate impact potential of this second submission to be medium.

1.3 Paradigm shift potential

Scale: N/A

23. This funding proposal aims to demonstrate how the potential of forest landscape restoration can be translated into concrete climate action while simultaneously promoting sustainable development. If properly designed and successfully implemented, the project could make a significant contribution to transforming the forest sector.

24. As clearly expressed in the funding proposal, the success and scalability of the project depend heavily on three key aspects: (i) improving forest governance conditions, particularly by strengthening land and tree tenure security for local actors, as well as through adequate forest management planning; (ii) planning and implementing climate-resilient management and restoration practices that contribute to both climate change mitigation and adaptation; and (iii) operationalizing sustainable and equitable NTFP value chains. Although the project attempts to address these aspects, and the AE has incorporated some of the recommendations made by the iTAP during the first submission, the proposal still presents concerning shortcomings.

25. **Land and tree tenure and use rights.** The proposal highlights the need to strengthen land tenure security as part of its overall objective and the funding proposal further clarifies the importance of secure land tenure in the main document and in several annexes. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations defines land tenure as the relationship, whether legally or customarily defined, among people, as individuals or groups, with respect to land, and identifies three types of right included in the concept of tenure: use rights, control rights and transfer rights, including ownership and inheritance rights.³

26. The responses provided by the AE to iTAP questions indicate that the project will focus primarily on the planning and implementation of land-use agreements, affecting only use rights, while not addressing other types of tenure. This approach is understandable given the highly complex land tenure context in Cameroon, characterized by overlapping statutory rights and diverse customary tenure systems that vary across the three AEZs covered by the proposal. Nevertheless, considering the central importance attributed to land tenure throughout the funding proposal, a more robust, systematic and genuinely transformative approach, supported by a corresponding allocation of financial resources, would be necessary for alignment with the proposed theory of change.

27. The AE highlighted its more practical approach towards securing tree-use rights for local stakeholders, particularly traditionally disadvantaged groups, and that the MINFOF Agroforestry Notebook, to be used at the site level, will serve as an instrument for recording

³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2002. *Land Tenure and Rural Development*. Rome: FAO. Available at <https://www.fao.org/4/y4307e/y4307e00.pdf>.

planted trees and their associated beneficiaries, potentially providing an initial form of recognition of use or tenure rights.⁴

28. The funding proposal refers to the Agroforestry Notebook and/or the Silviculture Notebook under activity 2.1.3, “Support the simplification of policy and regulatory processes”, and activity 3.1.4, “Train local artisans in equipment maintenance and repair”. However, neither of these activities falls under component 1 of the project, which addresses the governance-related elements of the proposal, and does not include promotion of these tools.

29. The funding proposal includes an empty template of the Agroforestry Notebook (annex X-C to the funding proposal). Based on the information provided in this annex, the notebook in its current form appears to function primarily as a tool for clarifying the conditions for the transport of NTFPs originating from plantations registered with the Forest Service, while clarification of ownership would require prior inspection by the Chief of the Forestry Control Post. The iTAP observes that, although the Agroforestry Notebook could potentially be expanded to provide a form of evidence of use rights, the proposal does not present it either as a governance instrument or as a means of verification for monitoring improvements in tree tenure and use rights. It appears that, if this is the tool the project will use for providing evidence of any type of tenure or use rights, changes would need to be made as part of the project to the concept, purpose, template and process for the Agroforestry Notebook.

30. **Implementation of SFM and forest landscape restoration systems.** According to the logical framework, the project will implement forest landscape restoration activities across 95,165 hectares through assisted natural regeneration, reforestation and agroforestry (table 1).

Table 1: Forest land restoration activities

Forest land restoration activities per agroecological zone	Target area mid-term (hectares)
Forest landscape restoration in Waza (ANR and reforestation)	61,590.00
Forest landscape restoration in Dja-Lobéké (ANR and reforestation)	12,395.00
Forest landscape restoration in Bakossi-Bamboutous (ANR and reforestation)	11,180.00
Agroforestry, Waza	1,950.00
Agroforestry, Dja-Lobéké	4,130.00
Agroforestry, Bakossi-Bamboutous	3,920.00
Total	95,165.00

Source: Funding proposal and written answers by the accredited entity.

Abbreviations: ANR = assisted natural regeneration.

31. When asked about existing experience with the proposed species in the three AEZs, the AE indicated that there is partial experience in MINFOF and IUCN with some species, but not with all of them. Furthermore, it remains unclear where the planting material, species-specific management expertise and knowledge for processing the associated NTFPs would come from, particularly in cases involving the introduction of new species. This raises concerns regarding both the implementation capacity of the current partners and the financial feasibility of the project. These concerns are discussed in detail in sections 1.6 and 1.7 below and call into question the transformative potential of the proposal.

32. **Operationalization of sustainable and equitable NTFP value chains.** Component 2 of the funding proposal aims to “make selected Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) value chains operational, profitable and climate-resilient so that local producers, cooperatives and small enterprises can access stable markets and decent incomes from restoration-compatible products”. Such transformative market access requires a solid understanding of the demand-side and market conditions for each selected NTFP, including price elasticity, expected levels of market saturation, potential price changes at different production volumes, buyer requirements

⁴ IUCN written responses to iTAP questions, 18 May 2026.

for specific products and the unit-level economic viability at the projected NTFP prices. In addition, the financial viability of the proposed value chains, including access to timely and affordable credit instruments for establishing productive systems and harvesting, processing and commercializing specific NTFPs, needs to be clear. This is important because, without this analysis and assessment, the project risks promoting products that may either fail to attract the investments needed to access markets or fail to recover investment costs in the event of market oversupply. Unfortunately, the funding proposal does not provide the above-mentioned level of analysis.

33. The iTAP acknowledges that the AE has improved the design of component 2 compared with the first submission, and identified six potential promising NTFPs, two for each AEZ. However, the iTAP also notes that the current level of clarification regarding the value chain components does not yet provide sufficient confidence that the project will successfully operationalize the selected value chains.

34. With the project's limited approach to strengthening land and tree tenure, the insufficient EE capacity for innovation in climate-resilient agroforestry systems and the limited analysis conducted on value chains and potential markets for NTFPs, the project will not achieve the proposed transformation. Therefore, the iTAP assesses the paradigm shift potential of the proposal in its current form to be low to medium.

1.4 Sustainable development potential

Scale: N/A

35. As stated during the first submission, in a broad sense this funding proposal is aligned with the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration⁵ and, for obvious reasons, with the Bonn Challenge,⁶ as well as with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 15 (life on land).

36. In its first assessment, the iTAP raised two main concerns regarding sustainable development: first, the potential negative effects on the environmental co-benefits of forest landscape restoration associated with the use of fast-growing but water-intensive and potentially invasive exotic species; and, second, the need to clarify both the supply and demand sides of the NTFP value chains to be promoted by the project.

37. As mentioned in section 1.2 above, this second submission includes the potential use of additional fast-growing and/or alien species, which may become invasive in new ecological zones. The iTAP acknowledges that, under specific circumstances, the use of such species may be justified to increase food production, for income generation or for their mitigation potential, and that, depending on the specific species and context, strategies can be developed to minimize potential environmental impacts and safeguard biodiversity.

38. Nevertheless, the iTAP strongly recommends that before finalizing the selection of species in the participative manner indicated in the proposal, the AE and EEs undertake an assessment of potential negative environmental or social impacts of the selected species, especially exotic species, and develop a corresponding risk mitigation and biodiversity and water management strategy before initiating the production of planting material.

39. The potential economic co-benefits of forest landscape restoration, particularly through agroforestry systems, are widely recognized. However, realizing these benefits requires clarity not only regarding production systems but also regarding market conditions, commercialization

⁵ Launched by the United Nations General Assembly and co-led by the United Nations Environment Programme and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

⁶ Launched by the Government of Germany and IUCN in 2011.

costs and the accessibility of appropriate financing mechanisms. The funding proposal has evolved on the supply side, mainly with respect to the production stage of the selected value chains. However, the demand side remains less clear. This may jeopardize market access for the selected NTFPs, thereby reducing the likelihood of achieving the proposed improvements in the income levels of local stakeholders.

40. The project can provide important social co-benefits. Its focus on small-scale farmers, one of the most vulnerable social groups in rural areas, alongside refugees, and is positioned to generate significant social benefits. If effectively implemented, the project has the potential to improve access to better food and nutrition, empower small-scale farmers through their active participation in the co-design of site-specific restoration systems and improve access to use rights.

41. The funding proposal includes a detailed environmental and social management plan (annex 6B to the funding proposal) and a gender analysis and action plan (annex 8 to the funding proposal), including detailed information on gender and climate change, an intersectional analysis, an analysis of the existing institutional and legal framework, and corresponding gender responses.

42. In addition, the funding proposal seeks to apply a strong gender lens. The gender analysis and action plan, together with the clarifications provided on how the project will tailor access to land- and tree-use rights for women across the different AEZs, adequately document the existing challenges and explain how the proposed activities could contribute to addressing them.

43. However, the iTAP remains concerned about the potential negative effects on local populations, particularly women, arising from the absence of viable alternative livelihood options in areas covered by SFM activities. The iTAP acknowledges that, in its responses, the AE referred to the establishment of woodlots on private land as a strategy to provide firewood to affected populations. Nevertheless, this approach may generate additional costs for livelihoods already affected by poverty and could further exacerbate negative impacts on women.

44. The iTAP strongly recommends that the AE assess the risk of potential negative social and economic impacts associated with reduced livelihood options in areas covered by SFM activities, with particular consideration given to the differentiated impacts on women, and prepare corresponding mitigation strategies tailored to the specific contexts of the three AEZs included in the project.

45. Considering the multiple co-benefits, as well as the potential social and environmental risks that have not yet been fully addressed, the iTAP assesses the sustainable development potential of this proposal, at its current stage, to be medium to high.

1.5 Needs of the recipient

Scale: N/A

46. Cameroon is classified as a lower-middle-income country, ranking 151 out of 193 countries in the Human Development Index, with a score of 0.588.⁷ According to the latest country report from the International Monetary Fund, Cameroon's economy is improving gradually, with gross domestic product(GDP) growth reaching 3.6 per cent in the first half of 2024, alongside declining inflation, a reduction in the public debt-to-gross domestic product ratio and increased capitalization of the banking sector.⁸

47. Although the medium-term economic outlook is generally positive, the International Monetary Fund also highlights ongoing social tension and the persistent risk of violence in

⁷ See <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI>.

⁸ See <https://data.imf.org/en>.

conflict-affected regions. These risks may be exacerbated by natural disasters. Cameroon ranks 155 out of 187 countries in the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative index, with a score of 38.7,⁹ and climate-related hazards continue to constrain economic growth, challenges compounded by external risks, such as geoeconomic fragmentation.

48. While Cameroon is not considered to be a fragile state, it ranks 20 out of 179 countries in the Fragile States Index¹⁰ and appears in the World Bank's list of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations under the "Conflict affected" column.¹¹ In addition, its three neighbouring countries, Nigeria, Chad and the Central African Republic, are all considered to be fragile states.

49. Furthermore, the fragility context differs significantly across the three targeted AEZs in Cameroon. The Waza landscape, located in the Far North Region near the border with Nigeria and Chad, is characterized by high levels of insecurity linked to cross-border armed violence, refugee movements, internal displacement, resource conflicts between pastoralists and farmers, and recurrent climate shocks such as droughts and floods. The Dja-Lobéké landscape in the East Region, bordering the Central African Republic and the Republic of the Congo, faces fragility associated with cross-border population movements, illegal exploitation of natural resources, weak institutional presence, land-use pressures and persistent rural poverty affecting forest-dependent communities and Indigenous Peoples. In contrast, the Bakossi-Bamboutous landscape in the Western Highlands is comparatively more stable from a security perspective, but experiences fragility linked to high population density, land scarcity, social tensions over land- and tree-use rights, environmental degradation and increasing climate variability affecting agricultural productivity. Across all three landscapes, climate change, poverty, limited institutional capacity and competition over natural resources act as underlying drivers of fragility and may constrain the long-term sustainability of restoration and livelihood interventions if not adequately addressed.

50. Following the iTAP recommendation on the first submission, the AE prepared a detailed conflict sensitivity analysis (annex 22E to the funding proposal) and, through its written responses, explained its differentiated conflict management strategy tailored to the specific context of each AEZ.

51. Considering the above, the iTAP assesses the needs of the recipient to be high.

1.6 Country ownership

Scale: N/A

52. The funding proposal includes a no-objection letter issued by the national designated authority of Cameroon, the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development, dated 24 February 2025.

53. The funding proposal is fully aligned with Cameroon's climate change mitigation and adaptation priorities. Cameroon submitted its updated nationally determined contribution in 2021, outlining its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 35 per cent by 2030 relative to 2010 levels. This target includes a 23 per cent reduction conditional on international support and a 12 per cent unconditional reduction. The agriculture, forestry and other land-use (AFOLU) sector is identified as a priority area, followed by the energy and waste sectors. In terms of adaptation, the nationally determined contribution (NDC) includes reduction of forest-related vulnerability, explicitly referenced in table 9 (p. 37) of the funding proposal and in section 6.4 of the funding proposal, under adaptation programmes, specifically projects 9 and 10.

⁹ See <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/>.

¹⁰ See <https://fragilestatesindex.org/global-data/>.

¹¹ See <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/b3c737c4687db176ec98f5c434d0de91-0090082024/original/FCSListFY25.pdf>.

54. Cameroon submitted its first national adaptation plan (NAP) in 2015, which covers both the agriculture and forestry sectors. The plan emphasizes the importance of enhancing the resilience of agricultural systems (p. 66) and forest ecosystems, as well as promoting synergies between adaptation and REDD+ efforts (pp. 67–68). In this regard, Cameroon submitted its forest reference level (FRL) in January 2026, which is currently under review by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change technical experts. The iTAP acknowledges that the AE uses data and emission factors from the forest reference level to the extent possible.

55. Annex 7 to the funding proposal documents consultations conducted with stakeholders from the public and private sectors, as well as with civil society representatives during the project's preparation, and outlines a stakeholder engagement strategy for the project's implementation. In addition, annex X-I to the funding proposal describes the proposed grievance mechanism.

56. The proposal identifies MINFOF and IUCN as the EEs, both of which possess recognized expertise and experience at the national and international level, respectively. In the description of the institutional arrangements (section B.4 of the funding proposal), the funding proposal also identifies a range of technical experts required for implementation. However, the proposal remains less specific regarding the roles of subnational and local authorities, civil society organizations and technical experts in project execution.

57. Partnerships with national and international research or advisory institutions present in Cameroon and with proven experience in the agriculture and forestry sectors at the local level, in value chain strengthening and market access promotion, and in progressive microfinance for small-scale producers, as well as with local and grass-roots organizations, appear necessary to address some of the knowledge gaps identified in this assessment. These include gaps related to the demand side of NTFPs, the impacts of future climate scenarios on the selected restoration systems, and the silviculture of the species and systems proposed for implementation across the different AEZs. Such partnerships would also help to ensure greater inclusivity, knowledge integration and long-term sustainability.

58. In its assessment of the first submission, the iTAP recommended strengthening collaboration with research or advisory institutions operating in Cameroon and possessing proven experience in the agriculture and forestry sectors at the local level, in value chain strengthening and market access promotion, and in progressive microfinance for small-scale producers, as well as with local and grass-roots organizations with implementation experience in the selected AEZs.

59. Unfortunately, although the funding proposal includes a list of potential research and civil society partners in its stakeholder engagement plan (annex 7 to the funding proposal), no partnership was established before the current resubmission. Therefore, the iTAP considers that its previous recommendation has not yet been adequately addressed, and the identified gaps therefore remain.

60. Considering the above, the iTAP assesses the country ownership of the funding proposal to be medium to high.

1.7 Efficiency and effectiveness

Scale: N/A

61. The total budget for the seven-year implementation period is USD 46,045,636, with a funding request to GCF of USD 29,740,699 in the form of a grant. The Government of Cameroon will contribute USD 15,100,424 and IUCN will contribute USD 1,204,512, both also in the form of grants. This results in a co-financing ratio of approximately 1:0.55.

62. The funding proposal includes an updated economic and financial analysis, and the iTAP acknowledges the improvements made in the analysis. However, while the current version

represents a step in the right direction, it still does not provide the level of depth necessary to identify the NTFPs that offer a genuine opportunity to achieve economic development while simultaneously promoting adaptation and mitigation outcomes. For example, the analysis relies on outdated cost data, and the sensitivity analysis tests variables only independently and not cumulatively, thereby underestimating the potential financial and economic risks.

63. At the current stage of the project's design, the iTAP has the following concerns regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of the proposal:

- (a) **Budget allocation.** The project aims to restore 95,165 hectares through assisted natural regeneration, reforestation and agroforestry during the implementation period. A rough estimate of the direct implementation costs for these activities, based on available data from Cameroon, suggests a range of approximately USD 28–32 million.¹² In the proposal, the actual implementation of these restoration activities across more than 95,000 hectares is covered under activities 1.2.2, 1.2.3 and 1.2.4, which are the only activities specifically dedicated to on-the-ground restoration implementation. The overall budget allocated to these activities amounts to only USD 16.2 million, which, when compared with iTAP estimates raises concerns regarding the plausibility of achieving the proposed outputs. The iTAP recognizes that other budget lines may cover indirect implementation costs and therefore limited its comparison to direct costs only. Similarly, an analysis of the budget allocation per cost category (see table 2) suggests a possible overestimation of certain cost categories. For example, it is unclear what justifies a travel budget of USD 5.7 million for a single-country project, or the allocation of approximately 30 per cent of the budget to personnel costs alongside an additional 18 per cent allocation for training. If the personnel costs are intended to secure sufficient technical expertise within the implementation team, the corresponding training costs would be expected to be lower. The iTAP acknowledges that GCF does not provide specific guidance on budget allocation structures. Nevertheless, the iTAP considers it important that the Board be made aware of these budget allocation patterns, as they may jeopardize the achievement of the project's proposed outputs and outcomes;

Table 2. Budget allocation

Budget category	Percentage of the budget (%)	Total (USD)
Staff costs	20	8,997,520.50
Local consultants	6	2,862,036.50
International consultants	4	1,942,800.00
Training, workshops and conferences	18	8,349,700.00
Travel	13	5,747,234.00
Professional/contractual services	20	9,344,173.00
Equipment	19	8,802,171.00
Total	100	46,045,635.00

Source: annex 4 to the funding proposal, budget.

¹² Using data from the following references:

WCS, WWF and Birdlife. 2022. *Defining the Real Cost of Restoring Forests. Practical Steps Towards Improving Cost Estimates. A Trillion Tree White Paper*. Available at <https://trilliontrees.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Trillion-Trees-Defining-the-real-cost-of-restoring-forests-1.1.pdf>.

Bodin B. et al. 2022. A standard framework for assessing the costs and benefits of restoration: introducing The Economics of Ecosystem Restoration. *Restoration Ecology*. 30: e13515. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1111/rec.13515>.

Topa G, Karsenty A, Megevand C and Debroux L. 2009. *The Rainforests of Cameroon: Experience and Evidence from a Decade of Reform*. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/2683>.

- (b) **Lack of understanding of the requirements from the demand side.** The iTAP observes that the proposal emphasizes the production of NTFPs from restored forests, and includes related training activities. However, the proposal is less clear about processing requirements and provides limited analysis of the corresponding demand-side conditions required to sustain these interventions over time. In particular, the proposal does not adequately assess market requirements, market absorption capacity, price elasticity, quality standards, processing constraints, transport and transaction costs, or the competitiveness of the proposed products in local, national or international markets. The proposal further assumes that the increased production of NTFPs will automatically translate into increased sales and income, improved livelihoods and economic sustainability. However, insufficient evidence is provided regarding existing and projected demand, potential market saturation effects, the capacity of value chains to absorb increased production, or the costs and technical requirements associated with processing, storage, certification and commercialization; and
- (c) **Lack of financing instruments to support financial viability.** The iTAP welcomes the inclusion of letters of intent from La Régionale Bank and Savana Islamic Finance. However, the funding proposal package provides no evidence of research, analysis or consultation with these institutions on the necessary characteristics of financial products to be developed, including affordability, collateral requirements, repayment conditions or risk-sharing arrangements. While the iTAP recognizes that the project is still at an early stage, the proposal insufficiently demonstrates how accessible and operational financing mechanisms adapted to the target population will be developed and deployed during implementation. Considering the financial concerns outlined above, the iTAP considers it essential that partnerships with financial institutions be operationalized early enough to co-design and test suitable credit products for the seven-year implementation period. Otherwise, the long-term financial viability and sustainability of the proposed interventions may be compromised.
64. In addition, the lack of engagement of local partner organizations discussed in section 1.6 above further reduces the likelihood of an efficient use of GCF resources.
65. In consideration of the above, the iTAP assesses the efficiency and effectiveness of the funding proposal to be low to medium.

II. Overall remarks from the independent Technical Advisory Panel

66. This proposal presents promising opportunities for promoting forest landscape restoration as a mechanism to generate both climate change mitigation and adaptation outcomes, while contributing to broader sustainable development objectives. If effectively implemented, the proposed interventions could contribute to addressing climate change challenges across the three targeted AEZs of Cameroon, while also generating important environmental, social and economic co-benefits. The iTAP further acknowledges that, in this second submission, the AE has addressed several of the recommendations raised during the previous assessment. However, despite these improvements, key technical, operational and financial shortcomings remain:
- (a) The proposal currently provides limited evidence on how improvements in tree-use rights and related tenure arrangements will be documented and monitored over time, despite the importance of tenure security for sustaining agroforestry adoption and restoration outcomes;
- (b) While the proposal promotes several agroforestry systems as climate-resilient interventions, the methodology for assessing their resilience under future climate scenarios remains insufficiently explained; and

- (c) The proposal does not sufficiently demonstrate that the AE and EEs currently possess the specialized technical and operational capacity required to implement landscape restoration activities across the highly diverse socioecological conditions of Waza, Dja-Lobéké and Bakossi-Bamboutous.

67. The proposal relies significantly on the commercialization of NTFPs to support livelihoods and long-term sustainability, but insufficiently considers demand-side dynamics, market requirements, processing costs, value chain constraints and financial viability.

68. The iTAP considers that these shortcomings can be adequately addressed during the implementation phase of the project, provided that corresponding conditions are applied, thereby enhancing the project's performance against the investment criteria.

69. Therefore, the iTAP recommends that the Board approve this funding proposal subject to the following conditions.

(a) **Covenants for inclusion in the FAA:**

- (i) The AE shall ensure that MINFOF as Executing Entity adapt the Agroforestry Notebook in a manner that effectively documents land and tree use or ownership rights, and use it as a systematic means of verifying improvements in land and tree tenure and use rights throughout the duration of the Funded Activity.

(b) **Conditions precedent to first disbursement of GCF Proceeds under the FAA:**

- (i) Prior to the first disbursement of GCF Proceeds under the FAA, the Accredited Entity shall submit, in form and substance satisfactory to the GCF Secretariat, a methodology for assessing the resilience of the proposed agroforestry systems under relevant future climate scenarios, including the key climate assumptions, assessment criteria, and indicators to be used.
- (ii) Prior the first disbursement of GCF Proceeds under the FAA, the Accredited Entity shall submit evidence of at least one signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a partner organization active in Cameroon and with demonstrated technical expertise and operational experience in forest landscape restoration relevant to the ecological conditions of Waza, Dja-Lobéké and Bakossi-Bamboutos. The MoU shall clearly define the scope of collaboration and the technical support to be provided for the implementation of the proposed restoration activities.

(c) **Condition precedent to second disbursement of GCF Proceeds under the FAA:**

- (i) Prior to the second disbursement of GCF Proceeds under the FAA, the Accredited Entity shall prepare, in consultation with relevant stakeholders and financial institutions, at least one business plan for the most promising non-timber forest products (NTFPs) in each targeted agroecological zone (AEZ). The business plans shall include, inter alia: (i) market and demand analysis; (ii) assessment of market requirements and price sensitivity/elasticity; (iii) value-chain and competitor analysis; (iv) processing, transport and commercialization costs; (v) financial viability and risk assessment; (vi) identification of potential buyers and financing mechanisms; and (vii) implementation arrangements for sustainable scaling beyond the implementation period of the Funded Activity.

70. The iTAP also strongly recommends that the AE implement the recommendations outlined in paragraphs 38 and 44 above.

Response from the accredited entity to the independent Technical Advisory Panel's assessment

Proposal name:	Securing Permanent Forests to Combat Climate Change and Enhance Sustainable National and Local Economies in Cameroon (SPEFOCE)
Accredited entity:	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)
Country:	Cameroon
Project size:	Small

Impact potential

The AE acknowledges iTAP's assessment that the overall impact potential of the project is medium.

The AE appreciates iTAP's recognition of the significant mitigation and adaptation potential of forest landscape restoration, sustainable forest management, and agroforestry in Cameroon, as proposed under the project. Within the GCF forestry and land use results area, the project is expected to achieve mitigation outcomes of 2.47 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) in emission reductions and carbon enhancement over its 20-year lifespan. Furthermore, across the adaptation result areas covering most vulnerable people and communities; health and well-being, and food and water security; and ecosystems and ecosystem services, the project is expected to benefit nearly 200,000 direct beneficiaries and more than 1.3 million indirect beneficiaries.

The AE takes note of iTAP's recommendations regarding species selection (para 38). The project will comply with the AE's Exclusion List, which prohibits the "use of non-native species where the risk assessment has not ruled out a risk of developing invasive characteristics, unless there is a mitigation plan in place to prevent this from occurring as well as scientific justification for the choice of the species." In addition, the AE acknowledges iTAP's condition regarding the submission of a methodology to assess how future climate risks may affect the species selected for the proposed agroforestry systems.

The AE considers that a conservative approach has been applied in the mitigation calculations. In particular, the calculations incorporate a 20 per cent uncertainty deduction and do not include carbon sequestration from assisted natural regeneration. Furthermore, certain components of the development plan, such as cotton production, may be less significant than initially anticipated due to the potential impacts of climate change. These considerations further support the conservative nature of the estimated mitigation outcomes.

The AE appreciates iTAP's recognition that the project incorporates a clear and comprehensive approach to monitoring and reporting progress towards its climate mitigation outcomes. The AE also welcomes iTAP's acknowledgement that the project will contribute to strengthening and further developing Cameroon's measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) system.

Paradigm shift potential

The AE acknowledges iTAP's assessment that the overall paradigm shift potential of the project is low to medium.

The AE appreciates iTAP's recognition of the project's potential to make a significant contribution to the transformation of Cameroon's forest sector.

Sustainable development potential

The AE acknowledges iTAP's assessment that the overall sustainable development potential of the project is medium to high.

The AE appreciates iTAP's recognition that the proposed activities are expected to generate significant environmental, social, and economic co-benefits.

The AE also appreciates iTAP's feedback regarding livelihood options (para 44) and will further strengthen the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) accordingly.

Needs of the recipient

The AE acknowledges iTAP's assessment that the overall needs of the recipient are high.

Country ownership

The AE acknowledges iTAP's assessment that the overall country ownership is medium to high.

Efficiency and effectiveness

The AE acknowledges iTAP's assessment that the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the project is low to medium.

Overall remarks from the independent Technical Advisory Panel:

The AE acknowledges iTAP's overall assessment and recommendation for the Board approval.



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

ANNEX 8

GENDER ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLAN (GAAP)

VERSION DATE: 27/05/2026

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AE	Accredited Entity
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CoC	Code of Conduct
EE	Executing Entity
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESMS	Environmental and Social Management System
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GAAP	Gender Assessment and Action Plan
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
IP	Indigenous Peoples
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MINFOF	Ministry of Forests and Wildlife
MINPROFF	Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family
MRE	Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
PFA	Permanent Forest Area
PFM	Permanent Forest Management
PMU	Project Management Unit
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
ROAM	Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SIS	Safeguard Information System

Key Gender Terms

Gender: A matrix of culturally based expectations regarding the attitudes and behaviours of women, men, girls, and boys. Gender differs from the biological differences between females and males (sex) and is socially constructed. Gender roles, relations, power dynamics, privileges and rights are not the same across cultures. They can change over time and be influenced by class, age, race, ethnicity, disability and other factors.

Gender Analysis: A critical examination of how differences in gender norms, roles, power structures, activities, needs, and opportunities affect women, men, girls, and boys in certain situations or contexts.

Gender Mainstreaming: The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes.

Gender Equality: Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women, men, girls, and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

Gender Equity: Fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits, power, resources, and responsibilities between women and men. The concept recognizes that women and men have different needs and power and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalances between the sexes.

Gender-Responsive: Acknowledges the different needs, constraints, contributions, and aspirations of women and men, and adjusts strategies and resource allocation to address gender inequalities.

Intersectionality: A framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, disability, indigeneity) combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege.

GBV/SEAH: Gender-Based Violence / Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment — any harmful act directed against a person based on gender, including physical, sexual, or psychological harm, coercion, and deprivation of liberty. SEAH refers specifically to sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment committed in the context of **project implementation**.

FPIC (Free, Prior and Informed Consent): The collective right of indigenous peoples and local communities to give or withhold consent to proposed actions that may affect their lands, territories, and resources, as recognized under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and ILO Convention 169.

Executive Summary

The objective of this report was to conduct a gender analysis and a gender risk assessment, and develop a gender action plan. Key results in terms of gender related issues, as well as possible entry points, are provided in the tables below.

This Gender Assessment and Action Plan (GAAP) has been developed in compliance with the GCF Updated Gender Policy (Decision B.24/12, November 2019) and the GCF Revised Policy on the Prevention and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse, and Sexual Harassment (GCF/BM2021/06). It covers the full 7-year implementation period of the SPEFOCE project across the three target landscapes: Waza (Sudano-Sahelian), Dja-Lobéké (dense humid forest), and Bakossi-Bamboutos (montane). The GAAP identifies gender-differentiated climate vulnerabilities, establishes participation targets aligned with GCF standards (minimum 40% women in all consultations and trainings; minimum 30% women in governance bodies), incorporates GBV/SEAH prevention measures, and provides a dedicated implementation budget of USD 1,147,250 from GCF resources.

In addition, the results of the gender risk assessment which was also conducted are presented below including the risks identified and mitigation measures. To conclude, a gender action plan is provided, as well as provisions for monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

The GAAP is structured around the following mandatory elements per GCF requirements: (i) Gender Assessment with baseline data collection; (ii) Identification of drivers of change and gender dynamics; (iii) Specific gender elements integrated into project activities; (iv) Implementation budget estimates; (v) Measurable output, outcome and impact indicators disaggregated by sex; and (vi) Institutional arrangements for implementation and monitoring.

1. Introduction

This document sets out the Gender Action Plan (GAP) for the project “Securing Permanent Forests to Combat Climate Change and Enhance Sustainable National and Local Economies in Cameroon”. The project aims to reduce GHG emissions from deforestation and forest degradation through sustainable forest management and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks. This project will be implemented in Permanent Forests Areas including Waza, Dja-Lobéké and Bamboutos Highlands, and relating to restoration of degraded forests and lands, mitigation, improvement of SFM instruments and practices, REDD+ implementation support and market and value chain development and alternative livelihood support. More information on the project can be found in the project’s Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP).

2. Purpose of a Gender Analysis and Action Plan

The purpose of this GAAP is to serve as a practical implementation guide for the SPEFOCE project to ensure gender is meaningfully mainstreamed across all project components and activities. The GAAP provides a framework for integrating gender considerations into project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

2.1 General Objective

To enhance gender equality and women's empowerment in the management of permanent forest areas and the development of sustainable livelihoods in Cameroon's three target landscapes.

2.2 Specific Objectives

- Contribute to the deepening of knowledge and the development of innovative strategies to deal with the inequalities observed between men and women PFAs;
- Identify and address gender gaps in terms of participation and leadership in decision making processes, access to opportunities, rights, incomes and benefits, and control and use of resources;
- Design and incorporate affirmative actions aimed at reducing gender inequalities across the components of the Project;
- Improve the participation of local communities and indigenous women including women’s associations in decision making process notably through multi-stakeholder dialogue,

women's empowerment and leadership development and climate resilient livelihood activities

- Use participatory methods to guarantee equal opportunities for women and men to participate and contribute to project design and implementation;
- Identify opportunities to empower women to support project success and sustainability.
- Ensure compliance with the GCF Revised Policy on SEAH Prevention and Protection (GCF/BM2021/06) through the establishment of a zero-tolerance policy, Code of Conduct, survivor-centered GRM, and comprehensive staff training;
- Adopt an intersectional approach that addresses the compounded vulnerabilities of indigenous women (Baka, Bagyeli), youth, elderly women, and women-headed households;
- Strengthen women's land and resource tenure rights within community forests, council forests, and restored landscapes in accordance with Cameroon's forestry legislation and customary practices;
- Establish a comprehensive gender-responsive M&E system with sex-disaggregated indicators at output, outcome, and impact levels, in line with the GCF Integrated Results Management Framework (IRMF).

2.3 Regulatory and Policy Compliance Framework

This GAAP has been prepared in accordance with the following regulatory and policy instruments, listed in order of precedence:

- GCF Updated Gender Policy (Decision B.24/12, Annex XXIII, November 2019) and the associated Gender Action Plan 2020-2023 (Annex XXIV)
- GCF Revised Policy on the Prevention and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse, and Sexual Harassment (GCF/BM2021/06)
- GCF Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) Standards (Decision B.07/02)
- GCF Indigenous Peoples Policy
- IUCN Environmental and Social Management System
- Cameroon Constitution (Preamble guaranteeing equality of all citizens)
- Cameroon Law No. 2011/024 on the Fight against Violence against Women and Gender-Based Discrimination
- Cameroon Forestry Law (Law No. 94/01 of 20 January 1994) and its implementing Decree No. 95/531
- Cameroon Penal Code provisions on sexual violence (Sections 295-298)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ratified by Cameroon in 1994
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)

3. Methodology

The gender analysis was conducted through a combination of secondary and primary data. The desk review of secondary data involved policy and strategy documents, national and international development reports. A qualitative field assessment was conducted in the three landscapes through focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and participatory rural appraisal exercises with both women and men, including indigenous communities (Baka and Bagyeli).

The methodology is aligned with GCF Gender Policy requirements (Decision B.24/12, para. 19(b)) which mandate gender-equitable and inclusive stakeholder engagement and consultations throughout the design and implementation of the project. The field assessment covered all three target landscapes with specific attention to: (i) gender roles and division of labor in forest-related activities; (ii) women's access to and control over forest resources, land, and NTFPs; (iii) decision-making power in household and community governance; (iv) GBV/SEAH risk factors in forest operations; and (v) intersectional dimensions of gender inequality among indigenous communities (Baka, Bagyeli) versus local communities.

4. Brief Project Description

The project objective is to transform land use and forest management practices in and around Permanent Forest Areas (PFAs) into climate-resilient, low-emission and economically viable systems that sustainably generate forest ecosystem goods and services for national and local economies, reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and strengthen the climate change resilience of forest-dependent communities and ecosystems.

It is envisaged that the proposed project outcomes will include:

Outcome 1: Targeted PFAs are managed and restored using climate-smart sustainable forest management practices that reduce deforestation and degradation, increase carbon sequestration, and maintain forest ecosystem services.

Outcome 2: Forest product NTFP value chains are operational, competitive and low-emission, generating stable incomes for local communities while conserving forest resources.

Outcome 3: Stakeholders (communities, local governments, state services, private sector) have the technical, organizational and governance capacities to plan and adopt climate-resilient land-use practices in and around PFAs.

Outcome 4: A robust monitoring, governance and knowledge-driven partnership system guides public and private decisions, secures climate/REDD+ financing, and enables scaling up of resilient, low-emission and economically viable forest management models.

5. Socioeconomic and Gender context

Information on the project socioeconomic and environmental context is provided in the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) report and the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP).

5.1 Gender and Climate Change

Climate change disproportionately affects women in Cameroon's forest-dependent communities. Women bear the primary responsibility for household food security, water collection, and firewood gathering, activities that are directly impacted by changing climatic conditions. In the Waza landscape, droughts and desertification intensify the distances women must travel to collect water and fuelwood. In the Dja-Lobéké and Bakossi-Bamboutos landscapes, changing rainfall patterns affect agricultural productivity and NTFP availability, both of which are crucial for women's livelihoods.

Over the past two decades, Cameroon has experienced seasonal and frequent extreme climatic events, such as floods and recurrent droughts. These, coupled with the instability of the duration of the rainy seasons, have made climate change emerge as a significant problem

for the Cameroonian society¹. Gender and climate change Deforestation, land degradation, mining, soil erosion, water quality, waste management and air pollution are some of the major environmental challenges in Cameroon. Variability due to climate change has also posed specific challenges for Cameroon, including more frequent and intense weather patterns, such as floods and droughts, which have significant negative impact on natural resources, the country's economy, and—differentiated impacts—on women and men in Cameroon. A majority of the country's population directly depend on ecosystem goods and services to maintain food security, livelihood and health, especially marginalized groups such as women who often do not have equal access to other sources of sustenance. Water resources are also impacted by climate change with longer dry seasons but also heavy rains eroding soil, both causing additional soil degradation reducing agriculture viability and consequently food and nutrition availability, especially for those who are dependent on agriculture to maintain livelihoods. Women are primarily responsible for maintaining household food security (in production and preparation) and collecting water, meaning that as these resources are degraded by the effects of climate change women disproportionately feel increased burdens in food, fuel and water collection and productive livelihood work. Additionally, women's tenuous land rights—which can impact their ability to produce sustenance and income, as well as access decision-making groups and loans—and their limited access to adaptation capacity options leaves them particularly vulnerable to climatic changes.

5.2 Gender and REDD+

REDD+ processes and benefit-sharing mechanisms must be designed with explicit attention to gender dynamics. Women's extensive use of forests for NTFPs, fuelwood, and water — often undocumented and undervalued — means that standard REDD+ frameworks risk excluding women from benefit flows unless proactive measures are taken.

The role of Permanent Forests Areas (PFAs) in the lives of women and men in Cameroon is crucial with the provision of food, clothing, shelter, furniture, potable water supply sources and bush meat. The PFAs are also highly valued as sources of natural medicines, which are essential components of health treatment, which is commonly used in conjunction with mystical and ritual practices. REDD+ and restoration activities respond to the impending and continued impacts of climate change. However, these efforts must take into consideration the human interactions with the natural world while building resilience in ecosystems as to not cut off existing livelihoods in efforts to curb and adapt to climate change. This provides opportunities for communities to continue accessing ecosystem benefits while sustainably managing resources and restoring landscapes for healthier communities and ecosystems. Women's significant, diverse roles in the forestry sector affords them specific skills and experiences associated with best forestry management practices, as well as knowledge on properties of culturally and household-important NTFPs and forest resources. Women manage trees around the household and in home gardens, especially fruit trees. This contributes to household food security, food sovereignty and nutrition and potentially to women's autonomous income through small-scale sale of NTFPs, and particularly important for their involvement in government-planned agriculture and agroforestry implementation. Women and children also access forests for energy needs, collecting fuel wood for a variety of household uses.

However, despite the many benefits women's involvement in forestry provides, women are not equally involved in formal forest management activities and often cannot access higher paying positions in forestry activities, or in commodity production along various resource value chains

¹ NDC (2021)

that relate to REDD+ activities. Additionally, increased forest use for large-scale energy needs and conversion of land to private plantations limits women's access to fuel wood for household use, increasing their time and labour dedicated to collecting this resource, as well as exposure to harsh environmental conditions and risks of gender-based violence (GBV). Sustainable development and inclusion aspects of REDD+ activities represent prime opportunities to close gender gaps in regards to these issues through inclusive and gender responsive REDD+ management. Actively involving women and men in planning, implementation and monitoring of projects, and ensuring equal access to opportunities and benefits, will help form a context-specific solution that addresses localized gender issues and meets the various needs and priorities of women and men.

Women are key managers and users of subsistence-based NTFPs and forests. They have important knowledge concerning the nutritional, medicinal and cultural benefits of forest products, and can gain supplemental income from sale of forest and agroforestry products. All of these activities are immensely important for household and community livelihood security and help women explore economic and educational opportunities for themselves and their families. However, despite the benefits women contribute to the household through their knowledge of and relationship with forests, their access to legal land ownership and control, decision-making opportunities in forest management and prospects for increased forestry wage labour is limited. Marginalization of women in communities dependent on forests from their services to products necessitates the need for improving upon the status quo of gender integration and fully addressing inequitable issues.

5.3 Intersectionality Analysis

An intersectional approach is essential for the SPEFOCE project given the diversity of target communities across the three landscapes. The following intersecting dimensions of vulnerability have been identified:

- Indigenous women (Baka, Bagyeli): Face compounded discrimination based on both gender and indigenous status. They have the lowest levels of formal education, limited access to national identity documents, and face cultural barriers to participation in decision-making. Baka women in Dja-Lobéké and Bagyeli women in Bakossi depend heavily on forest-based livelihoods and have specific NTFP knowledge that is at risk of loss.
- Women-headed households: Represent a significant proportion of vulnerable households across all three landscapes. They often lack access to land, capital, and male labor, placing them at greater risk when forest access is restricted or modified.
- Youth women (15-25 years): Face barriers to education and employment, early marriage (particularly in Waza), and limited participation in community governance. They are also at heightened risk of SEAH in the context of forest operations.
- Elderly women: Hold valuable traditional ecological knowledge, particularly regarding NTFP use, medicinal plants, and seed conservation, but are often excluded from formal consultations and decision-making.
- Women with disabilities: Face compounded barriers to participation in community activities, trainings, and forest-based livelihood programs.

6. Institutional and Legal Framework for Gender Equality

6.1 International Commitments

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): Cameroon ratified CEDAW in 1994. The Convention obliges States Parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all areas of life.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA): Cameroon endorsed the BPfA which identifies 12 critical areas of concern for women's advancement and sets strategic objectives and actions.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): The UNFCCC Gender Action Plan and the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender recognize the importance of gender-responsive climate action.

GCF Gender Policy : The GCF Updated Gender Policy (Decision B.24/12) requires all funded projects to submit a gender assessment and project-level gender action plan, with implementation budgets and sex-disaggregated indicators.

IUCN ESMS : IUCN's Environmental and Social Management System includes gender as a cross-cutting standard requiring gender analysis, action planning, and sex-disaggregated monitoring.

6.2 National Gender Framework

Cameroon has established a National Gender Machinery led by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF), which coordinates gender mainstreaming across sectors.

The Cameroon legal framework relevant to gender equality in the forestry sector includes:

- Constitution of Cameroon (Preamble): Guarantees equality of all citizens regardless of sex and affirms adherence to international human rights instruments.
- Law No. 2011/024 of 14 December 2011: Addresses the fight against violence against women and gender-based discrimination. Provides legal definitions and penalties for GBV offences.
- Law No. 94/01 of 20 January 1994 (Forestry Law): Provides for community participation in forest management, including community forests and council forests, but lacks explicit gender provisions.
- Decree No. 95/531 of 23 August 1995: Implementing decree for the Forestry Law, establishes management plan requirements where gender-responsive participation can be integrated.
- Law No. 2016/007 of 12 July 2016 (Penal Code): Contains provisions on sexual violence (Sections 295-298), including penalties for sexual assault and harassment.
- National Gender Policy (2014-2023): Provides the strategic framework for promoting gender equality across all sectors, including natural resource management.
- Cameroon REDD+ Strategy (2018): Recognizes the need for gender mainstreaming in REDD+ implementation but lacks detailed operational guidance.

- Law No. 2019/024 of 24 December 2019 (General Code of Regional and Local Authorities): Provides for women's participation in local governance structures.

7. Gender-Differentiated Issues, Gaps and Responses

While the analysis of the existing institutional and national framework of different institutions, policies, and mandates; and gender and REDD+; gender and climate change and climate vulnerabilities and impacts - relevant to the forestry sector is necessary, the engagement and input from local stakeholders—women and men—at all levels is crucial. The information in the following sections was gathered specifically from the field work in three landscapes including Dja-Lobéké, Waza and Bamboutos landscapes (as elaborated upon in the methodology, Section, 1.4) with local-level stakeholders to guide and develop a more comprehensive understanding of issues, capacity gaps and thus potential responses to approach mainstreaming gender particularly in implementation of the proposed Project activities. As such, the following sections provide in-depth information and analyse the gaps, challenges and opportunities largely within this pillar based on field discussions, and analysis. Below, in Table 2 is a summary of the key takeaways from these sessions included to aid key stakeholders and decision makers with priority issues and opportunities for integrating gender.

Table1: Key takeaways on gender-differentiated issues, gaps and responses

Varied participation by women and men in forest-related activities, as well as the intensity of those activities, dictate differentiated drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, requiring various sustainable livelihood options for women and men to reduce these drivers and their associated impacts.

Reducing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation will require increased community awareness through information dissemination and education of women, men and youth, as well as strengthened regulation and utilization of existing law enforcement—including through traditional outlets.

Women are mostly involved in the collection of firewood for home energy consumption. Promoting the use of clean(er) cooking systems (particularly proposed by the Mbororo women of the Bamboutos Highlands) to decrease the negative health impacts of indoor air pollution, while raising awareness on the issue as an incentive to reduce deforestation and degradation.

Women and men utilize and prioritize trees in differentiated ways, and therefore have separate and distinct impacts on deforestation and forest degradation, as well as conservation management. As a result of entrenched gender roles, women tend to prefer tree species that provide food, medicine, energy, and/or income, necessitating diversity in the tree species to be made available in nurseries to meet the uses and needs of women and men.

Shade trees, in particular, are in demand by both women and men to support cultivating species

both prioritize. Women in particular feared the introduction of trees as shades not suitable for maize and potatoes production. There is, however, a need to increase the prevalence of fruit trees which could drive an increase in community well-being.

Tree planting for forest and landscape restoration is vital, but it is necessary that ownership rights (of land, trees, carbon, etc.) for both women and men are clear and equitable.

Women and men are interested in adding value to their crops and forest products. Women are particularly interested in post-harvest management of NTFPS (especially in the Dja-Lobéké landscape) —requiring targeted resources and training—to increase income generated.

Waza: When asked about which customary laws or traditions affect women's rights to access or control natural resources, the stakeholders gave mixed responses. The Nidiguina and Andirni leadership stakeholders among local communities indicated that there were no restrictions to natural resource usage, and that women are allowed to do all activities that men engage in. However, the Djegueré leadership stakeholder said that while some women are allowed a lot of liberty by their husbands (e.g., work in the fields, petti-trading etc.), many households restrict their women to household chores. On the other hand, most natural resource users from local communities expressed that their women have many restrictions to access of natural resources according to customs, religion and only use resources under the authority of men. For instance, traditional laws restrict women from carrying out fishing, women don't have rights to land since their husbands are considered the main farmers, and some communities require women to stay home and only do household chores. For the vulnerable group stakeholders, one indicated that there are many women whose husbands subject them to certain cultural restrictions forbidding them to work in the field, while the other stakeholder said that women have free access to natural resources.

Dja-Lobéké: Discussion participants were asked to describe their suggested solutions for preventing impacts of the project on vulnerable groups including women. The indigenous community suggested developing a written policy that defines procedures and rules, educating people about discrimination, considering more than one option for communication channels, implementing an anti-retaliation program, conducting team-building activities, focus groups. They also suggested that Baka people have traditional knowledge so the project could help them to do some activities which need traditional technology and less physical effort.

The Indigenous community also cited that there are no customary laws that affect women's access to and control over natural resources but there is a customary practice like "njengi" which woman is not allowed to participate if she is not initiated.

Table 2: Local Community gender-analysis

Local community	
Theme	Gender issues, gaps and possible entry points
Over-harvesting and Illegal harvesting of natural resources	<i>Gender Issues and gaps</i> • More men than women participate in all the activities linked with natural resources. Illegal activities are mostly carried out by men especially hunting of wildlife for consumption. • Women are mostly involved in the collection of food NTFPs for household consumption and commercialisation on a small

	scale. The high dependence on NTFPs induces over-harvesting and renders them more vulnerable. • The main benefit of NTFPs collection and hunting is the generation of cash, availability of food and with supplementary benefits to women. Possible Entry Points • Even though NTFPs are vital for household survival, it is important to implement activities that could provide alternative livelihoods for both women and men. Some of the alternative options include: tree planting with species that are important for women and men (See project proposed activities); adding value to forest products in the value chains; increasing awareness of the negative impacts of unsustainable use of forests.
Firewood collection	Gender Issues and gaps • The participation of women and children is higher for collecting Fuel wood using machetes. Men are in charge of collecting Fire wood of bigger size using chainsaws or machetes. • Women mainly collect firewood as a cheap source of energy to cook. Additionally, women obtain some cash selling firewood. In the case of men, their main interest for firewood is the opportunity for income. Entry Points • It is important to offer women and men alternative livelihoods that can increase the possibility for a better income. Alternative activities could include awareness and implementation of sustainable harvesting of woodlots, use of agroforestry systems and practices on land, and promotion of access to clean cook stoves. • Increase awareness on the impact on health due to fuelwood smoke can reduce degradation.
NTFP Production	Gender Issues and gaps • Women and men participate in different activities related to the collection and processing of the NTFPS. Women are more involved with the collection and transformation of NTFPs especially in the Dja-Lobéké area. Men in the Bamboutos region are more involved in producing wine, and with both women and men involved in collecting medicinal plants. • Collection of NTFPs by both women and men can be utilized for household consumption and commercialisation. In the three landscapes, in addition to NTFPs providing income, they also enhance food security and health (via access to medicine), Entry Points • Promoting alternative livelihoods for women and men through sustainable harvesting and production can reduce NTFP collection, keep forests intact and enhance rural livelihoods. This can be for either conservation, promotion, and value addition of NTFP which could require training especially on post-harvest management and marketing

	Increasing access and entry for community women and men into commodity value chains, to add value to products, can significantly increase income and discourage unsustainable collection and forest degradation.
Burning (fire) for agriculture, hunting and fodder for livestock	Gender Issues and gaps - Men use fire for hunting purposes and also to start bush fires to clear land for agriculture production, including planting cocoa. - Fire is used for clearing land because it is thought to increase yields in the first few years and the increased production can be sold to generate increased income. - The use of fire is used in hunting because it is an easy way to capture game in the forest. Game, is a high source of protein, and can be sold in local food places for income, or used for household consumption and increased nutrition. - The use of fire is practiced by herders especially in the Bamboutos area, before the early rains, is to enable fresh and green grass to grow for livestock to use as fodder. Entry Points - Providing alternative livelihood options and trainings for women and men will reduce the incentive to burn forest/land, including bee keeping, domestication of small animals (to increase food source/nutrition), and encourage agroforestry practices. - Informing farmers and communities on: the risks of burning during dry season (less control and likelihood of a wildfire destroying a much larger swath of land), and options for creating fire belts around the areas. - Increase awareness of people
Water collection and use	Gender Issues and gaps - The participation of women and children is higher for collecting Water since they are more involved in domestic activities. - Women travel over long distances especially during the dry season to fetch water from streams. - Women mainly collect water for cooking, laundering, gardening etc. - Men mainly use water to irrigate farmlands especially during the dry season and feed their livestock. Entry Points - It is important to provide water in the villages that will reduce the workload of women. - Awareness raising and implementation of sustainable harvesting of woodlots, to protect water points and catchments
Agricultural	Gender Issues and gaps - Both women and men participate in different activities that cause agricultural expansion; women usually participate in small-scale activities and men participate in large-scale activities. - Women often receive little, if any, monetary benefit from farming and agricultural expansion but it is done for subsistence purposes/food security for the household. - Men engage in these farming activities to gain income from selling the products, and expand fields to increase yield.

	• The use of herbicides reduces the stress of weeding, especially for women—who often find themselves engaged in this activity daily. Men are usually responsible for chemical application, but women also do it when they own their own land plots. Chemical application causes health problems for both women and men because usually they do not use (because they don't have access to) application equipment and protective wear, thus their contact with chemicals can be detrimental to health. • Cattle raising and grazing is an activity done mainly by men and boys. They are interested in this activity because it is a source of income and protein for the household. Entry Points • Due to the use of unsustainable methods of agriculture for food crop production and cocoa and coffee farming, as well as the differentiated participation, needs and interests of women and men s, it will be necessary to offer women and men different alternatives for their specific livelihoods. • Promotion of tree nurseries, improved varieties and planting of commonly used NTFPs in farmlands to provide alternative livelihoods should be promoted • Women and men involved in these activities request government support in farming inputs, financial assistance, storage facilities, technical assistance and markets for agri-products to provide a way to add value to agricultural products, gain access to the use of chemical-protection information on safe handling, and access to alternative organic-biological-cultural pest control practices. • Increased access to and knowledge/communication on climate smart agriculture practices, access to improve cocoa,plams, maize, plantain, etc. varieties and trees for shade. • Ensure the ownership of planted trees by women and men.
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Table 3: Indigenous community gender-analysis

Indigenous community	
Theme	Gender issues, gaps and possible entry points
Over-harvesting and Illegal harvesting of natural resources	Gender Issues and gaps • More men than women participate in all the activities linked with natural resources. Illegal activities are mostly carried out by indigenous men especially in the Dja-Lobéké area where indigenous people are totally dependent on the forests. The IPs expressed that the Bantu force them to carry out illegal activities in the forest since the Bantus are afraid to enter the forest. • With the exception of the Mbororo women in the Bamboutos area, women, men and children (Dja-Lobéké, Waza) are involved in the collection of NTFPs for household consumption and commercialisation on a small scale. The high dependence on NTFPs renders IPs livelihoods vulnerable since NTFPs availability is seasonal.

	• Mbororo women in the Bamboutos area are not involved in NTFPs collection since they do not go to the forest. • The main benefit of NTFPs collection and hunting is the generation of cash, availability of food. Entry Points • Even though NTFPs are vital for household survival, it is important to implement activities that could provide alternative livelihoods for indigenous women and men. Some of the alternative options include: tree planting with species that are important for women and men (See project proposed activities); adding value to forest products in the value chains; increasing awareness of the negative impacts of unsustainable use of forests.
Firewood collection	Gender Issues and gaps • The participation of women and children is higher for collecting Fuel wood using machetes. • Women mainly collect firewood as a cheap source of energy to Cook and heating during cold periods. Entry Points • Alternative activities could include awareness and implementation of sustainable harvesting of woodlots, use of agroforestry systems and practices on land, and promotion of access to clean cook stoves particularly proposed by some Mbororo women from the Bamboutos area and vulnerable groups in the Waza area. • Increase awareness on the impact on health due to fuelwood smoke can reduce degradation.
NTFP Production	Gender Issues and gaps • In the Dja-Lobéké and Waza area, indigenous women, men and children jointly participate in different activities related to the collection and processing of the NTFPS used for consumption and commercialisation. • NTFPs also provide health security especially for the Baka community (via access to medicine), Entry Points • Promoting alternative livelihoods for women and men through sustainable harvesting and production can reduce NTFP collection, keep forests intact and enhance rural livelihoods This can be for either conservation, promotion, and value addition of NTFP which could require training especially on post-harvest management and marketing • Increasing access and entry for community women and men into commodity value chains, to add value to products, can significantly increase income and discourage unsustainable collection and forest degradation.
Bush burning fodder for growth for livestock	Gender Issues and gaps • The use of fire is practiced by herders especially in the Bamboutos area, before the early rains, to enable fresh and green grass to grow for livestock to use as fodder. Entry Points • Informing farmers and communities on: the risks of burning during dry season (less control and likelihood of a wildfire destroying a

	much larger swath of land), and options for creating fire belts around the areas. • Technical assistance and awareness raising on how to graze in a more sustainable manner will be required in order to reduce the environmental impacts of this activity. Practices like growing fodder, intensive cattle production and pasture rotation can be promoted in the region.
Water collection and use	<i>Gender Issues and gaps</i> • The participation of women and girls is higher for collecting water since they are more involved in domestic activities. • Women travel over long distances especially during the dry season to fetch water from streams. • Women mainly collect water for cooking, laundering, gardening etc. • Men mainly use water to feed their livestock. • Water points in the Bamboutos area especially have been fenced by some farmers, thereby reducing access to women. Some women climb farmer's fences to fetch water. Also, streams are contaminated by the use of pesticides thereby rendering people vulnerable. • Women travel over long distances especially during the dry season to fetch water from streams. <i>Entry Points</i> • It is important to provide tapes in indigenous communities that will reduce the workload of women and reduce distance to water points. Also, tape provision will enable the women and girls not exposed to gender-based violence related to crossing over farmers fences.
Agricultural and livestock rearing	<i>Gender Issues and gaps</i> • Both women and men participate in different activities; women (Bamboutos area) participate in small-scale around their homes, while the men are involved in livestock rearing. • Women often receive little, if any, monetary benefit from livestock rearing • Cattle raising and grazing is an activity done mainly by men and boys. They are interested in this activity because it is a source of income and protein for the household. <i>Entry Points</i> • Technical assistance on how to graze in a more sustainable manner will be required in order to reduce the environmental impacts of this activity. Practices like growing fodder, intensive cattle production and pasture rotation can be promoted in the region.

Institutional Capacity

In the three -landscapes visited, the following local institutions that play a fundamental role in advancing women rights and access to natural resources included the following:

- CEFAID/PNL
- Association- ASMYDI/PNL
- Association WHCS/PNL
- AFAA'PON

- Gic Naral
- ERUDEF

8. Gender Risk Assessment and Mitigation Measures

In addition to the gender analysis, a gender risk assessment was also conducted. The information in the following sections was gathered specifically from the field work in three landscapes including Dja-Lobéké, Waza and Bamboutos landscapes with local-level stakeholders (men, women, youths, girls) from both the local community and indigenous community to guide and develop a more comprehensive understanding of potential beneficiaries of the project, the risks, local assessment of risks and proposed mitigation measures for risks and impacts. Issues of access and control of natural resources, institutional capacity and decision-making power are also addressed. Below, in Table 7.1 and 7.2 is a summary of the key issues from the stakeholders. This information shapes the gender mainstreaming for the project. The Socioeconomic and environmental baseline assessment and together with the Environmental Social Impact Assessment conducted in three PFAs including Dja-Lobéké, Waza and Bamboutous Highlands together provide useful information in understanding the risk, and mitigation measures for the IUCN Project “Securing Permanent Forests to Combat Climate Change and Enhance Sustainable National and Local Economies in Cameroon”. The results of the assessment shape the gender mainstreaming strategy for the project which includes four main topics to be analysed. Questions on these topics are included in the Impact Assessment Protocol.

8.1 Gender risk assessment and mitigation measures for Indigenous People

Indigenous Community		
Potential Risk	Risk assessment	Mitigation measures
Discrimination against women or other groups based on gender with regards to access to resources, services, or benefits provided by the project	Potential for discrimination in terms of which livelihood / enterprise activities are chosen and supported by the project for the (Development of market, value chain & livelihood activities); examples for Mbororo women might include piped water, access to land for farming, improved farming practices or other economic income sources;	• The need for working with and representing diverse marginalized groups, especially among women and the range of economic and cultural contexts;
	Participation: Potential for discrimination terms of participation of women in project activities eg. capacity building activities, restoration, REDD+; considering that most indigenous women and girls are not educated and do not have national identity cards	• Ensure that for each project activity, women are fully represented • Facilitate the establishment of national identity cards for women and girls in the 3 landscapes

	Potential for discrimination in terms of not considering women's household needs especially water when carrying out restoration activities geared towards protecting the water areas and the forest.	•ROAM process should identify areas where women fetch water regularly and provide regulated access or provide access to some areas
Creation, exacerbate or perpetuate gender-related inequalities;	a. Bamboutous: women are not represented in land/ natural resource use decision making in the village; i. There is a risk of women not being included in decision-making regarding the ROAM restoration activities (the activities, location of activities, etc); ii. There is a risk of project livelihood interventions/ activities not including or benefiting women;	•Hold discussions for men and women separately for all project activities •Promote specific livelihood activities that indigenous women can carry out within their communities •Sensitise and educate the local population on the important role of women in society
	There is risk of the project working only with already existing villages institutions in which women are not represented thereby reinforcing the dominance of men in decision making.	• ROAM-methodology includes separate consultations with men and women in indigenous communities. •Resulting Village Activity Plan for IPs differentiates between men & women. •Each landscape has a partner with gender expertise especially on Indigenous Peoples issues
	There is the risk that project proponent will work with organisations which are not sensitive to gender issues	•Conduct capacity building on gender responsive information/data collection and communication systems for implementing partners •Project proponent should ensure that executing partners identify and use sources and channels of information and communication that allow for participation of women and vulnerable groups, particularly in rural communities

3. Adverse impacts on the situation (e.g., livelihood or rights) of women and girls, including restrictions on women's ability to use, develop or protect natural resources, taking into account different roles and positions of women and men in accessing environmental goods and services; and services	a. Contextual risk: women have issues with access to streams (for freshwater) due to fencing and de facto privatisation of streams (and due to changes in stream flow, particularly in dry season); there is a risk that any fencing, hedgerows or other restoration related activities with local communities further restrict access to freshwater; b. Women's Concerns that restoration activities promoted by the project (eg. tree planting) might affect sun-reliant crops (potatoes; maize), ie. might not be appropriate	•Construct tapes to enable women have water in their communities and reduce distance to collection sites; •ROAM process should identify crops planted by the women and discuss the type of trees suitable in farmlands
	Contextual risk: Women are economically dependent on the men since the men are mostly involved in commercial beneficial activities such as livestock rearing	•Involve women in livelihood and restoration activities •Encourage and support women to engage in small business
4. Gender-based violence including risks of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment (SEAH).	-Access to water: Women are insulted and verbally harassed when they cross over people's fences to fetch water from streams fenced by farmers	-Construct taps and/or wells in their locality The project has a gender coordinator as well as a safeguards position, responsible for all gender and safeguards-related matters during project implementation. An exclusive SEAH PoC is not foreseen as part of project staff. However, IUCN's ESMS team structure includes a Regional ESMS Specialist for its West and Central Africa operations, based in Dakar, who is responsible for oversight as well as handling of grievances, with a direct escalation in matters relating to SEAH. As this position is not part of the project staff, it ensures independence and protection from retaliation for victims. Further escalation levels include the ESMS

		Global Coordinator as well as the Head of Oversight.
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8.2 Gender risk assessment and mitigation measures for local communities

Similar risks have been identified for local communities, with additional dimensions including women's limited access to cocoa and coffee value chains, risks of exclusion from large-scale restoration activities, and limited representation in village governance institutions.

Local communities		
Risk	Risk assessment	Mitigation measures
1.Discrimination against women or other groups based on gender with regards to access to resources, services, or benefits provided by the project	Potential for discrimination in terms of which livelihood / enterprise activities are chosen and supported by the project for the (Development of market, value chain & livelihood activities);	• Work with and representing diverse marginalized groups, especially among women and the range of economic and cultural contexts;
	Participation: Potential for discrimination in terms of participation of women in project activities eg. capacity building activities, restoration, REDD+; considering that most women and girls are not educated and do not have national identity cards	•Ensure that for each project activity, women are represented by setting percentages • Promoting participation in decision-making, emphasizing the quality and creative nature of work, place needs over wants and foster healthy, mutually beneficial relationships among people and between people. •Individuals and community organizations must be empowered so they can achieve sustainable livelihood. Adapted capacity building and training to different groups to enable them to improve on their crafts or learn other alternative sources of income.
	Potential for discrimination in terms of not considering women's household needs especially water when carrying out restoration activities geared towards protecting the water areas and the forest.	•ROAM process should identify areas where women fetch water regularly and provided regulated access or provide access to some areas
2.Creation, exacerbate or perpetuate gender-related inequalities;	i. there is a risk of women not being included in decision-making regarding the ROAM restoration	•Hold discussions for men and women separately and jointly for project activities •Promote specific livelihood activities that women can carry out within their communities

	activities (the activities, location of activities, etc); ii. there is a risk of project livelihood interventions/ activities not including or benefiting women;	•Sensitise and educate the local population on the important role of women in society -Provide financial assistance to enable them rent or buy farms; buy farm inputs, money to engage in business; money to buy fertiliser to enrich cultivable and farm equipment.
	There is risk of the project working only with already existing villages institutions in which women are not represented	• ROAM-methodology includes separate consultations with men and women in LCs. •Resulting Village Activity Plan for LCs differentiates between men & women. •Each landscape has a partner with gender expertise
3.Adverse impacts on the situation (e.g., livelihood or rights) of women and girls, including restrictions on women's ability to use, develop or protect natural resources, taking into account different roles and positions of women and men in accessing environmental goods and services; and services	a.Contextual risk: women have issues with access to freshwater; b.Women's Concerns that restoration activities promoted by the project (eg. tree planting) might affect sun-reliant crops (potatoes; maize), ie. might not be appropriate	•Construct tapes to enable women have water in their communities and reduce distance to collection sites; •ROAM process should identify crops planted by the women and discuss the type of trees suitable in farmlands - Training on best agricultural and agroforestry techniques for planting and harvesting as well as value addition and marketing of farm produce
	Contextual risk: Women are economically dependent on the men since the men are mostly involved in agricultural beneficial activities such as cocoa and coffee farming and livestock rearing	•Involve women in livelihood and restoration activities •Encourage and support women to engage in small business •Facilitate access to loans for women
Gender-based violence including risks of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment (SEAH).	/	The project has a gender coordinator as well as a safeguards position, responsible for all gender and safeguards-related matters during project implementation. An exclusive SEAH PoC is not foreseen as part of project staff. However, IUCN's ESMS team structure includes a Regional ESMS Specialist for its West and Central Africa operations, based in Dakar, who is responsible for oversight as well as handling of grievances, with a direct escalation in

		matters relating to SEAH. As this position is not part of the project staff, it ensures independence and protection from retaliation for victims. Further escalation levels include the ESMS Global Coordinator as well as the Head of Oversight.
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8.3 GBV/SEAH Risk Assessment and Prevention Framework

In compliance with the GCF Revised Policy on the Prevention and Protection from SEAH (GCF/BM2021/06) and IUCN's ESMS requirements, the following GBV/SEAH risk assessment and prevention framework has been established for the SPEFOCE project:

Risk Factor	Context	Mitigation Measure	Timeline
Field operations in remote forest areas	Women may face safety risks when travelling to and working in remote forest sites for restoration, NTFP collection, and monitoring activities	Ensure group-based field operations; establish safe transportation arrangements; avoid overnight stays in remote areas without adequate facilities	Year 1 onward
Power imbalances between project staff and communities	Project staff, consultants, and contractors may exploit their position of authority over community members, particularly women	Code of Conduct signed by 100% of staff; zero-tolerance policy; mandatory SEAH training; background checks for all recruited staff	Month 1-6
Benefit distribution processes	Risk of sexual exploitation linked to access to project benefits, green credits, micro-finance, and livelihood support	Transparent benefit distribution criteria; women-only distribution channels where needed; monitoring of benefit flows by gender	Year 2 onward
Indigenous women's vulnerability	Baka and Bagyeli women face heightened vulnerability due to marginalization, language barriers, and limited access to justice systems	Culturally adapted GRM with local-language facilitators; community-based SEAH reporting mechanisms; partnership with local women's organizations	Month 1-12

Training and capacity building settings	Residential training sessions and workshops may create environments where SEAH risks are elevated	Gender-safe training environments; separate dormitory facilities; trained SEAH focal points present at all multi-day events	Year 1 onward
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SEAH Prevention and Response Measures

- **Zero-Tolerance Policy:** A zero-tolerance policy on GBV, SEAH, and forced labour shall be declared in all project documents, the Project Operations Manual (POM), and all contracts with implementing partners and contractors.
- **Code of Conduct (CoC):** A project-specific CoC addressing SEAH shall be developed during the inception phase and signed by 100% of project staff, consultants, and contractors within the first 6 months. The CoC shall cover expected behaviour standards, prohibited conduct, and consequences of violations.
- **Survivor-Centered GRM:** The project GRM shall include a specific, confidential SEAH procedure with: (i) multiple reporting channels (including anonymous options); (ii) referral to existing national GBV services; (iii) trained female focal points in each landscape; (iv) culturally appropriate mechanisms for indigenous communities.
- **Staff Training:** 100% of project staff and implementing partners shall be trained on SEAH risks, prevention measures, and reporting procedures within the first 12 months. Refresher training shall be conducted annually.
- **SEAH Risk Mitigation Plan:** A standalone SEAH Risk Mitigation Plan shall be developed within 9 months of project inception, integrated with the ESMP.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Public awareness campaigns on GBV/SEAH prevention and reporting shall be conducted in all three landscapes, using local languages and culturally appropriate media.

9. Gender-Responsive Results Framework

In compliance with GCF Gender Policy requirements (Decision B.24/12, para. 19(a)(v)), the following gender-responsive results framework establishes indicators at impact, outcome, and output levels, all disaggregated by sex. This framework is aligned with the GCF Integrated Results Management Framework (IRMF) and the project's Theory of Change.

Level	Indicator	Target	Means of Verification
IMPACT LEVEL			
Impact	Increased climate resilience and improved socio-economic conditions of women and girls through gender mainstreaming and	At least 40% of direct beneficiaries are women; measurable improvement in women's livelihoods and climate resilience in target landscapes	Baseline and endline surveys (sex-disaggregated); gender audit reports

	support to gender-specific activities		
OUTCOME LEVEL			
Outcome 1	Women's meaningful participation in forest governance and decision-making at landscape level	At least 30% women in multi-stakeholder platforms and forest management committees	Meeting minutes; membership records; satisfaction surveys
Outcome 2	Women's equitable access to project-generated benefits (green credits, micro-enterprises, livelihood support)	At least 35% of NTFP value chain and micro-enterprise benefits flow to women; 33% of green credit beneficiaries are women	Benefit distribution records; financial reports; enterprise surveys
Outcome 3	Improved land and resource tenure security for women in target landscapes	Women's use rights documented in at least 50% of community forest management plans and restoration plans	Forest management plans; land use plans; community records
OUTPUT LEVEL (Core Indicators)			
Core 2	Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries (sex-disaggregated)	At least 40% women among direct beneficiaries	Project M&E system; Annual Performance Reports (APRs)
GBV/SEAH	SEAH prevention and response mechanisms operational	CoC signed by 100% staff (Month 6); GRM with SEAH procedure operational (Month 6); SEAH Risk Plan approved (Month 9); 100% staff trained (Month 12)	CoC records; GRM reports; training records

10. GAAP Implementation Requirements

The table below outlines the project requirements for gender mainstreaming at each stage of project design and implementation.

Requirement	Concept Note	Proposal Stage	Inception (6 months)	Annual / End of Y1	Project Closing
Provisional GAP	N/A	Required	Required	N/A	N/A
Established GAP	N/A	N/A	N/A	Required	Required
GAP Implementation	N/A	N/A	N/A	Required	Required
Gender Baseline Survey	N/A	N/A	Required	N/A	N/A

Code of Conduct (SEAH)	N/A	N/A	Required (Month 6)	Annual review	N/A
GAP Progress Reporting in APR	N/A	N/A	N/A	Required	Required
Gender Audit / Mid-Term Review	N/A	N/A	N/A	Required (Mid-term)	Required (Final)

11. Integrating Gender into SPEFOCE

The project has a gender coordinator as well as a safeguards position, responsible for all gender and safeguards-related matters during project implementation. The Gender Action Plan presented below sets out the specific activities, indicators, targets, responsibilities, and budget for mainstreaming gender across all four project components.

The GAP is structured around the four project components and includes cross-cutting gender actions for GBV/SEAH prevention, intersectionality, and gender-responsive M&E. All activities include sex-disaggregated indicators with specific percentage targets for women's participation. Implementation responsibilities are distributed among the Executing Agencies (MINFOF and IUCN), the PMU, the Gender Expert, and landscape-level partners, with coordination by the national Gender Specialist recruited at project inception.

Minimum participation targets aligned with GCF standards:

- Community consultations and meetings: minimum 40% women
- FPIC processes (all stages): minimum 30% women
- Training programs (all components): minimum 30% women
- Multi-stakeholder platforms and forest management committees: minimum 30% women
- Project Steering Committee: minimum 25% women
- Cash-for-work and benefit-sharing: minimum 30% women recipients
- NTFP value chains and micro-enterprises supported: minimum 30% women-led

12. Gender Action Plan

Outputs	Activities	Indicators and Targets	Timeline	Responsibilities	Budget (USD)	
<i>Impact Statement: Increased climate resilience and improved socio-economic conditions of women and girls through gender mainstreaming and technical and financial assistance to gender-specific activities across the SPEFOCE project in Cameroon</i>						
Component 1: Climate-smart sustainable forest management (SFM) and land restoration practices effectively implemented in targeted forest landscapes						
Output 1.1: Improved governance systems for SFM of PFAs	1.1.1 Improve guidelines for PA management plans including integration of climate mitigation and adaptation Stakeholder consultations	-No and % of women consulted out of total Target: At least 30% of the individuals consulted are women	Y1-Y2	Executing Agency, PMU, Consultants	7,000	
	1.1.2 Improve guidelines for production forests management plans Stakeholder consultations	-No and % of women consulted out of total Target: At least 30% of the individuals consulted are women	Y1-Y2	Executing Agency, PMU, Consultants	7,000	
	1.1.4 Implement updated management plans of 3 council production forests Stakeholder consultation and mobilisation	-No and % of women consulted and mobilized out of total Target: At least 30% of the individuals consulted and mobilized are women	Y1-Y2	Executing Agency, PMU	7,000	
	1.1.5 Create and operationalise multi-stakeholder platforms Bring stakeholders together for dialogue	-No and % of women involved in dialogue Target: At least 35% of individuals involved are women - No and % of women in each trimestrial meeting of the platforms Target: At least 35%	Y2-Y7	Executing Agency, PMU, Consultants	21,000	
	1.1.5A Integrate gender-responsive provisions in multi-stakeholder platform governance	Platform governance rules include minimum 30% women membership and rotation of female co-chair positions At least 2 women-led sub-committees	Y2-Y7	PMU, Gender Expert	15,000	

Outputs	Activities	Indicators and Targets	Timeline	Responsibilities	Budget (USD)	
		established per landscape platform				
Output 1.2: Increased restoration of degraded lands and forests in and around permanent forest areas	1.2.1 Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in all 3 landscapes	-No and % of women consulted in each landscape Target: At least 33% of individuals consulted per landscape are women	Y3	Executing Agency, PMU	10,000	
	1.2.2-1.2.4 Restoration of degraded areas Identify restoration areas, including women's needs	-No and % of women consulted out of total Target: At least 30% of individuals consulted are women	Y2-Y4	Executing Agency, PMU, Ministry	150,000	
	1.2.1A Conduct gender-responsive ROAM assessments that document women's forest use, NTFP collection areas, and water access routes	ROAM assessments include gender-specific mapping of women's forest use in all 3 landscapes Women's NTFP collection areas and water access routes documented and integrated in restoration plans	Y2-Y3	PMU, Gender Expert, ROAM consultants	25,000	
	1.2.4A Ensure women's equitable participation in cash-for-work restoration activities	At least 40% of cash-for-work recipients for restoration activities are women Women-friendly working conditions established (schedules, childcare, proximity)	Y3-Y7	PMU, Landscape coordinators	20,000	
Component 2: Value chain development and transformation are operational						
Output 2.1: Strengthened non timber forest product (NTFP) Value Chains and Market Linkages	2.1.1 Build capacities on micro-enterprise management Conduct needs assessment	-No and % of women associations whose needs have been assessed Target: At least 30% are women-led	Y3	PMU, Executing Agency, Consultants	30,000	

Outputs	Activities	Indicators and Targets	Timeline	Responsibilities	Budget (USD)	
	2.1.2 Develop/upgrade capacity and infrastructure Identify and engage potential associations with focus on women and IP Develop business plans for micro-enterprises	-No and % of women-led associations identified and engaged Target: At least 35% of associations are women-led -No and % of women-led enterprises with developed business plans Target: At least 35% are women-led	Y2-Y5	Executing Agency, PMU, Gender Expert, Consultants	180,000	
	2.1.3 Build capacity of micro-enterprises Select participants including at least 30% women	-No and % of women-led micro-enterprises whose needs have been assessed Target: At least 30% are women-led	Y3	PMU, Executing Agency, Consultants	30,000	
Component 3: Stakeholders' capacities are strengthened on climate-resilient land-use practices						
Output 3.1: Improved capacity of stakeholders	3.1.1 Strengthen capacity on use of improved SFM guidelines Select participants including at least 30% women	-No and % of women participants selected and trained Target: At least 30% of selected and trained participants are women	Y2-Y3	Executing Agency, PMU, Consultants	75,000	
	3.1.2 Train and disseminate information on revised instruments Select participants including at least 30% women	-No and % of women participants selected and trained Target: At least 30%		Executing Agency, PMU, Consultants	15,000	
	3.1.2 Build capacity on forest monitoring, REDD+ registry and SIS Select participants including at least 30% women	-No and % of women participants selected and trained Target: At least 30%	Y3	PMU, Executing Agency, Consultants	30,000	
	3.1.3 Build capacity of State and non-State actors on green investment legal framework Identify	-No and % of women participants identified and trained Target: At least 30%	Y3	PMU, Executing Agency, Consultants	10,000	

Outputs	Activities	Indicators and Targets	Timeline	Responsibilities	Budget (USD)	
	participants including at least 30% women					
	3.1.4 Conduct dedicated gender and climate change training for women leaders across all 3 landscapes	At least 60 women leaders trained in gender and climate change (20 per landscape), including indigenous women leaders Women-only training sessions on leadership, FPIC, land rights, and GBV/SEAH awareness	Y2-Y3	PMU, Gender Expert	35,000	
	3.2.5 Build capacity of local artisans Select participants including at least 30% women	-No and % of women artisans whose needs have been assessed Target: At least 30% are women	Y3	PMU, Executing Agency, Consultants	30,000	
Component 4: Strong project monitoring and knowledge-driven partnerships						
Output 4.1: Project Management Team is functional	4.1.1 PMU leads implementation Define positions and responsibilities Recruit staff	Target: A gender position is defined as part of the project management team Target: A national gender specialist is recruited at project inception	Y1	IUCN	168,000	
	4.1.1A Develop and sign project Code of Conduct addressing GBV/SEAH, signed by 100% of staff	Code of Conduct developed by Month 3 and signed by 100% of PMU and partner staff by Month 6 Zero-tolerance policy on GBV/SEAH declared in POM and all contracts	Y1 (M1-M6)	IUCN, PMU, Gender Expert	5,000	
	4.1.1B Establish survivor-centered GRM with specific SEAH procedure	GRM with SEAH procedure operational by Month 6 Female SEAH focal points designated in each landscape Referral protocols to national GBV services established	Y1 (M1-M6)	IUCN, PMU, Gender Expert	10,000	

Outputs	Activities	Indicators and Targets	Timeline	Responsibilities	Budget (USD)	
	4.1.1C Conduct SEAH training for 100% of project staff and implementing partners	100% of project staff trained on SEAH by Month 12 Annual refresher training conducted SEAH Risk Mitigation Plan approved by Month 9	Y1-Y7	Gender Expert, PMU	15,000	
Output 4.2: Project is monitored and evaluated	4.2.1 Operationalize Project Steering Committee Identify and establish members	-No and % of women selected as project steering committee member Target: At least 25% of project committee members are women	Y1	IUCN	8,250	
	4.2.2 Implement M&E plan	Target: Gender is fully integrated in the M&E system Target: Gender lessons are disseminated for continuous improvement Target: Gender activities and outputs are reported in all APRs	Y1-Y7	Gender Expert, PMU, M&E Expert, Consultants	50,000	
	4.2.2A Conduct gender baseline survey during inception phase	Gender baseline survey completed across all 3 landscapes within first 6 months Baseline data collected on: women's participation rates, income, land tenure, decision-making, GBV prevalence	Y1 (M1-M6)	Gender Expert, M&E Expert	40,000	
	4.2.2B Conduct gender audit at mid-term and final evaluation	Mid-term gender audit (Year 4) and final gender evaluation (Year 7) conducted by independent evaluator GAP indicators fully integrated in APR reporting	Y4 and Y7	IUCN, Independent evaluator	60,000	
	4.2.2C Produce and disseminate gender knowledge products	At least 6 gender-responsive case studies produced and disseminated Lessons learned on gender mainstreaming in	Y3-Y7	PMU, Gender Expert, Communications	20,000	

Outputs	Activities	Indicators and Targets	Timeline	Responsibilities	Budget (USD)	
		Cameroon REDD+ documented and shared with GCF				
Cross-Cutting: Indigenous Peoples — Gender-Specific Actions						
Indigenous Women's Empowerment	Conduct culturally adapted consultations with Baka and Bagyeli women using local-language female facilitators	At least 40% of indigenous consultations include women Female local-language facilitators engaged in each IP community Separate women-only FPIC sessions conducted	Y1-Y7	PMU, Gender Expert, IP focal points	25,000	
	Document and integrate indigenous women's traditional ecological knowledge (NTFP, medicinal plants, seeds)	Traditional knowledge assessment of Baka and Bagyeli women completed in all target communities Women's knowledge integrated in at least 50% of forest management plans	Y2-Y4	PMU, Gender Expert, IP consultants	20,000	
	Facilitate access to national identity documents for indigenous women and girls	Identity card facilitation campaign conducted in all 3 landscapes At least 200 indigenous women and girls obtain national identity cards	Y1-Y3	PMU, MINFOF, Local authorities	15,000	
	Support indigenous women's livelihood activities (NTFP processing, community-based enterprises)	At least 10 indigenous women-led NTFP processing groups established and supported Indigenous women's income from NTFPs increased by at least 20%	Y2-Y7	PMU, Gender Expert, Livelihood consultants	30,000	

13. GAAP Implementation, Monitoring and Supervision

13.1 Institutional Arrangements

The GAAP will be implemented under the overall responsibility of IUCN as Accredited Entity, with the PMU responsible for day-to-day coordination. Key institutional roles are:

- IUCN (AE): Overall fiduciary and reporting responsibility for GAAP implementation; integration of GAAP progress in Annual Performance Reports (APRs) to GCF.
- PMU / Gender Specialist: Day-to-day coordination; GAAP activity planning and monitoring; gender mainstreaming across all project components; SEAH prevention coordination; gender-responsive data collection and analysis.
- MINFOF (EE): Integration of gender considerations in forest management instruments and policies; support for gender-responsive implementation at landscape level.
- Landscape Partners: Implementation of gender activities at community level; culturally appropriate engagement with indigenous women; local GRM operation.
- M&E Expert: Integration of GAAP indicators in project M&E system; sex-disaggregated data collection and reporting.

Additional institutional arrangements per GCF requirements:

- A SEAH Focal Point shall be designated in each landscape, preferably a trained female staff member, responsible for receiving confidential SEAH complaints and initiating the referral process.
- MINPROFF (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family) shall be invited to participate in the Project Steering Committee as an observer/advisor on gender matters.
- Local women's organizations and indigenous women's representatives shall be engaged as implementation partners in each landscape for community-level gender activities.
- An external gender audit shall be conducted at mid-term (Year 4) and project closure (Year 7) by an independent evaluator.

13.2 Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

Gender integration shall be a central element of the monitoring and evaluation system. All project-level indicators shall be disaggregated by sex and, where relevant, by indigenous status. Gender-related progress will be reported in all Annual Performance Reports (APRs) submitted to the GCF.

The M&E framework for the GAAP shall include:

- Quarterly collection of sex-disaggregated data on all GAAP indicators by landscape coordinators;
- Semi-annual gender progress reviews by the Gender Specialist, shared with the PMU and Steering Committee;
- Annual integration of GAAP progress in the project APR submitted to GCF, including quantitative indicators and qualitative gender analysis;

- Gender baseline survey during inception (Year 1) to establish benchmarks for all GAAP indicators;
- Independent mid-term gender audit (Year 4) to assess progress and recommend corrective measures;
- Final gender evaluation (Year 7) assessing the project's transformative impact on gender equality and women's empowerment;
- Satisfaction surveys among women beneficiaries at mid-term and project closure, measuring perceived quality of participation and benefits;
- SEAH monitoring through GRM data analysis (anonymized and confidential).

13.3 Adaptive Management

The GAAP is a living document that will be refined during the inception phase based on the gender baseline survey findings. Annual review of GAAP progress shall identify areas where targets are not being met and propose corrective actions.

Adaptive management triggers shall include:

- Women's participation in any activity falls below 25% for two consecutive quarters: PMU must investigate barriers and implement corrective measures (e.g., schedule adjustments, childcare, separate women-only sessions);
- SEAH complaint received through GRM: Immediate activation of survivor-centered response protocol; investigation within 10 working days; reporting to IUCN and GCF as per GCF policy;
- Gender audit identifies significant gaps between GAAP targets and actual performance: GAP revision and resource reallocation within 3 months of audit findings;
- Baseline survey reveals different gender dynamics than assumed: GAAP indicators and targets adjusted during inception phase.