Gender Assessment

FP311: RACINE Project

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RACINE PROJECT - Green Climate Fund

GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

Contents

PART I: GENDER ANALYSIS/ASSESSMENT 1
1. Demographic and socio-economic context 2
2. National strategic framework and international commitments 3
3. Situation of women in the economy and agriculture 4
4. Specific analysis of the cocoa and coffee sectors 4
5. Social inclusion of young people as a vulnerable target group 5
6. Causal Links Between Identified Problems and GAP Actions 5
7. SEAH risk screening and situational analysis 7
8. SEAH risks and mitigation measures by sphere of responsibility 7

PART II: GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 10
1. Project logic framework 10
2. Alignment of the MINEPAT institutional SEAH framework with GCF requirements 10
3. Detailed action plan 14
4. Consolidated budget for gender action plan 20
5. Consolidated results framework indicators 21
6. Specific SEAH indicators for the consolidated results framework 21

PART I: GENDER ANALYSIS/ASSESSMENT

Methodological Approach

This Gender Assessment was developed using a mixed method approach combining: (i) desk review of national gender frameworks (PNG 2014, SND30, PNIA 2020–2030) and relevant SDG commitments; (ii) quantitative analysis of FODECC's producer registry, which shows that 37.7% of registered producers are women; (iii) field consultations conducted with cooperatives, including the womenled COOPAFERLOS[1] (November 2024), decentralised MINADER services (Nkongsamba missions, December 2023), and MFIs; and (iv) contributions from MINPROFF and gender experts during technical workshops.

This methodology ensures alignment with the GCF Gender Policy and provides the evidence base for the actions outlined in Part II.

[1] COOPAFERLOS is by far the largest and most representative women's cooperative located in the project areas. Furthermore it was the first cooperative to adhere massively to the FODECC Guichet system which explains why a high level of women already participate in the programme. Given the existing experience with the FODECC, the COOPAFERLOS members are very well positioned to identify issues and areas for improvement of the FODECC guichet system.

Alignment With Green Climate Fund Gender Policy and Purpose of This Assessment

In response to GCF requirements, this Gender Assessment has been expanded to ensure full alignment with the Green Climate Fund's Gender Policy and Action Plan (2020–2023). The purpose of this assessment is to establish a clear, evidence-based understanding of gender roles, inequalities, and structural barriers that shape women's participation in the cocoa and coffee sectors in Cameroon, and to identify targeted measures that enable equitable access to the project's climate-resilient support mechanisms.

Scope of the Assessment

The assessment covers all dimensions required under the GCF Gender Policy, including:• national gender equality commitments and policy frameworks (PNG, SND30, PNIA);• socioeconomic and sectorspecific gender inequalities affecting access to land, finance, information, and technology;• differentiated climate vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities of women and men;• gendered labour burdens, mobility constraints and time use patterns;• structural barriers affecting women's ability to benefit from deforestationfree valuechain transformation;• the situation of young women and vulnerable social groups, including Baka and Bagyeli communities.

Data Sources and Evidence Base

The assessment draws on: (i) national policies and statistics; (ii) FODECC's producer database (320.000 registered producers, of which 37.7% are women); (iii) field consultations with decentralised MINADER services and producer groups (Nkongsamba, Melong); and (iv) direct engagement with women-led cooperatives, including COOPAFERLOS. These sources provide a robust factual basis for identifying gender-differentiated barriers and opportunities.

Link to Gender Action Plan and Project Design

Findings from this assessment directly inform the Gender Action Plan (Part II), which outlines targeted measures to remove structural barriers to women's participation—such as adapted enrolment processes, gender-responsive outreach, digital and financial literacy, prioritisation mechanisms, and corrective actions if the 40–45% target for women's participation is not achieved. The Assessment therefore underpins the project's gender-responsive design and ensures compliance with GCF principles of non-discrimination, equitable access to climate finance, and empowerment of women in climate-resilient value chains.

1. Demographic and socio-economic context

Cameroon has a demographic profile characterised by an estimated population of 28.6 million in 2023, with a balanced gender distribution (50.3% women versus 49.7% men) according to INS-UNFPA projections. This population remains predominantly rural (51%), which is particularly important for the RACINE project, which operates in cocoa and coffee-producing areas. Women's fertility remains high, with a Total Fertility Rate of 5.1 children per woman, reflecting persistent challenges in family planning and women's empowerment.

Despite the government's efforts to reduce poverty and gender-based inequalities, Cameroon faces many structural challenges. With an HDI of 0.576, the country ranks 151st out of 191 countries ranked by the UNDP Human Development Report (2021/2022) and remains among the most unequal countries in the world. Its GINI index of 39.8 in 2018 illustrates this persistence of inequality. Even more revealing, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) of 0.565

and the Gender Development Index (GDI) of 0.885 highlight the extent of the loss of human development potentially due to the gap between the levels achieved by men and women, mainly in the dimensions of empowerment and economic status.

2. National strategic framework and international commitments

2.1. National policies and strategies

Cameroon has a substantial legal and policy arsenal for promoting gender equality. The National Development Strategy 2020-2030 (SND30) places gender issues at the centre of its interventions, particularly through Pillar 2 on human capital development and Pillar 3 on employment and economic integration. Action 4.5 of the Rural Sector Development Strategy (SDSR/PNIA 2020-2030) allocates 46% of the overall budget to actions specifically dedicated to women, young people and governance issues.

The National Gender Policy (PNG), adopted in 2014 and revised in 2021, defines seven strategic axes, including the reinforcement of women's contribution to socioeconomic development through insertion in productive circuits and equal access to employment and production factors. However, implementation suffers from chronic underfunding — budgets allocated to gender promotion in most ministries fall far short of the 30% requirement set by the PNG.

The MINEPAT Gender Situational Analysis (2025) confirms that MINEPAT's Programme 022 (Structural Transformation for Growth Acceleration) — the programme under which RACINE falls — has identified gender gaps in access to productive resources, credit, and markets as central constraints to the structural transformation of the cocoa-coffee value chain. The analysis provides disaggregated problem trees (Programme 022 arbre à problèmes) that directly inform the TOC linkages in Part II of this GAP.

2.2. Alignment with sustainable development goals

The RACINE project is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 13 and SDG 10.

on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Target 5.1, which aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, directly resonates with the structural constraints identified in the cocoa and coffee sectors. Target 5.a on equal access to economic resources, control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources is particularly relevant given that only 10% of Cameroonian women own land, compared to 90% of men.

SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth converges with the project's objectives through target 8.5, which aims to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people. This dimension is crucial in a context where 79.2% of women are underemployed, compared to 63% of men. SDG 13 on climate action incorporates an essential gender dimension, as the project aims to strengthen the resilience of rural women to climate shocks through the adoption of agroecological practices.

3. Situation of women in the economy and agriculture

3.1. General economic participation

Women play a leading role in agricultural production and the domestic economy in Cameroon, representing 71.6% of the informal agricultural sector and 56.3% of the total agricultural workforce. They contribute 60% of national food production. However, this substantial contribution is not reflected in equitable economic participation. In the labour market, women are less active than men (64% versus 74%) and disproportionately affected by unemployment and underemployment.

The workload of rural women constitutes a central vulnerability. Their working days are 1.5 to 3 times longer than those of men, with an average of 8.2 additional hours per week devoted to unpaid domestic work (MINEPAT Situational Analysis 2025 confirms 3.9 hours/day unpaid work vs. 1.8 for men). This excessive burden significantly limits their access to income-generating activities, training, and decision-making forums.

3.2. Structural constraints on access to resources

Despite a legal framework that theoretically facilitates equal land access (Ordinance 74/1 of 6 June 1974), traditional land tenure systems and the low economic power of rural women impede their access to and control over land. Only 10% of Cameroonian women own land (compared to 90% of men). This structural exclusion from land ownership cascades into limited access to credit — rural women find it difficult to obtain bank loans due to restrictive collateral requirements, repayment schedules incompatible with agricultural cash flows, and lack of financial literacy.

Information asymmetry further marginalises women. They are poorly informed about available financing windows, including FODECC services, leading to self-exclusion from mechanisms that do not formally require land titles. FODECC's producer window model, which waives title deed requirements, has proven effective in overcoming this specific barrier, as evidenced by women's 37.7% participation rate.

4. Specific analysis of the cocoa and coffee sectors

4.1. Baseline situation FODECC

FODECC data for October 2024 show that of 238,176 coffee and cocoa producers enrolled, 89,909 are women (37.7% of farm managers). This figure represents significant progress but remains below the project's target of 40-45%, requiring deliberate and sustained gender-responsive outreach and enrolment practices. In the cocoa and coffee sectors, women are numerous but predominantly occupy subsidiary roles. Agricultural work in cocoa plantations is additive to the food crops women typically manage, domestic responsibilities, and family care. The overlapping of agricultural calendars — cocoa harvest (June-December) coinciding with food crop season (March-June) — creates extreme time burdens for women, structurally limiting their ability to participate in training, cooperative meetings, and market activities.

According to a UNICEF survey in Cameroon, women contribute 74% of household income spent on improving daily life, while men contribute only 22%. This data reinforces the argument for their economic empowerment in cash crop sectors as a household welfare and food security lever.

5. Social inclusion of young people as a vulnerable target group

Young people aged 15 to 34 make up 34.7% of Cameroon's population, or approximately 7.4 million people, 52.3% of whom are girls. Despite a high literacy rate (78.2%), rural youth are for the most part socially and economically excluded. The broad unemployment rate is higher among young people aged 15-24 (10.3%) and 15-34 (8.9%) than among the population as a whole (5.7%). The informal sector (agricultural and non-agricultural) is the sector in which the vast majority of young people (92.0%) are employed, characterised by its precariousness and vulnerability.

In the coffee and cocoa sectors, young people are mainly employed as labourers. Very few are landowners or farm managers. However, high unemployment and the financing opportunities made available through the producer window are key factors encouraging young people to take over abandoned family plantations and attracting new young investors to the sector.

6. Causal Links Between Identified Problems and GAP Actions

The following table presents the causal chain connecting gender and social inclusion problems identified in Part I to the specific actions and outputs of the Gender Action Plan in Part II. This simplified Theory of Change ensures that each intervention is grounded in a diagnosed constraint, and that the logic of change is transparent and verifiable.

Problem identified (Part I)	Root cause	Expected change	GAP Response
Women's participation below 40-45% target (currently 37.7%)	Time constraints, limited mobility, enrolment not gender-responsive	Women = 40-45% of FODECC beneficiaries by Year 6	Output 2: Adapted enrolment, quotas, outreach
FODECC processes not gender-responsive	Gender not integrated in governance, procedures, HR	Gender mainstreamed in all FODECC procedures by Year 2	Output 1: Gender unit, audit, revised manuals
Women's limited financial literacy and MFI access	Low financial literacy; collateral requirements incompatible with women's situation	1,000 women trained in financial literacy and MFI navigation	Output 2, Act. 2.4: Financial literacy training
Youth excluded from sector as farm managers	No land, capital or technical support; youth treated as labourers	25% of new FODECC recruits are youth by Year 4	Output 3: Facilitation towards FODECC window
Baka/Bagyeli excluded by language and cultural barriers	Outreach not adapted; FPIC not systematised	Indigenous communities access FODECC with FPIC	Output 2, Act. 2.1/2.2: Adapted outreach, South/East
No sex/age-disaggregated M&E data	FODECC systems not configured for gender/age disaggregation	100% of FODECC indicators disaggregated by Year 1	Output 4: Gender-responsive M&E system

GBV/SEAH risks in project activities (field missions, power dynamics)	No SEAH risk identification or SEAH-responsive MGP at project level	SEAH risks mitigated; all complaints handled within 15 days	Output 5: SEAH register, SEAH-responsive MGP

7. SEAH risk screening and situational analysis

In line with the GCF SEAH Action Plan for GCF-Financed Activities (para. 21(a)) and the Revised Environmental and Social Policy, a screening of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) risks was undertaken at project level during the design stage. The screening builds on the risk typology established in MINEPAT's SEAH Action Plan (PLAN-SEAH, section I.1), which differentiates SEAH risks by type of activity, and on the vulnerable-group differentiation set out in Circular No. 000084/C/MINEPAT/SG/DAG of 18 March 2026 (section III), which identifies women, persons under 18 and persons with disabilities as groups requiring specific attention. Risks are accordingly differentiated by gender and by age across the five project regions.

Four SEAH risk categories specific to RACINE have been identified and are reflected in Output 5 (Activity 5.1): (a) power asymmetries in producer–agent interactions, notably enrolment discretion; (b) GBV risks during mixed-group field training and overnight missions; (c) transactional sex risks in value-chain financing contexts; and (d) risks of domestic violence escalation as women's economic independence increases.

Beyond these direct risks, and in accordance with paragraph 4.4.2(a) of the SEAH Action Plan, the screening also considered indirect, induced, long-term and cumulative SEAH risks along the cocoa and coffee value chains. These include: (i) indirect risks associated with actors not contracted by the project but interacting with beneficiaries (buyers, intermediaries, transporters, seasonal labour); (ii) induced risks linked to seasonal labour influx around post-harvest and processing infrastructure supported under Window 2, which may increase pressure on host communities; (iii) long-term risks associated with shifts in intra-household power dynamics resulting from women's increased income; and (iv) cumulative risks where several project interventions converge in the same locality. These risks fall primarily within the community sphere and are addressed through the community-level prevention, protection and redress measures described in Output 5 (Activities 5.2 and 5.3) and in the risk-and-mitigation matrix below.

Consistent with paragraph 4.4.2(b) of the SEAH Action Plan, the resulting risk categorisation is proportionate to the nature, scale and location of project activities: risk intensity varies across the three financing windows and the five regions, with higher vigilance applied to Window 1 enrolment processes and Window 2 infrastructure sites. The overall SEAH risk is assessed as moderate and manageable, on the strength of MINEPAT's binding institutional SEAH framework — SEAH Policy (Feb. 2026), SEAH Code of Conduct with its signed Statement of Honour, SEAH Action Plan, Circular No. 000084 and the distributed SEAH grievance mechanism — complemented by the project-level measures financed under Output 5.

8. SEAH risks and mitigation measures by sphere of responsibility

The table below consolidates the screening results into three spheres of responsibility, mapping for each sphere the main SEAH risks identified, the applicable mitigation measures and instruments, and the entities responsible for implementation and monitoring.

Sphere	Main SEAH risks identified	Mitigation measures and instruments	Responsibility and monitoring
MINEPAT (institutional sphere — covered individuals)	– SEAH risks involving MINEPAT staff, consultants and partners engaged in supervision of the project; – Risks of non-reporting due to hierarchical relationships.	– SEAH Policy (zero tolerance, victim-centred approach, confidentiality, presumption of innocence, protection against retaliation — POLI-SEAH §V); – SEAH Code of Conduct signed by all staff, with Statement of Honour; – Background verification at recruitment (criminal record extract — CIRC-SEAH §VI); – Mandatory training: induction at hiring, annual refresher, specialised modules (POLI-SEAH §VI.2); – Annual review of the SEAH framework (POLI-SEAH §XI.3).	– MINEPAT Gender Focal Point and IGEFS; – Institutional SEAH grievance mechanism (five reporting channels, POLI-SEAH §VII).
Project (UGP, FODECC, contractors and field workforce)	– The four RACINE-specific risk categories (a)–(d) identified at screening (power asymmetries, mixed-group training and missions, value-chain financing, domestic violence escalation); – Risk of contractor or sub-contractor non-compliance.	– SEAH contractual clauses in all FODECC-RACINE tendering documents and contracts (CIRC-NECS §IV; SEAH Code of Conduct §V Art. 16); – SEAH checks extended to all project recruitment; – 100% of project workforce trained on the SEAH Code of Conduct (Year 1), with annual refresher; – Project-level SEAH expert (first 3 months), will train the PMU and staff and provide initial support to the gender focal point to act as SEAH focal point; – Project complaints mechanism (confidential box, e-mail, hotline in all regions) articulated with the institutional MINEPAT mechanism; – SEAH Risk Register maintained and updated annually.	– UGP and FODECC Legal Officer; – SEAH Focal Point; – Half-yearly SEAH performance reporting to GCF (Output 5, Activity 5.4).
Beneficiaries and host communities	– Direct risks to beneficiaries in project interactions; – Indirect and cumulative risks along the value chain (non-contracted actors, seasonal labour influx near Window 2 infrastructure); – Barriers to reporting (distance, language, stigma,	– Pre-project and continuing awareness campaigns in the five regions, culturally appropriate and delivered in local languages (Activity 5.2); – Systematic information on the three-tier recourse system: project mechanism, MINEPAT institutional mechanism, GCF Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) (Activity 5.2); – Community-driven protection: trained community relays, women leaders and local mediators (Activity 5.3); – Survivor-centred redress pathway: medical care prioritised within 72 hours (POLI-SEAH §VIII.1.a), psychosocial support (§VIII.1.b), legal assistance (§VIII.1.c), referral to MINPROFF specialised services (§VIII.1.d);	– Community facilitators and trained relays; – MINPROFF partnership; – Disaggregated SEAH case data (sex, age, type, context) compiled in the SEAH register (Activity 5.4).

	fear of losing project benefits).	– Socio-economic reintegration support for survivors (Activity 5.3).	