



Terminal Evaluation of the UN Environment Project “A regional focus on sustainable timber management in the Congo Basin (GEF 3822)” (2011-2016)



Denis Ruysschaert

June 2019



Evaluation Office of UN Environment

Photos Credits:

Front cover and all pictures in the report: Denis Ruyschaert

@UN Environment/ (Denis Ruyschaert), UN Environment Evaluation Mission (2018)

This report has been prepared by an independent evaluation consultant and is a product of the Evaluation Office of UN Environment. The findings and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of Member States or the UN Environment Senior Management.

For further information on this report, please contact:

UN Environment Evaluation Office:

Email: eou@unep.org

Website: <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation>

(A regional focus on sustainable timber management in the Congo Basin)

(Project number: 3822)

(Date: 07/2018)

All rights reserved.

© (2018) UN Environment

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Terminal Evaluation was prepared for UN Environment by Denis Ruyschaert, as an independent consultant.

The evaluator would like to express its gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this evaluation, as listed in Annex II.

The reviewers would like to thank the project team, Ms Neeral Shah from the Evaluation Office and Mr Adamou Bouhari from UN Environment GEF for their contribution and collaboration throughout the Evaluation process and comments to the draft report. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to the Steering Committee (COMIFAC), the executing agency (WRI) and main sub-contracting partner RA

Special acknowledgement to Nzoyem Maffo from the Rainforest Alliance in Cameroon and Paulette Taraganzo from the Ministry of forestry and economics in Republic of Congo.

Finally, Thanks to Mercy Mwangi for her so necessary administrative support.

BRIEF CONSULTANT BIOGRAPHY

The consultant is sociologist (PhD in Public Policy) and agronomist (Masters in environment). He has over 20 years of technical and evaluation experience including for large, regional or global programmes over four continents (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Asia. This including the use of the TOC approach. He has a deep understanding of natural resources/forest management, having widely published in this area. He is a native French speaker as well as having excellent oral and written skills in English. He has good working experience and understanding of the UN system and specifically of the work of UN Environment. Back then, he coordinated the UN Environment flagship publication "UNEP and Civil Society: Natural Allies" and facilitated civil society participation into the work of the UN Environment.

Evaluation team

(Neeral Shah) – Evaluation Manager

(Mercy Mwangi) - Evaluation Administrative Officer

UN Environment

(Adamou Bouhari) – Project Manager

ABOUT THE EVALUATION

Joint Evaluation: No

Report Language(s): English.

Evaluation Type: Terminal Evaluation

Brief Description: This report is a terminal evaluation of a UN Environment-GEF project implemented between 2011 and 2015. The project's goal "to strengthen sustainable management of forest ecosystems of the Congo Basin as a contribution of globally relevant biodiversity and ecosystem services, maintaining a solid foundation for the region's sustainable development". The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UN Environment, the GEF and their executing partner UNDESA - UNFF and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

Key words: Climate Change; Congo Basin; Forest Management; Forest Financing; Ecosystem; GEF; Governance; Project Evaluation; Ecosystem Management; Terminal Evaluation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	3
About the evaluation	4
Table of contents	5
List of acronyms	7
Project identification table	9
Executive summary - English	10
Résumé exécutif - Français	16
I. Introduction.....	24
II. Evaluation Method	26
A. Using the TOC.....	26
B. Method and information access	26
C. Overcoming challenge in accessing information and ethics.....	28
III. The Project	29
A. Context.....	29
B. Objectives and components	29
C. Stakeholders	32
D. Project implementation structure and partners.....	34
E. Changes in design during implementation	35
F. Project financing	36
IV. Theory Of Change at evaluation	38
V. Evaluation Findings.....	43
A. Strategic Relevance.....	43
B. Quality of Project Design	46
C. Nature of the External Context	47
D. Effectiveness	48
E. Financial Management.....	58
F. Efficiency.....	62
G. Monitoring and Reporting	63
H. Sustainability.....	66
I. Factors Affecting Performance	69
VI. Conclusions and Recommendations.....	77
A. Conclusions	77
B. Lessons learnt from project experiences.....	79
C. Recommendations	81
D. Summary of project findings and ratings.....	83
Annex I. Response to stakeholder comments	92
Annex II. RPSC’s objectives, expected results and outputs	131
Annex III. Project budget and expenditures	133
Annex IV. People consulted during the Terminal Review	134
Annex V. Key documents consulted.....	136

Annex VI.	Brief CV of the evaluator.....	139
Annex VII.	Evaluation TORs (without annexes).....	141
Annex VIII.	Quality assessment of the terminal EVALUATION report	160
Annex IX.	Logical framework and reconstructed theory of change	169

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFDB	African Development Bank
CAR	Central African Republic
CB	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBSP	Congo Basin Strategic Program (Strategic Program for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIRAD	Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COMIFAC	Commission des Forêts d' Afrique Centrale (Central African Forest Commission)
DFID	Department for International Development from the United Kingdom
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EU	European Union
FAO	Food Agriculture Organization
FLEGT VPA	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement
FMO	Fund Management Officer
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
FMU	Forest Management Unit
IRD	Institut de recherche pour le développement
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PDQ	Project Design Quality
POW	Programme of Work
PRC	Project Review Committee
ProDoc	Project Document
RA	Rainforest alliance
REDD+	Reduction Emission from Deforestation and forest Degradation
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
ToC	Theory of Change
ToRs	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme (previous name of UN Environment)
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WRI	World Resource Institute
WWF	World Wild Fund

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Table 1: Project summary

UN Environment GEF ID:	3822		
Implementing Agency:	UN Environment	Executing Agency	World Resources Institute
Sub-programme:	Climate Change, Ecosystem Management, Governance	Expected Accomplishment(s):	EM (c) CC (a and c)
UN Environment approval date:	August 2011	Programme of Work Output(s):	MTS 2010 – 2013 POW 2010 – 2011 and 2012 – 2013.
GEF approval date:	26 July 2011	Project type:	Full size project
GEF Operational Programme:	GEF-4	Focal areas: GEF Strategic Priority:	Biodiversity, Climate Change, Sustainable Forest Management BD-SO2 (SP 4 & 5) and SFM/REDD-SO1
Expected start date:	September 2011	Actual start date:	October 2011
Planned completion date:	August 2015	Actual completion date:	February 2016
Planned project budget at approval:	US\$16,918,748	Actual total expenditures reported as of [date]:	US\$8,151.814
GEF grant allocation:	US\$3,075,681	GEF grant expenditures reported as of [date]:	US\$3,075.681
Planned Extra-Budgetary Financing:	US\$13,843.067	Secured Extra-Budgetary Financing:	US\$5,076.133
GEF grant allocation	US\$100,000	Project Preparation Grant – co-financing	US\$146,785
First disbursement:	29 September 2011	Date of financial closure:	February 2016
No. of revisions:	1	Date of last revision:	March 2014
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	3	Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:	Last: 10/2015 First: 02/2013
Mid-term Review (planned date):	November 2013	Mid-term Review (actual date):	March 2014
Terminal Review (planned date):	July 2017	Terminal Review (actual date):	December 2017 – July 2018
Coverage - Countries:	Cameroon Central African Republic Democratic Republic of Congo Equatorial Guinea Gabon Republic of Congo	Coverage - Region:	Central Africa
Dates of previous project phases:	No dates	Status of future project phases:	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - ENGLISH

Project background

1. Implemented between September 2011 and August 2015, the United Nations Environment Programme/Global Environmental Facility project “a regional focus on sustainable timber management in the Congo Basin” covered six countries in Central Africa: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Republic of Congo.

2. The project’s objective was “To promote a harmonized regional approach to the sustainable management of production forests in the Congo Basin”. The project identified three interventions: the formulation of instruments to tackle illegal logging in a harmonized manner, the promotion of market and fiscal incentives, and the improvement of environmental governance. To fulfil this objective, the project undertook activities at regional level in the form of policy assessments and pilot activities in three countries: Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea and Republic of Congo. Due to the civil war, activities in Central African Republic were suspended and reallocated to Cameroon.

3. The project was part of the larger Global Environment Facility-4 Trust Fund “Strategic Program for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin”, a US\$ 200 Million programme implemented by five other multilateral agencies: African Development Bank, Food Agriculture Organization, United Nations Development Programme, and The World Bank. This programme sought to strengthen sustainable management of forest ecosystems of the Congo Basin as a contribution to the conservation of the globally relevant biodiversity and ecosystems.

4. The project had an initial pledge budget of close to US\$ 17 Million made up of US\$ 3 Million from a secured Global Environment Facility grant and US\$ 14 Million from pledged co-financing. World Resource Institute was the executing agency with the Rainforest Alliance as the sub-contracted regional partner. In addition, there were sub-contracted national partners in each pilot country: Organisation pour le Développement Environnemental in Central African Republic; le Ministère de développement durable de l’économie forestière et de l’environnement associated with the Collège d’enseignement technique mixte 12 août 1065 in Congo Republic; and Amigos de la Naturaleza y del Desarrollo de Guinea Ecuatorial in Equatorial Guinea.

This evaluation

5. The Terminal Evaluation was undertaken to assess the project performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and to evaluate the achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impacts, actual and potential, including their sustainability. As such, it had two primary goals: 1) to provide evidence of the results to meet accountability requirements; and 2) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among project partners and implementing agencies from the Global Environment Facility.

6. The evaluation took place between December 2017 and September 2018. This long period was due to the challenges to access information more than two years after project completion. These difficulties were, however, overcome through careful investigation and the valuable support from project partners especially the executing agency and sub-contracting partners.

7. The evaluation used the reconstructed Theory of Change from the logical framework of the project. The use of the Theory of Change means the access to information regarding the intervention logic of main stakeholders, finding the drivers and assumptions linked to causal pathways and assessing the project interventions where change had occurred.

8. The evaluation sources included a desk review of project documents, analysis of existing literature on forest governance in the Congo basin and in-depths interviews (face-to-face, by Skype, and by email) with the United Nations Environment, the executing agency, the partners, the main beneficiaries and the organisations that had a direct stake in the project's successful implementation (governmental agencies, non-governmental organisations, private firms, donors, multilateral agencies, research centres). The consultant visited the pilot projects in Republic of Congo and in Cameroon from the end of February to early March 2018. Those pilot projects were selected based on the ability to analyse changes on the ground and meet a wide range of different stakeholders in the most efficient way.

Key findings

9. The overall evaluation rating is 'Unsatisfactory'. There is evidence of substantive work having been carried out under the project, however, the rating is limited by two main factors:

- 1) The project design and its associated results framework were over-ambitious given the timeframe, secured funding and the complexity of the issue being addressed. Evaluations can only assess achievements against agreed plans.
- 2) Recommendations from the Mid Term Review were adopted, specifically a change in the implementation structure and some changes to outputs. Performance improved noticeably after this change, which gave Rainforest Alliance a stronger role on the ground. However, there was insufficient time left to the end of the project for this work to redeem the overall project performance rating.

10. The overall project performance rating is calculated as a weighted average from the evaluation of the different criteria (see Table 8 in the main report). Given the wide range of ratings from satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory, the overall project needs to be understood in its entirety, from its start to its completion with a focus on some key criteria detailed below.

A. Strategic relevance

11. Project is strategically very relevant for UN Environment and GEF. It was somewhat relevant for the region (Commission des forêts d'Afrique Centrale), and its practical relevance for national strategies (on climate and biodiversity) A key strategic aspect is that the project omitted the fundamental stakeholders (large firms, politicians, administration and beneficiaries). Finally, the project was not particularly relevant with regards to UN Environment's efforts towards enhancing the South-South Cooperation and Bali strategic plan on technology transfer.

12. The project contributed to the Central African Forest Commission at regional level, at a key moment while redefining their 2015-2025 convergence plan. Beyond that, the project did not contribute to, nor cooperate substantively with, the growing list of actors working on similar issues, including the multilateral implementing agencies from the Global Environment Facility-4.

B. Effectiveness

13. The initial project design was ambitious and had overlooked fundamental issues, such as the exact beneficiaries and the resources needed to monitor, communicate and cooperate. In addition, it underestimated the challenging context in which the project was operating. It also did not address some key assumptions and drivers. At the national level, it would have been better to engage with local administration on enforcement, engage with political elites, as well as partnering with logging firms. At the international level, with the global logging market shifting towards Asia there was less demand for products from sustainable sources, therefore Asian actors should have been involved (governments, firms). Finally, the initial project was not geared towards respect of human rights, inclusion of indigenous peoples, or gender equity. Despite these issues gaining ground at United Nations Environment Programme, they were not properly addressed during the project implementation¹. Finally, the initial project did not address most of the concerns from the UN Environment Project Review Committee and did not properly identify the main actors to engage with prior to the project's implementations (including communities, logging firms, political or administrative elites).

14. Despite these initial challenges, executing partners worked diligently to achieve the project outputs. By implementing the Mid-Term Review recommendations, partners simplified some outputs, strengthened the role of Rainforest Alliance at regional level and better involved the Central African Forest Commission (Commission des Forêts d' Afrique Centrale) Secretariat. They also established a tailor-made monitoring system with a dedicated staff and budget. Combined with a supportive supervision and excellent communication between project and finance managers, those tools and measures allowed the executing partners to fully achieve 5 outputs (5 highly satisfactory) within the project time-frame (August 2015). These outputs are directly linked to studies or training in Forest Stewardship Council certification where Rainforest Alliance had a strong expertise, but they are not the main ones to affect outcomes and there was no evidence of a strong ownership of these outputs by beneficiaries and their institutions. In addition, the delivery of 11 outputs remained low (5 moderately unsatisfactory, 5 unsatisfactory and 1 highly unsatisfactory). In conclusion, the delivery of outputs was rated Unsatisfactory, because only 31% of the outputs were fully delivered; most of the outputs delivered that would affect the outcomes were delivered late/of little utility; and there was a low user ownership.

15. It was even more challenging to achieve direct outcomes overall and the likelihood of impact in the long term. Despite partners' best efforts, some of the initial structural conceptual flaws could not be properly addressed. Almost no key stakeholders (i.e. local administration, politicians, representative of indigenous networks or large-scale logging firms) were involved in the project implementation or its governance; there were no real action to communicate or raise awareness; and there was little activity to create shared knowledge and build relationships with other entities. As a result, the achievement of direct outcomes is rated Highly Unsatisfactory (HU), and the overall impact of the project on the Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin is Highly Unlikely (HU).

¹ Gender was mainstreamed into UN Environment MTS from 2010 and the PRC request to include gender equity, this was not done during the project. In addition, the Evaluation Office of UN Environment has incorporated this criteria in assessments of projects in the TORs since 2011.

16. These issues had also a negative financial impact with the project only able to secure US\$ 5 Million out of US\$ 14 Million of the pledge funds with most of it coming from Rainforest Alliance and World Resource Institute.

C. Sustainability

17. Sustainability of the project remained an open issue. The socio- political, financial and institutional sustainability conditions were not yet fulfilled. Countries did not provide additional funds from their own budget to sustain the actions, the Central African Forest Commission remained structurally powerless to impose policies on member states and pilot activities could not establish reliable mechanisms to be financially or institutionally sustained.

D. Efficiency

18. The initial project implementation set up was complicated with several layers of technical and financial responsibilities in six different countries entailing a waste of resources on international travel, delaying decision-making, and generating a high carbon footprint. Project partners made considerable efforts to improve project cost effectiveness after the Mid-Term Review, by strengthening the role of Rainforest Alliance at regional level and maintaining an extremely good collaboration between institutions. However, the initial legal arrangements remained the same and as such too much of the funds were spent in the project administration, with field activities remaining structurally underfunded with only US\$ 669,252 (or 4% of US\$ 16,918,748) of the overall pledged funds being used for pilot activities at local or national level. This percentage spent on pilot activities increases to 8% if the GEF grant and secured co-finance (US\$5,106,000) is considered and 22% if the GEF grant only (US\$3,075,681) is considered.

19. To conclude, the main project partners (RA/WRI) managed the criteria they were responsible for rather well: they scored between Unsatisfactory and Satisfactory (project implementation). This was an achievement considering the challenging initial situation, the lack of adequate supervision from UN Environment and a rather difficult context in the forest sector. Despite this good work, the project was not able to achieve the direct outcomes and the likelihood of impact is rated Highly Unlikely. Some issues such as pilot project, gender, engagement with marginalized peoples, required a better allocation of time/budget within the project and others – communication and outreach – had been omitted in the project design. If the role of RA/WRI can be rated as moderately satisfactory overall, the role of the UN Environment as Implementing Agency during the project was not up to par. The project document did not mention the role of the UN Environment. The recommendations from the Project Review Committee were hardly incorporated. The different UN Environment sections did not know about this project (despite the fact that GRASP or UN-REDD+ for example had a particular interest in it). The only recommendation from the Mid-Term Review that was addressed to the UN Environment was not fulfilled (elaboration of a MOU between UN Environment and COMIFAC to address political elite) and the criteria where UN Environment could have contributed with its convening power (stakeholder participation and cooperation) and world outreach capacity (communication) were rated Unsatisfactory. Finally, UN Environment did not raise the capacity (or understanding) of the Executing agency on how to access GEF funds. As a result, it took one year and four months for WRI to get the GEF grant at the start of the project, which had a dire impact on executing the project at a critical early stage.

Lessons Learned

20. **Lesson 1.** Ensure that Executing Agency and its partners understand UN Environment expectations in the implementation of projects. There is a strong need to tighten the UN Environment supervision over projects so that they stay focused and are executed in line with UN Environment policies and practices (e.g. stakeholder engagement, cooperation, communication, gender, indigenous peoples).
21. **Lesson 2.** Build on already functioning projects for upscaling. When it is possible, projects should 1) build on existing local initiatives and support their uptake and replication at national level; 2) support conducive national process to upscale the piloted approaches at the regional level.
22. **Lesson 3.** Stay focused on a specific policy area. There is a need to identify a specific policy area and engage more closely with the respective decision makers, administration and the private sector to strengthen the link between local results (pilots) and national/regional level decision making.
23. **Lesson 4.** Ensure that the key stakeholders are identified and engaged throughout the project cycle. Project design needs to have a well thought through theory of change, and roles and responsibilities of the identified stakeholders need to be carefully considered. At the project implementation stage, these stakeholders need to be adequately engaged.
24. **Lesson 5.** Increase transparency and collaboration among all actors implementing the project. The Task and Portfolio Managers of Global Environment Fund-funded projects should carefully assess and verify the information presented in Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) and maintain close communication with the executing partners to be able to form a realistic picture of the project progress and to be able to take corrective measures.
25. **Lesson 6.** Streamline project management layers. Project design needs to be carefully reviewed also from the perspective of cost-effectiveness, this includes streamlining project management layers and appropriate selection of partners.
26. **Lesson 7.** Ensure that communication is a central aspect of a project. Communicating to the wider audience is fundamental to develop understanding, establish trust, foster partnerships, and ultimately ensure that the project is supported in the wider society and its results are shared.
27. **Lesson 8.** Allocate sufficient funds for evaluations (mid term and terminal). Budget for the Terminal Evaluations needs to be adapted to the worst case scenarios, such as the complexity of projects, the lack of support from the Task Manager, and the difficulties in access to information.

Recommendations

28. **Recommendation 1.** Clarify project financial information. The Terminal Evaluations recommends the Ecosystems Division ensures that all of the required financial information is provided by the Executing Agency, and especially when the audit findings mention a possibility of mismanagement of funds, is communicated and discussed within the Division's management and a formal management response is provided by the Division to the Executing Agency.
29. **Recommendation 2.** Analysis of the project shortcomings. The Terminal Evaluations recommends that the findings of the terminal evaluation are discussed by the Ecosystem

Division with a view of clarifying Divisional-level processes and practices which might have contributed to the shortcomings of this project.

30. Recommendation 3. Make use of existing knowledge exchange/best practice platforms within UN Environment to discuss projects relating to forestry and forest management. The TE recommends to make use of existing knowledge exchange/ best practice platforms within UN Environment to discuss projects relating to forestry and forest management. This could, for example, be established through the Ecosystem Management and /or Climate Change Sub-programme coordination function.

31. Recommendation 4. Ensure that projects implemented in the Congo Basin promote, not impede, gender equity and equality. UN Environment, through the Ecosystems Division and the Ecosystem Management Sub-programme Coordinator, should develop a mechanism which ensures that any project implemented in the Congo Basin fully promotes gender equity and equality. This includes, 1) ensuring that Executing Agencies and other project partners have a proper gender policy compatible with the UN Environment Gender Policy before project approval; 2) providing guidance to project partners on what it practically means to mainstream gender into project activities; 3) ensuring the project has a specific budget line to undertake activities promoting gender equity and equality; and 4) ensuring a gender balanced representation in the project governance.

32. Recommendation 5. Ensure that projects implemented in the Congo Basin include, not exclude, indigenous communities. UN Environment, through the Ecosystems Division and the Ecosystem Management Sub-programme Coordinator, should develop a mechanism which ensures that any project implemented in the Congo Basin 1) includes representatives of indigenous peoples in the project governance; and 2) ensures that the project activities support the inclusion of indigenous communities, with a specific budget line attached to these activities.

RESUME EXECUTIF - FRANCAIS

Contexte du projet

33. Mis en œuvre entre septembre 2011 et août 2015 par le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement, le projet « Focus Régional sur la Gestion Durable du bois des forêts du Bassin du Congo » a couvert six pays d'Afrique centrale : le Cameroun, la République centrafricaine, la République démocratique du Congo, la Guinée équatoriale, le Gabon et la République du Congo.

34. L'objectif du projet consistait à « promouvoir une approche harmonisée de la gestion durable des forêts de production (de bois) dans le bassin du Congo ». Le projet a identifié trois domaines d'intervention : la formulation d'instruments pour s'attaquer au problème de l'abattage de bois illégal d'une manière harmonisée, la promotion d'incitations fiscales et de marché et l'amélioration de la gouvernance environnementale. Pour remplir son objectif, le projet a entrepris des initiatives sous forme d'évaluations de politiques au niveau régional et d'activités pilotes dans trois pays : la République centrafricaine, la Guinée équatoriale et la République du Congo. En raison de la guerre civile en République centrafricaine, les activités furent suspendues dans ce pays et réallouées au Cameroun.

35. Le projet faisait partie d'un programme plus large du Trust Fund du Fonds pour l'environnement mondial-4 appelé « Programme stratégique pour la gestion durable des forêts dans le Bassin du Congo ». Doté de 200 Million US\$, ce programme est mis en œuvre par cinq institutions multilatérales, à savoir : le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement, la Banque Africaine de Développement, l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture, l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour le développement et La Banque Mondiale. Ce programme cherchait à renforcer la gestion durable des écosystèmes forestiers du Bassin du Congo comme une contribution à la conservation de la biodiversité et des écosystèmes d'importance mondiale.

36. Les fonds pour le projet s'élevaient à près de 17 millions US\$, dont 3 Million US\$ assurés par une donation du Fonds pour l'Environnement mondial et 14 millions de cofinancements promis. Le World Resource Institute (WRI) était l'agence d'exécution, avec le Rainforest Alliance comme partenaires sous-traitant au niveau régional. Dans chaque pays pilotes, il y avait aussi des partenaires sous-traitants : l'Organisation pour le Développement Environnemental en République centrafricaine, le Ministère de développement durable de l'économie forestière et de l'environnement associé au Collège d'enseignement technique mixte 12 août 1065 en République du Congo et les Amigos de la Naturaleza y del Desarrollo de Guinea Ecuatorial en Guinée équatoriale.

Cette évaluation

37. Cette Evaluation Terminale a été entreprise afin d'apprécier la performance du projet en termes de pertinence, d'efficacité et d'efficience, ainsi que d'évaluer la concrétisation des résultats et la probabilité d'impacts, effectifs et potentiels,

incluant leur durabilité. En tant que telle, l'évaluation à deux objectifs prioritaires : 1) Donner des évidences de résultats pour satisfaire aux obligations de rendre des comptes et 2) Promouvoir des améliorations opérationnelles, l'apprentissage et le partage des connaissances à travers les résultats et les leçons apprises au bénéfice des partenaires du projet et des agences multilatérales de mise en œuvre Fonds pour l'environnement mondial.

38. L'évaluation s'est déroulée entre décembre 2017 et septembre 2018. Cette longue période s'explique par le défi qu'a constituée d'accéder à l'information plus de deux années après la fin du projet. Les difficultés ont cependant pu être surmontées par une enquête approfondie et le soutien précieux des partenaires, en particulier ceux de l'agence d'exécution et de ses sous-traitants.

39. L'évaluation a utilisé la Théorie du changement reconstituée à partir du cadre logique du projet. L'utilisation de la Théorie du changement signifie d'accéder à la logique d'intervention des principales parties prenantes, trouver les facteurs déterminants et les hypothèses à remplir tout au long du parcours causal de la logique d'intervention, et évaluer les interventions du projet là où les changements se sont produits.

40. Les sources d'information ont inclus les documents du projet, les publications existantes sur la gouvernance forestière dans le Bassin du Congo et des entretiens approfondis (Face-à-face, Skype, et E-Mails) avec les parties prenantes : des personnes du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement, de l'agence d'exécution, des partenaires sous-traitants, des principaux bénéficiaires et des parties prenantes dans le succès de ce projet (agences gouvernementales, organisations non-gouvernementales, entreprises privées donneurs, agences multilatérales, centres de recherches). Le consultant a visité les projets pilotes en République du Congo et au Cameroun entre la fin février et le début mars 2018. Les projets ont été sélectionnés pour la possibilité d'y analyser les changements sur le terrain et de rencontrer une grande diversité de parties prenantes de manière la plus efficace possible.

Les résultats clefs

41. L'Évaluation note le projet globalement « Insatisfaisant » Il y a des évidences qu'un travail substantiel a été entrepris pour mener ce projet. Cependant, la note est limitée pour deux facteurs principaux :

- 1) La conception du projet et le cadre des résultats associés étaient trop ambitieux considérant le temps du projet, les fonds sécurisés et la complexité de la problématique à résoudre. Les Évaluations peuvent seulement évaluer des réalisations par rapport à des plans approuvés.
- 2) Les recommandations de la Revue à Mis Parcours furent adoptées, en particulier un changement dans la structure de mise en œuvre et quelques changements dans les outputs. La performance s'est améliorée notablement après ces changements, qui renforcèrent le rôle de Rainforest Alliance sur le terrain. Cependant, il ne restait

pas assez de temps jusqu'à la fin du projet pour que ce travail puisse améliorer la note de performance globale du projet.

42. La note globale du projet est calculée comme un score moyen pondéré de différents critères (voir Table 8 dans le rapport principal). Etant donné la grande disparité des notations qui vont de satisfaisant à hautement insatisfaisant, le projet global doit se comprendre dans son histoire, du début jusqu'à son achèvement en mettant l'accent sur certaines critères clefs détaillés ci-dessous.

A. Importance stratégique

43. Le projet stratégiquement est très pertinent pour le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement et le Fonds pour l'environnement mondial. Il est aussi quelque peu pertinent au niveau régional (pour la Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale) et a une relevance pratique pour les stratégies nationales (sur le climat et la biodiversité). Un aspect stratégique clef est que ce projet omet les parties prenantes fondamentales (grandes entreprises, politiciens, administrations et bénéficiaires) Enfin, le projet n'est pas particulièrement pertinent en ce qui concerne les efforts du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement visant à renforcer la coopération Sud-Sud et à mettre en œuvre le plan stratégique de Bali sur les transferts technologiques.

44. Le projet contribua à la Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale à un moment clef alors de la redéfinition son plan de convergence 2015-2025. A part cela, le projet n'a ni contribué, ni coopéré substantiellement avec la liste grandissante des acteurs travaillant sur des questions similaires, incluant les agences multilatérales de mise en œuvre du Fonds pour l'environnement mondial-4.

B. Efficacité

45. La conception du projet initial était trop ambitieuse et avait négligé des questions clefs, comme la nature exacte des bénéficiaires et les ressources nécessaires pour suivre, communiquer et coopérer. De plus, il avait sous-estimé le contexte difficile dans lequel le projet devait opérer. De même, il ne tenait pas compte d'hypothèses clefs à remplir et de facteurs déterminants pour le succès. A ce titre, au niveau national, il aurait été judicieux d'impliquer l'administration locale pour appliquer le droit, travailler avec l'élite politique et s'associer avec les exploitants forestiers. Quant au niveau international, avec le centre de gravité du marché mondial du bois se déplaçant vers l'Asie, il y avait moins de demande pour des produits de sources durables ; donc il aurait été nécessaire d'impliquer les acteurs asiatiques (Gouvernement, entreprises). Enfin, le projet initial éludait les aspects liés au respect des droits humains, l'inclusion des peuples autochtones et l'égalité de genre. En dépit du fait que ces sujets gagnaient du terrain au sein du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement, ils n'ont jamais été correctement traités lors de la mise en œuvre du projet. Ce projet initial omettait aussi la plupart des réservations émises par le Project Review Committee (organe du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement) n'a pas réalisé une identification correcte de la plupart des acteurs auquel s'associer lors de la mise en œuvre du projet (incluant les communautés, les exploitations forestières, les élites politiques or administratives).

46. En dépit des difficultés initiales, les partenaires exécutants le projet ont travaillé diligemment pour atteindre les outputs. En mettant en œuvre les recommandations de la Revue à mi-parcours, les partenaires ont simplifié certains outputs, ont renforcé le rôle de Rainforest Alliance au niveau régional et ont amélioré la participation du Secrétariat de la Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale. Ils ont aussi élaboré un système de suivi sur mesure avec du staff et un budget. Combiné avec une supervision d'appui et une excellente communication entre la partie technique et financière, ces moyens et mesures ont permis aux partenaires exécutants de remplir totalement 5 outputs (Hautement satisfaisant) dans le temps imparti au projet, c'est-à-dire pour août 2015. Ces outputs sont directement liés aux études ou aux formations en certification Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) pour lesquelles World Resource Institute et Rainforest Alliance avaient une expertise solide, mais ils ne sont pas les outputs principaux pour atteindre les résultats et il n'y a pas d'évidence d'une réelle appropriation de ces outputs par les bénéficiaires et leurs institutions. De plus, la réalisation de 11 des outputs est restée faible (5 modérément insatisfaisants, 5 insatisfaisants et 1 très insatisfaisant). En conclusion, la réalisation des outputs est notée Insatisfaisante, car seulement 31% des outputs ont été entièrement finalisés, la plupart des outputs qui ont un impact significatif sur les résultats sont de qualités discutables (en retard, peu d'utilités), les bénéficiaires n'ont montré que peu d'appropriation de ces outputs.

47. Il était encore plus difficile d'obtenir des résultats directs globaux et un impact dans le long terme. En dépit des meilleurs efforts des partenaires, quelques-uns des défauts structurels initiaux n'ont pas pu être proprement traités. Presqu'aucune partie prenante clef (ex. administration locale, politiciens, représentants de réseaux des peuples indigènes ou des concessionnaires forestiers à large échelle) n'ont été impliqués dans la mise en œuvre du projet ou dans sa gouvernance ; il n'a eu aucune action réelle pour communiquer ou pour sensibiliser ; et il n'y a eu que très peu d'activités pour créer du savoir partagé et pour construire des relations avec d'autres entités. En conséquence, le direct outcomes est noté Très insatisfaisant, et l'impact global du projet sur la gestion forestière durable du Bassin du Congo est Hautement improbable.

48. Ces défauts structurels ont aussi eu un impact négatif sur le projet, puisqu'il n'a pu sécuriser que 5 millions US\$ sur les 14 millions promis, sachant qu'en plus cet argent sécurisé provient essentiellement de Rainforest Alliance et World Resource Institute.

C. Durabilité

49. La durabilité du projet est restée problématique. Les conditions de la durabilité sociale, politique, financière et institutionnelle n'ont pas été remplies. Les pays n'ont pas donné de fonds additionnels provenant de leur propre budget pour continuer les actions ; la Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale est restée structurellement incapable d'imposer des politiques sur ses états membres ; enfin, les activités pilotes n'ont pas établi de mécanismes fiables pour pouvoir perdurer financièrement ou institutionnellement.

D. Partenariats stratégiques

50. Le projet a contribué au travail de la Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale au niveau régional à un moment crucial où elle redéfinissait son plan de Convergence pour la période 2015-2025. Pour autant, le projet n'a ni contribué, ni coopéré avec la liste grandissante des acteurs travaillant sur les sujets similaires, en particulier les agences multilatérales de mise en œuvre du Fonds pour l'environnement mondial.

E. Efficience

51. La configuration initiale était très compliquée, avec plusieurs niveaux de responsabilité technique et financière dans six pays différents, entraînant un gaspillage des ressources alloués à des voyages internationaux, une accumulation de retard dans le processus de décision et la génération d'une empreinte carbone considérable. Les partenaires entreprirent des efforts considérables pour améliorer l'efficacité après la revue à mi-parcours, en renforçant le rôle de Rainforest Alliance au niveau régional et en maintenant une extrêmement bonne collaboration entre eux. Cependant, les arrangements légaux initiaux demeurèrent les mêmes et, en tant que tel, trop d'argent fut dépensé dans l'administration du projet, avec les activités de terrain restant structurellement sous-financées avec seulement 669,252 US\$ (soit 4% des 16,918,748US\$ du total des fonds promis) effectivement alloués pour des activités de terrain au niveau local ou national. En se limitant à la donation du Fonds pour l'environnement mondial (US\$3,075,681), le chiffre estimé est d'environ 22% dépensé pour des activités de terrain, et considérant le cofinancement sécurisé (financier ou en nature, soit US\$5,106,000) et la donation du Fonds pour l'environnement mondial, ce chiffre s'élève alors à 8%.

52. Pour conclure, les partenaires principaux du projet (RA/WRI) ont géré plutôt bien les critères pour lesquels ils étaient directement responsables : ils ont obtenu des scores entre Non-satisfaisant et Satisfaisant. Ceci constitue plutôt une réussite considérant la situation initiale complexe, le manque de supervision du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement et le contexte difficile du secteur forestier. Mais, en dépit de leur travail sérieux, le projet n'a pas été capable d'obtenir les résultats directs et la probabilité d'impact est notée Hautement improbable. Quelques sujets clés (comme les projets pilotes, le genre ou l'engagement avec les personnes marginalisées) demandaient une meilleure allocation en temps et en budget et d'autres sujets (communication et diffusion au public) avaient été omis dans le projet initial. Si le rôle des partenaires de mise en œuvre (RA/WRI) peut être évalué globalement modérément satisfaisant, le rôle du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement comme agence d'Exécution au cours de ce projet laisse à désirer. Le document de projet ne mentionnait pas le rôle du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement. Les recommandations du Project Review Committee ont été incorporées marginalement. Les différentes sections du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement ne connaissaient pas ce projet en dépit du fait que GRASP ou UN-REDD+, par exemple, avait un intérêt marqué pour le sujet. La seule recommandation de l'Évaluation à mi-parcours concernant le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement n'a pas été honorée.

(l'élaboration d'un Mémoire d'Understanding entre l'ONU Environnement et la COMIFAC pour se préoccuper de l'élite politique). Les critères pour lesquels le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement pourrait avoir contribué avec son pouvoir rassembleur (participation and coopération des parties prenantes) et sa capacité mondiale de diffusion (communication) ont été évalués Non satisfaisants. Enfin, le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement n'a pas amélioré les capacités (ou la compréhension) de l'Agence d'exécution sur la manière d'accéder à la donation du Fonds pour l'environnement mondial. En conséquence, il a fallu un an et quatre mois à WRI pour accéder à la donation du Fonds pour l'environnement mondial, ce qui a eu un impact catastrophique sur l'exécution du projet dans la phase critique de démarrage.

Leçons apprises

53. Leçon 1. S'assurer que l'Agence d'Exécution et ses partenaires comprennent les exigences du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement lors de la mise en œuvre des projets. Il y a un besoin fort que le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement resserre sa supervision sur les projets afin qu'ils restent ciblés et soient exécutés en suivant les politiques et les pratiques du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement (par exemple sur l'engagement des parties prenantes, la coopération, la communication, le genre, les peuples indigènes).

54. Leçon 2. Construire sur des projets déjà fonctionnels pour les transposer à plus grande échelle. Lorsque c'est possible, les projets devraient 1) Construire sur les initiatives locales existantes et soutenir leur adoption et leur réplication au niveau national ; 2) soutenir les processus nationaux conductifs pour transposer des approches pilotes au niveau régional.

55. Leçon 3. Rester ciblé dans un domaine politique précis. Il y a un besoin de déterminer un domaine politique clair d'intervention et de s'impliquer au plus proche avec les donneurs d'ordres, l'administration et le secteur privé. Cette approche a comme but de resserrer le lien entre les résultats locaux (pilotes) et les niveaux de prise de décision au niveau national/régional.

56. Leçon 4. S'assurer que les parties prenantes clés sont identifiées et engagées tout au long du cycle de projet. L'élaboration de projet doit comporter une Théorie du changement bien pensée, avec les rôles et les responsabilités des parties prenantes murement réfléchis. A l'étape de mise en œuvre, les parties prenantes doivent être adéquatement impliqués.

57. Leçon 5. Accroître la transparence et la collaboration entre tous les acteurs mettant en œuvre le projet. Les Task and Portfolio Managers des projets financés par le Fonds pour l'environnement mondial devraient évaluer soigneusement et vérifier l'information présentée dans les *Project Implementation Reviews* (PIRs) et maintenir une communication étroite avec les partenaires d'exécution pour être capable d'établir un portrait réaliste des progrès du projet et pour être capable de prendre les mesures correctives.

58. Leçon 6. Rationaliser les niveaux hiérarchiques de la conduite de projet. La conception du projet doit être soigneusement examinée de la perspective de son rapport coût-efficacité, ceci inclut rationaliser les niveaux hiérarchiques de la conduite projet et sélectionner les partenaires de manière appropriée.

59. Leçon 7. S'assurer que la communication est un aspect central du projet. Communiquer au grand public est fondamental pour développer la compréhension, établir la confiance, favoriser les partenariats, s'assurer que le projet soit soutenu par la société en général et que les résultats soient partagés.

60. Leçon 8. Etablir un budget adéquat pour les Evaluations Terminales. Le budget pour les Evaluation Terminales doit être adapté au pire scénario, tel que les projets complexes, le manque de soutien des organisations évaluées et l'accès difficile à l'information.

Recommandations

61. Recommandation 1. Clarifier l'information financière. Les Evaluateurs terminaux recommandent que la Division des Ecosystèmes s'assure que toute l'information financière est donnée par l'Agence d'Exécution, et que les audits qui révèlent la mauvaise gestion financière soient communiqués et discutés à l'intérieur de la Direction de la Division et qu'une réponse formelle du management de la Division soit donnée à l'Agence d'Exécution

62. Recommandation 2. Analyser les lacunes du projet. Les Evaluateurs terminaux recommandent que les observations de l'Evaluation Terminale soient discutées par la Division des Ecosystèmes dans le but de clarifier les processus et les pratiques au niveau de la Division qui pourraient avoir contribué aux lacunes de ce projet.

63. Recommandation 3. Utiliser les plateformes existantes sur l'échange de connaissance/les meilleures pratiques à l'intérieur du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement pour discuter des projets concernant la foresterie et la gestion forestière. Les Evaluateurs Terminaux recommandent d'utiliser les plateformes d'échange de connaissance/de meilleures pratiques existantes à l'intérieur du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement pour discuter des projets liés à la foresterie et à la gestion forestière. Ceci pourrait, par exemple, être établi par la fonction de coordination du Sous-programme de la Gestion des écosystèmes et/ou du Changement climatique.

64. Recommandation 4. S'assurer que les projets mis en œuvre dans le bassin du Congo font la promotion, et n'entravent pas, l'équité de genre et l'égalité. Le programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement, à travers le Division des Ecosystèmes et le Coordinateur du sous-programme de la gestion des Ecosystèmes, devraient développer un mécanisme qui assure que tout projet dans le Bassin du Congo fasse la promotion de l'équité et de l'égalité de genre. Ceci inclut 1) S'assurer que les Agences d'exécution et les autres partenaires du projets aient une politique de genre compatible à la Politique de Genre du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement avant l'approbation du projet; 2) guider les partenaires du projet sur

ce que signifie en réalité l'intégration du genre dans les activités du projet ; 3) s'assurer que le projet ait une ligne budgétaire spécifique pour entreprendre les activités promouvant l'équité de genre et l'égalité ; 4) s'assurer une représentation de genre équilibrée dans la gouvernance du projet.

65. Recommandation 5. S'assurer que les projets mis en œuvre dans le bassin du Congo incluent, et n'excluent pas, les communautés indigènes. Le programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement, à travers sa Division des écosystèmes et son Coordinateur de la gestion des écosystèmes, doivent développer un mécanisme qui assure que tout projet mis en œuvre dans le Bassin du Congo 1) inclut les représentant des peuples indigènes dans la gouvernance des projets et 2) assure que les activités du projet soutiennent l'inclusion des communautés indigènes avec un budget spécifique attaché aux activités.

I. INTRODUCTION

66. This is the terminal evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme/Global Environment Facility (UN Environment/GEF) project “a regional focus on sustainable timber management in the Congo Basin”.

67. The project covered six countries in Central Africa: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Republic of Congo. Initially, the project had activities in three pilot countries (Central African Republic (CAR), Republic of Congo and Equatorial Guinea) with regional support from Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale (COMIFAC), an intergovernmental organisation in charge of forests in the Congo Basin. Unfortunately, due to civil war in Central African Republic, the partners suspended activities in this country following the Mid-Term Review in March 2014. Project funds were then reallocated for field activities in Cameroon as well as increased in Equatorial Guinea and Republic of Congo to strengthen the existing activities.

68. At the UN Environment, the project supported three thematic priorities (or Sub-Programme): Ecosystem Management, Environmental Governance and Climate Change. The project fell within the UN Environment medium term strategy 2010-13, that sought new avenues to achieving sustainable development emerging from the use of economic instruments, technologies and empowerment of stakeholders. Even more specifically, the project supports Ecosystem Management Sub-Programme 2010-2011, where UN Environment promotes participatory decision-making and sustainable financing through payment or investments for ecosystem services to address drivers of ecosystem changes. Operationally, this project falls under the Ecosystems Division (previously called the Division for Environmental Policy Implementation), which supports countries in conserving, restoring and sustainably managing their terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems, for human well-being and prosperity.

69. For the GEF, this project is a component of the GEF-4 Trust Fund “Strategic Program for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin (CBSP)”. This US\$ 200M programme seeks to strengthen sustainable management of forest ecosystems of the Congo Basin as a contribution to the conservation of the globally relevant biodiversity and ecosystem services. The different projects under this trust fund are executed by The World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), the Food Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the African Development Bank (AFDB). The project is also aligned with COMIFAC, an intergovernmental organisation made up of ministers in charge of forests in the Congo Basin. COMIFAC adopted a “convergence plan” in 2005 by coordinating their interventions and focusing on areas such as i) harmonizing forest and environmental policies, ii) managing and valorising forest resources.

70. Approved by the GEF on July 26, 2011, the project was implemented between September 2011 and August 2015, four years as initially planned, with a six month no cost extension up to February 2016. A Mid-Term Review was conducted in 2014 which highlighted key institutional and working weaknesses, including the implementation of nine recommendations.

71. This project had a budget of US\$16,918,748 made up of US\$3,075,681 from a GEF grant and US\$13,843,067 from planned extra budgetary co-financing. The project was executed by the World Resource Institute (WRI), with The Rainforest Alliance (RA) being the main sub-

contracting partner for the six Central African Countries. In addition, WRI sub-contracted to national institutions as partners for each of the three pilot project countries as follows:

- CAR: Organisation pour le Développement Environnemental;
- Republic of Congo: le Ministère de développement durable, de l'économie forestière et de l'environnement (MDDEFE) in partnership the Collège d'enseignement technique mixte 12 août 1065 (CETM) at Pointe Noire (par of the Ministry of education)
- Equatorial Guinea: Amigos de la Naturaleza y del Desarrollo de Guinea Ecuatorial (ANDEGE)

72. The aim of this evaluation was to objectively assess the project performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and to determine its outcomes and impacts stemming from the project, including its sustainability. The evaluation had two primary goals: 1) to provide evidence of the results to meet accountability requirements and 2) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned. Therefore, this evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation especially for any second phase of the project, if applicable.

73. The main audience for these findings are UN Environment, the project partners (World Resource Institute, Rainforest Alliance, COMIFAC, sub-contract partners) and the other GEF implementing agencies in the Congo Basin (UNDP, FAO, and The World Bank).

II. EVALUATION METHOD

A. Using the TOC

74. The evaluation method uses the reconstructed Theory of Change (TOC). The TOC is explained in detail in Section 4 below. The TOC focusses on the causal pathways from the project outputs (goods and services delivered by a project) through direct outcomes (change resulting from the use of outputs by key stakeholders) through other “intermediate states” towards the intended impact. Using this tool means that the main stakeholders involved (as below in Section 3.3) have to be determined and what role they play has to be assessed. The change process between outcomes to intermediate states also depend on certain conditions (assumptions, some beyond control of the project) or be facilitated by supporting actions or conditions (drivers, that the project can control) that have to be explained. In other words, the TOC assesses “why” the performance was as it was, considering the project as a dynamic intervention by actors in an institutional ecosystem. As such, the use of the TOC assesses project performance against a whole set of criteria (detailed below in 5.2), in places where the changes are occurring. The use of the TOC also provides the basis for “lessons learned” from the project and recommendations for projects going forward.

B. Method and information access

75. The use of the TOC means access to information regarding the intervention logic of main stakeholders, finding the drivers and assumptions linked to causal pathways, and accessing the project interventions where change occurred, especially in pilot countries.

76. The first step was an exhaustive desk study in December 2017-January 2018 reviewing all documents related to the project (especially project documents, mid-term review) along with frank and open discussions with the Task Manager, main project partners (WRI and RA) combined with internet-based research on the actors involved in sustainable forest management in Congo Basin. This allowed to both analyse the interventional logic, map out key stakeholders (with their low/high interest and low/high power on the project) and establish issues impacting the project (drivers and assumptions). This first step also influenced the scope of the field mission in collaboration with the project partners. Locations to visit were selected based on the ability to analyse changes on the ground as well as to meet a wide range of different stakeholders (ex. government, indigenous peoples, NGOs, private actors) in the most efficient way. Meeting key actors face to face is critical for two reasons: it is the only way to get access to sensitive information on forest policy and very little reliable information is available otherwise (Internet, Skype, or phone do not function very well in Congo Basin). Based on the above, two sites were selected: Republic of Congo (Brazzaville /Point Noire) and Cameroon (Yaoundé/Messamena).

77. The second step consisted of a field mission with visits to Republic of Congo (Brazzaville /Point Noire) from 25 February to 01 March 2018 and Cameroon (Yaoundé/Messamena) from 01 March – 08 March 2018. In Republic of Congo, the visit to Brazzaville was focused on visiting UN agencies, other similar projects and governmental institutions, while the visit to Pointe Noire focused on discussions with partners and beneficiaries involved in the pilot project on woodworking. In Cameroon, the visit to Yaoundé focused on meeting with various UN agencies, visiting other similar projects, meeting with the main project partner RA and the COMIFAC, while the field visit in Messamena focused on meeting with institutions and beneficiaries involved in the pilot project linked to cacao

certification. All discussions were bilateral and semi-structured. In addition, in both field locations, there were open discussions between the main stakeholders to allow them to exchange their contradicting views and better understand the logic of the project. In addition, information (reports, flyers, data systems, etc) were collected and pictures taken as evidence. During the last two days of the mission in Cameroon, there were also an in-depth discussion on the primary findings with RA. To ensure that any potentially excluded groups (gender, vulnerability and marginalized) were reached and their experience captured, the research was conducted in a systematic manner. In particular, special effort was made during the field mission to interview both men and women that were beneficiaries in addressing gender-balance. There were also discussions with local actors that were not direct beneficiaries especially in Messamena (Biosphère du Dja, Cameroun).

78. A third step, after this field visit was to collect additional information to ensure objectivity in the findings. This included internet discussions, Skype or face-to-face interviews with other stakeholders at international levels that are all working in those countries, e.g. staff from UN environment (UN-REDD, Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP), from international NGOs (especially WWF) and from research institutions (ICRAF, University of Liège).

79. A fourth step was a de-briefing on the main findings with the Evaluation Office and RA and WRI on 11 April, 2018. This debriefing over Skype with a Power-Point Presentation was a unique opportunity to discuss each indicator performance and receive valuable informal feed-back from the project partners. In April 2018, the project partners also provided comments on the TOC at evaluation and their contribution was integrated into the TOC described in section IV below.

80. The draft evaluation report was shared with the Task Manager, Executing Agency and Co-Implementing Partner and their feedback was reviewed. During the draft and final evaluation reports there was a substantive revision to the evaluation ratings in a downward direction. While some adjustment in ratings between draft and final versions is relatively common, in this instance the adjustments were larger as the UN Environment Evaluation Office aims to achieve consistency across project evaluations in the way evaluation criteria are applied and ratings levels assessed. There were a number of complexities in this project's implementation and performance that were only full addressed in the final ratings:

- the project had weaknesses in its design which were sometimes addressed, but not always in line with the project's plans (some outputs) or in a way that differed from UN Environment's procedures (online monitoring).
- the project has 11 ambitious outputs, which were delivered to varying degrees and with different levels of effectiveness. The variance of performance within the outputs is unusual.
- an attempt was made, during the evaluation, to respond to the over-ambitious nature of the outcomes by phrasing them more realistically during the reconstruction of the TOC (these were then used to assess the performance of the project).
- adjustments to the implementing structure were made by the project in response to the Mid Term Review, but there was insufficient time for these changes to have a complete effect on the delivery of outputs.
- varying levels of performance were found between the Implementing Agent and Executing Agency/Co-implementing partner.

81. UN Environment Evaluation Office carried out an internal review of the evaluation process and final report findings in order to a) learn about potential weaknesses in its evaluation approach and b) confirm that the final report findings could be justified. The Evaluation Office made some further adjustments to the ratings of individual evaluation criteria but the overall project performance rating remained at 'Unsatisfactory'.

82. The detailed list of people interviewed and the method used to interview them is given in Annex IV.

C. Overcoming challenge in accessing information and ethics

83. Accessing relevant information two years after the completion of the project was a challenge. In particular, meeting key stakeholders, accessing beneficiaries and nurturing knowledge sharing among stakeholders was not easily achieved. These challenges were, however, mostly overcome through careful planning of the field mission, full support from the Rainforest Alliance in Cameroon, especially its project coordinator at regional level; from Ministry of Forestry in Republic of Congo, especially the person responsible for the pilot project for the Republic of Congo. These individuals were invaluable to access partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries. Access to some data from the project, especially financial data, was also a challenge and the team had to be reminded several times. Access to the "ANUBIS" web portal was only given in June 2018, which caused some delays to the analysis of financial information for this report.

84. Collected information was verified from different sources to ensure its accuracy. In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the project, the assessment considered the different scenarios between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project. This means that the assessment used historical desk studies to establish the baseline conditions, trends and counterfactuals in relation to the intended project outcomes and impacts as well to provide evidence to project outcomes and impacts.

85. Data collected respected ethics and human rights issues. All pictures and other information were taken after prior informed consent from people, all discussions remained anonymous and all information was collected according to the UN Standards of Conduct.

III. THE PROJECT

A. Context

86. The Congo Basin Ecosystem covers 1.7 million square kilometres of tropical forest, spanning over six countries: Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of Congo, Central African Republic (CAR) and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This vast ecosystem is an important carbon sink which can influence weather patterns and is host to unique biodiversity. The forest sector alone provides 3 to 8% of the gross domestic product of Central African nations and 20% of employment, supporting the livelihood of more than 29 million people².

87. Although the forests in the Congo Basin ecosystem are still in good condition, they are under increasing threat from illegal logging, unregulated expansion of agriculture and mining, and hunting that alters the structure and composition of the ecosystems. Therefore, the general goal of the project was “To strengthen sustainable management of forest ecosystems of Congo Basin as a contribution to the conservation of globally relevant biodiversity and ecosystem services”.

88. More specifically, the project focusses on the “production forests”. In the Congo Basin countries, all forests belong to the State. The “production forests” are based on long-term leases from the State to logging firms or local communities. There are three main types of production forests:

- The large-scale logging production forest. Managed by large-scale logging firms with several thousand hectares each.
- The small-scale or informal production forest. Managed by small-scale logging firms and even individuals.
- The community forestry. Managed by the local communities. They exist legally in all six countries but only well established in Cameroon.

B. Objectives and components

89. In these production forests, the project’s objective was “To promote a harmonized regional approach to the sustainable management of production forests in the Congo Basin”. The project identified three paths of interventions or “components” (Table 2): the formulation of instruments that enable Congo Basin countries to tackle illegal logging in a harmonized manner, the promotion of market and fiscal incentives to make it attractive for forest users to manage production forests in a sustainable manner and well-regulated governance system.

90. For the three aforementioned components, the project had established specific outcomes, each with several outputs. After the Mid-Term Review, some of the outputs were officially revised, but no outcomes were revised (Table 2). All combined, these outcomes would lead to an overall increase in the area of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) plans in the production forests (ie, a total of 45 million hectares under SFM plans, including 10 million hectares under certified Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)).

² From Project document. 2011

91. In addition to these three outcomes, the project also aimed to establish two further outcomes: a monitoring & evaluation component to promote adaptive project management and to share good practice and a project management component to account for project management and responsible financial aspects.

92. Overall, the approach was more theoretical, with many assessments at regional level to support COMIFAC in decision-making but few activities on the ground being implemented in the three pilot countries (CAR, Equatorial Guinea and Republic of Congo).

Table 2: components, outputs and outcomes in the revised logical framework after the Mid-Term Review

Component	Outcome	Output
1. Formulation of instruments that enable Congo Basin countries to tackle illegal logging in a harmonised manner	1. A harmonised approach to curbing illegal logging in Congo Basin countries	1.1 Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) strategy document on harmonised regional approach to the sustainable management of production forests; 1.2 Regionally agreed definitions and strategy documents on informal and illegal logging 1.3 Harmonised sub-regional methodology for monitoring illegal and informal logging 1.4 Assessment of national traceability systems and identification of conceptual parameters to be considered for the development of a sub regional traceability system

Component	Outcome	Output
<p>2. Promotion of market and fiscal incentives to make it attractive for forest users to manage production forests in a sustainable manner</p>	<p>2. Long term technical and financial incentives available to conserve biodiversity in the Congo Basin through training, value adding and sustainable financing mechanisms such as payments for environmental services, carbon finance, etc.</p>	<p>2.1 Systemisation, training, and outreach programme for linking informal and/or community-based groups to benefit from sustainable timber management</p> <p>2.2 Regionally-replicable models for improving the artisanal woodworking sector in order to lessen pressures on the forest and creating a path towards the formal sector</p> <p>2.3.1 The record of FLEGT VPA process in the Congo Basin is performed in order to identify the successes, challenges and prospects</p> <p>2.3.2 Awareness and training of forest administrations and forest concessionaires on the concept of forests with high conservation value</p> <p>2.4 A sub-regional cadre of trained auditors commensurate with the projected growth in area of certified forest</p> <p>2.5 Regionally-harmonised strategies to mainstream SFM issues in production forests into FLEGT and REDD+ initiatives</p> <p>2.6.1 Option for achieving REDD+ + on sustainable forest management platform</p> <p>2.6.2 Analysis of forest taxation in the Congo Basin and proposed tax incentives to ensure sustainable management of production forests</p>

Component	Outcome	Output
3. A well regulated governance system	3. Governance conditions that permit equitable participation and benefit sharing among all forest stakeholders	<p>3.1 Systemisation and dissemination programme on local participation, governance and representation in relation to SFM, REDD+ and biodiversity conservation in production forests</p> <p>3.2 Sub-regional analysis and policy recommendations regarding land rights and resource access issues as they relate to benefit sharing accruing from forest concessions, off-reserve forestlands and REDD+</p> <p>3.3 Capacity building programme, national and sub regional strategies and principles agreed by Governments and CSOs for the promotion of improved governance models for SFM and REDD+</p> <p>3.4 Regionally replicable models for multi-stakeholder collaboration in the design and implementation of REDD+, FLEGT, SFM and certification processes</p>

C. Stakeholders

93. The Evaluation Office of UN Environment considers stakeholders to be all those who are affected or could be affected (positively or negatively) by the project's results. The stakeholder analysis is complex as the project should impact on three inter-related areas, that is: six diverse countries, multiple-levels of governance (local, national, regional); and with different sectors of society (economy, forestry, land, environment).

The project partners

94. **UN Environment** was to ensure consistency with GEF policies and procedures, and provide guidance on linkages with other GEF-funded projects that fall under the large GEF-4 Trust fund "Strategic Program for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin (CBSP)". UN Environment was a member of the Steering Committee, providing yearly guidance on the project. The role of UN Environment's divisions were not mentioned though the Ecosystems Division (former Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI) (in particular UN-REDD+ and GRASP)) and the former Division of Regional Cooperation (DRC) was envisaged to have a strong interest as they worked with the same countries on the very same issues of sustainable forest management.

95. **GEF national focal point.** It facilitated the national implementation of the project, networking with the different ministries and with other GEF projects.

96. **WRI** was the Executing Agency. It was in charge of the project's daily implementation and fund management including, management of sub-contractors, controlling quality of outputs, ensuring proper monitoring and evaluation of the project. WRI also brought expertise on logging and wood processing, governance and timber tracking.

97. **RA** was the project advisor and main sub-contractor at regional level. RA status was strengthened after the Mid-Term Review, where it took over some roles from WRI: it became responsible for the project's daily implementation and fund management including, management of sub-contractors, controlling quality of outputs, ensuring proper monitoring. RA also advised COMIFAC, provided expertise in SFM and forest certification and provided expertise in community-based forestry and small enterprise development.

98. **National sub-contractors** in CAR (Organisation pour le Développement et l'Environnement (ODE), Equatorial Guinea (Amigos de la Naturaleza y del Desarrollo del Guinea Ecuatorial (ANDEGE) and Republic of Congo (Collège d'Enseignement Technique Moyen 12 août 1965, Ministère du Développement Durable, de l'Economie Forestière et de l'Environnement. MDDEFE) implemented the pilot activities (in countries that had each allocated \$500,000 to GEF fund):

- In CAR and Equatorial Guinea, facilitated multi-stakeholder collaboration in FLEGT and REDD+ processes.
- In Republic of Congo, supported and strengthened capacities of the woodworking sector in Brazzaville.

99. **COMIFAC** was co-chair of the Steering committee providing annual guidance to the project. COMIFAC also has the potential to foster coordination with the other forest-related activities in the Congo Basin.

Stakeholders that were not direct project partners

100. Other GEF-funded projects in the region, especially GEF/FAO on bush meat, GEF/UNDP on wetlands and GEF/World Bank on REDD+ could have impacted on the project. This is especially true for GEF World Bank project that could have had a direct impact on the components 2 (financial incentives) and 3 (governance) of the project.

101. Large logging firms (Formal industrial plants, formal Business and Industries). They hold concession rights on each of their "Forest Management Units – FMU". Ultimately, they are the stakeholders that can decide which type of management they will implement inside the concessions' boundaries (no management plan, a SFM plan, or applying FSC certification).

102. WWF initially developed the concept of FSC and WWF is implementing Central Africa Forest and Trade Network (CA-FTN) that brings together businesses involved in forest management and trade in Central Africa

103. Certification bodies (FSC, Keurhout). Private institutions that promote sustainable forest management in the Congo Basin. They have a keen interest in promoting the project to the logging firms, the multi-stakeholder process at national level for national implementation of FSC certification and a harmonized approach to sustainable forest management at the regional level.

104. FSC national initiative committee seek to interpret and implement FSC certification at the national level. This currently exists in Cameroon, CAR, DRC and Republic of Congo.

105. Multilateral development donors (World Bank, International Monetary Fund, African Development Bank) can potentially have large impact by financing sectors (e.g. infrastructure, health, agriculture) by promoting certain economic instruments (taxation policy).

106. Small businesses on the logging supply chain (small informal logging firms (small-scale business and Industries), Individual/family loggers, national traders/ processors) are potentially negatively impacted by the legality of wood or positively by improved governance.

107. Political elite, Politicians, (Ministers, Parliamentarians, prefects, provincial councillors) create laws, policies, institutions to 1) promote “community forestry”, 2) to establish mechanism for PES linked to the FMU.

108. Customs. Manage the exports of logs with forestry information systems (SYDONIA, SIGEF, SIGIF)

109. Local authorities issue permits to small informal logging firms and family loggers,

110. Local administration/Ministry of Forestry follow administrative procedures to issue permits for large-scale logging firms, small logging firms and family loggers and then enforce forest law checking on the legality of permits for small-scale logging firms and family loggers.

111. Farmers (small-scale farming; local inhabitants). The slash-and-burn type farming is expanding on the forest land at an alarming rate. This is due to over 90% of households involved in agriculture combined with 2% to 3% population growth per year.

112. International governments involved in the timber trade (EU, USA, France, Canada, Denmark, Ukraine). Their representatives can discuss with head of states from the Congo basin on promoting sustainable forest management and their development agencies can provide funds for sustainable forest initiatives in the region. EU (through FLEGT) and USA (through Lacey Act) can also control demand.

113. Scientific & Technological Community international institutions (CIFOR) and national research centres (e.g. Universities, CIRAD, IRD) publish widely on deforestation including issue of illegal trade, financing sustainable forestry, and certification.

114. Some part of the UN Environment (CITES and CBD) and main UN agencies (UNDP, UNESCO, UNFCCC, UNCCD) are interested in sustainable forest management in Congo basin as a global issue for environment, social equity, and cultural diversity reasons. CITES has established systems for traceability and customs control.

D. Project implementation structure and partners

115. The project’s implementation structure is shown in Figure 1 below. It was made up of the Implementing Agency (UN Environment), Executing Agency (WRI), Steering Committee (UN Environment and COMIFAC as co-chairs) and Project Partners. The Executing Agency was based in Washington, with a WRI regional project field coordinator based in Kinshasa (even though the initial project structure mentioned that the WRI regional field coordinator was based in Yaoundé). The project partners were RA based in Yaoundé (Cameroun) at Congo Basin level and three sub-contractors in each pilot countries: the Organisation pour le Développement Environmental in CAR, the Ministère du développement durable, de l’économie forestière et de l’environnement (MDDEFE) in the Republic of Congo, and the Amigos de la Naturaleza y del Desarrollo de Guinea Ecuatorial (ANDEGE) in Equatorial Guinea.

116. The steering committee has two levels. A regional level, which in addition to UN Environment and COMIFAC included a civil society representative, a focal point in the pilot countries (rotating depending on the location of the annual meeting), a representative from

civil society and a representative from private sector. A national level in pilot countries which replicates the regional arrangement nationally.

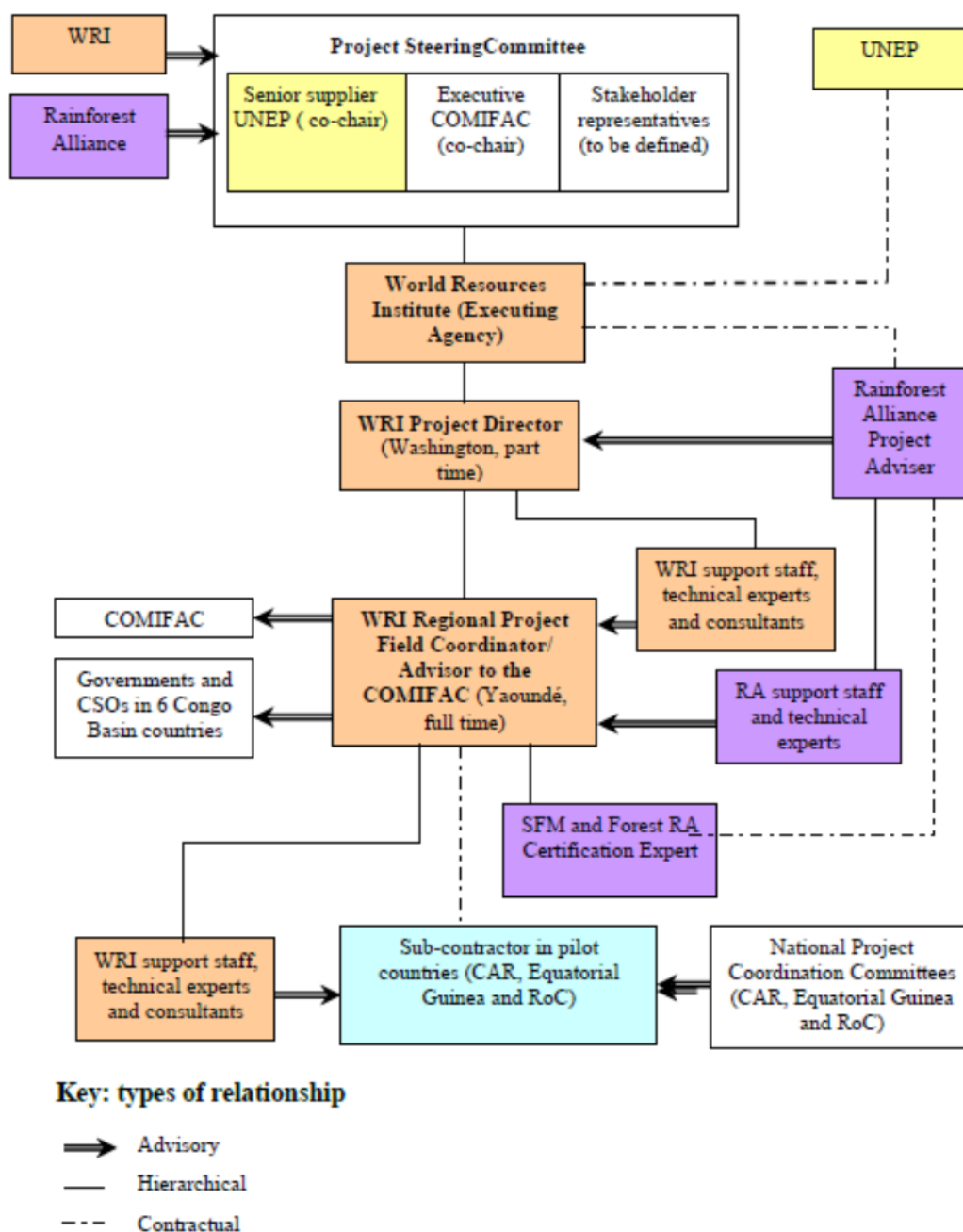


Figure 1: Organigram of the project with key project key stakeholders

E. Changes in design during implementation

117. After the Mid-Term Review in March 2014, the implementing structure changed, with RA taking over executive power to implement activities in the Congo Basin, and WRI remained the executing agency. As a result, RA was able to closely monitor the activities undertaken by the sub-contractors in Republic of Congo and Equatorial Guinea. In practice, RA also took on the role of advisor to COMIFAC since they were physically located close to COMIFAC, even though this last activity was not a recommendation of the Mid-Term Review.

118. After the Mid-Term Review, the pilot activities that were suspended due to civil war in CAR, were then terminated. Funds were then reallocated to strengthen the two other pilot activities in Republic of Congo and in Equatorial Guinea, as well as to strengthen the output 3.4 Regionally-replicable models for multi-stakeholder collaboration in design and implementation of REDD+, FLEGT, SFM and forest certification processes. As such, it organized a workshop on Community forestry in Congo Basin at regional level.

119. In addition, RA developed field activities on promotion of cacao certification in Cameroon where the main project partner (RA) had its regional office for the Congo Basin, as a contribution to the overall output 3.4 on forestry certification³. While this activity may contribute to this output, it is not in the revised log frame nor approved in the yearly steering committee meeting.

120. Overall, financial and project responsibilities towards UN Environment remained unchanged.

121. After Mid-Term Review, some planned initial activities (1.4, 2.3 and 2.4) and therefore outputs were changed as they were considered to be too ambitious. Instead of fulfilling the initial outputs, the Steering Committee decided on five new outputs, which were about analytical assessment papers: (1.4. Assessing traceability, 2.3.1 Assessing FLEGT, 2.6.1. Analysing REDD+, 2.6.2 Analysing forest taxation) and one training (2.3.2. for forest administration and firms on HCV). These new outputs read as such:

- 1.4 Assessment of national traceability systems and identification of conceptual parameters to be considered for the development of a subregional traceability system.
- 2.3.1 The record of FLEGT VPA process in the Congo Basin is performed in order to identify the successes, challenges and prospects
- 2.3.2 Awareness and training of forest administrations and forest concessionaires on the concept of forests with high conservation value.
- 2.6.1 Option for achieving REDD+ + on sustainable forest management platform
- 2.6.2 Analysis of forest taxation in the Congo Basin and proposed tax incentives to ensure sustainable management of production forests

F. Project financing

Table 3: Cost by component

Component/output	Estimated cost at design in USD	Actual Cost/ expenditure in USD	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
Component 1: Formulation of instruments that enable Congo Basin countries to tackle illegal logging in a harmonised manner	517,487 (17%)	Unknown	Unknown

³ The project team reported that the intention of the cacao production outputs was to contribute to REDD+.

Component/output	Estimated cost at design in USD	Actual Cost/ expenditure in USD	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
Component 2: Promotion of market and fiscal incentives to make it attractive for forest users to manage production forests in a sustainable manner	1,158,119 (38%)	Unknown	Unknown
Component 3: A well regulated governance system	877,287 (29%)	Unknown	Unknown

122. The expenditure by component is given in the Table 3 above. The project document gave an overview of the planned expenditure by component, but not by output. However, during project implementation, the partners did not record the expenditure by component or output. Therefore, it is not possible to give the exact expenditure ratio (actual/planned expenditure) by component or output).

123. However, the project followed the expenditure by budget lines, and there was no significant difference (less than 10%) between the estimated cost at the initial budget and the actual cost/expenditure. This indicates that the actual expenditure ratio is about 100% for each component.

124. The planned and actual co-financing is provided in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Planned and actual sources of cofinancing

Co financing (Type/Source)	UN Environment (US\$1,000)		Government (US\$1,000)		Other (US\$1,000)		Total (US\$1,000)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Grants								
European Com (ACP)			1,948	0			1,948	0
Canada (CIDA)			6,500	0			6,500	0
USA (Forest service)			750	0			750	0
World Resource Institute					2,470	3,638	2,470	3,638
Loans	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Credits	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equity investments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
In-kind support								
COMIFAC					200	95	200	95
Rainforest Alliance					775	1,369	775	1,369
Central African Republic			400	0			400	0
Equatorial Guinea			400	114			400	114
Republic of Congo			400	400			400	400
Totals			10,398	514	3,445	5,102	13,843	5,106

IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

125. The original project document did not include a TOC as this was not required by UN Environment in 2011. Given the importance of TOC in UN Environment projects since 2011, and as required by the Evaluation Office, a reconstructed TOC is presented in Figure 2 below. This TOC draws on information given in the project document (especially the logical framework, the risk analysis, the sections on barriers, context, stakeholder analysis, stakeholder participation) and discussions with the different stakeholders interviewed, including with a lengthy exchange with the main project partner, RA, during the field mission.

126. The Theory of Change (TOC) describes the process of changes by outlining the causal pathways from the project outputs (goods and services delivered by a project) through direct outcomes (change resulting from the use of outputs by key stakeholders) through other “intermediate states” towards the intended impact. The TOC identifies the main stakeholders involved (as above in section 4.3) and what role they play. The change process between outcomes/intermediate states may depend on certain conditions (assumptions, some beyond control of the project) or be facilitated by supporting actions or conditions (drivers, that the project can influence)⁴.

127. In the initial project document, the intervention logic and causal links from outputs to outcomes and to overall impact was rather poor because they missed key steps and omitted fundamental drivers (especially large-scale firms, administration and politics). In addition, the stated direct outcomes appear to have been set at a higher level than the outcomes that would immediately result from the outputs, with missing intermediary outcomes. As such, in the reconstructed TOC, direct outcomes have been reworded to reflect the OECD/DAC definitions of different results levels. For clarity, the Annex IX shows the reformulated outputs and outcomes compared to those outlined in the logical framework in the Prodoc. Finally, the intermediate states, a key step between medium term outcomes and overall impact was added to clarify logical pathways. In addition to establishing the overall pathway, assumptions (in red) and drivers (in green) for each step were added to show the links.

128. The overall desired impact of the project is “the globally relevant biodiversity and forest ecosystem in the Congo Basin countries are sustainably managed with a strategic harmonized approach whilst maintaining sustainable development in the region.” This directly corresponds to the overall objective “to promote a harmonized regional approach to the sustainable management of production forests in the Congo Basin resulting in reduction in the impacts of logging on forests and ecosystems.” The term “production forests” includes both the community forests (controlled by communities) and large-scale logging concessions (controlled by logging firms).

129. The fundamental assumption underlying the entire project is that a significant number of outputs in the form of assessments and capacity building initiatives could influence three interlinked medium-term outcomes: the adoption of sustainable management practices, technical/economic incentives and effective benefit sharing. Those outcomes obtained at regional Congo Basin level (with COMIFAC) and in three pilot countries (Republic of Congo, CAR, and Equatorial Guinea) would lead to the foundation for sustainable forest management in the Congo region.

⁴ Evaluation Office of UN Environment. Use of Theory of Change in Project Evaluations. Last review 26.1017

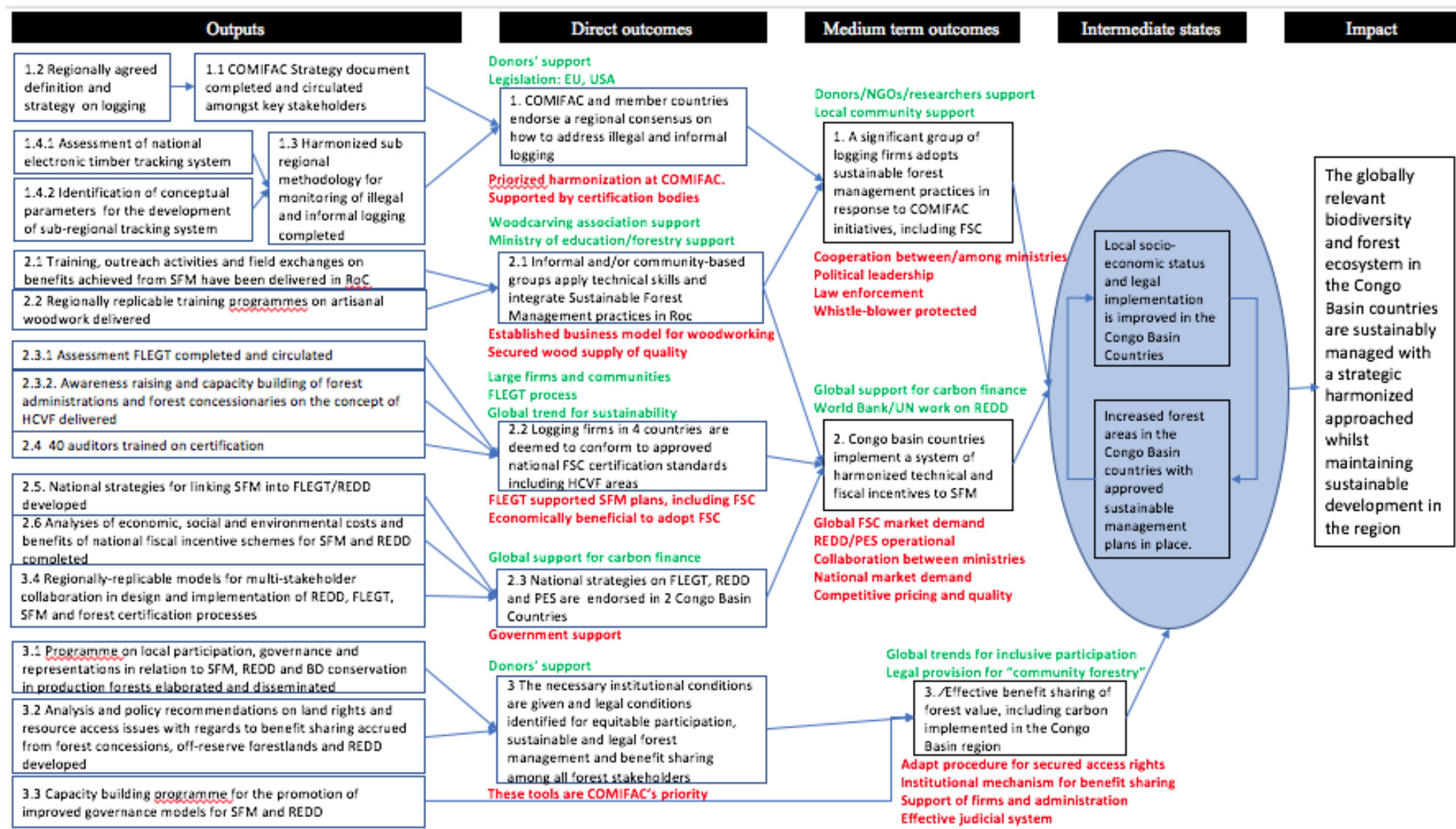


Figure 2: Flow diagram showing the causal links in the reconstructed Theory of Change at Evaluation.

130. The project therefore developed three main causal pathways leading to three specific medium-term outcomes detailed in the TOC. In the first pathway, the project seeks to achieve that “A significant group of logging firms adopts sustainable forest management practices in response to COMIFAC initiatives, including FSC certification”. To successfully achieve this pathway, the project implemented five outputs with an emphasis on assessment and policy papers which are interdependent. They are the regionally agreed definition and strategy on logging (Output 1.2); The COMIFAC Strategy document on SFM completed and circulated amongst key stakeholders (Output 1.1); The assessment of national electronic timber tracking system (Output 1.4.1); The identification of conceptual parameters for the development of sub-regional tracking system (Output 1.4.2); The harmonized sub regional methodology for monitoring of illegal and informal logging completed (Output 1.3). Those outputs lead to a first direct outcome: COMIFAC and member countries endorse a regional consensus on how to address illegal and informal logging (Outcome 1). A key assumption in achieving this direct outcome is that harmonization be a priority for COMIFAC and that certifying/auditing firms/bodies and individual countries would not derail this process. It could be easily the case as many stakeholders have their own vested interests. Key drivers are the international support to tackle illegal logging from the donor community especially from EU and USA where legislation is already in place to impede the importation of illegal products. Achieving the direct Outcome 1 should lead to the medium-term Outcome 1 provided that other outputs (Outputs 2.1 and 2.2) and direct Outcome 2.1 are also achieved. These are linked to the Component 2 of the project and are detailed below. Achieving the medium-term outcomes is also based on some key assumptions, in particular, a political leadership at national level, the cooperation between Ministries within a country (e.g. administration and the law enforcement) and the protection of whistle-blowers. In addition, there is a need to stop the international demand for products that are not from a legal origin. In short, it depends on good governance at national level and the establishment of only one global market for legal wood at international level. Achieving this medium-term outcome is also based on several drivers especially the broad support from international actors (donors, NGOs, researchers) and from the local communities seeking law enforcement and proper consideration to marginalized peoples for possible exclusion in the harmonization process.

131. In the second pathway, the project seeks to achieve the medium-term outcome that “Congo basin countries implement a system of harmonized technical and fiscal incentives to SFM”. To successfully achieve this, the project implemented eight outputs, leading to three different direct outcomes: raising skills, promoting certification standards and finding new financial mechanisms. Those three direct outcomes are closely interlinked to achieve the medium-term outcomes as the sustainable financing mechanism should encourage logging firms to adopt FSC certification in order to increase their income. At the same time, logging firms should work closely with the informal sector in order to raise their skills to help support legal trade and to all be part of firms/organisations adopting FSC certification.

132. The Outcome 2.1 “informal and/or community-based groups apply technical skills and integrate Sustainable Forest Management practices in Republic of Congo” assumes that there is an established successful and sustainable business model for woodworking and that there is a secure, good quality and legal supply of wood. This also assumes that the academic training is of quality and useful in practice. This is based on achieving two outputs: delivering training, outreach activities and field exchanges on the benefits of SFM in the Republic of Congo (Output 2.1) and delivering regionally replicable training programmes on artisanal woodwork (Output 2.2). Outcome 2.2 “Logging firms in 4 countries are deemed to conform to approved national FSC certification standards including HCVF areas” is focused

on large-scale established firms in order that they become FSC certification compliant or develop Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) plans. This assumes that the FLEGT process is supporting the adoption of SFM plans including promoting the FSC certification. This also assumes that it is economically beneficial for logging firms to adopt FSC certification. As for drivers for FSC certification adoption, there are three: a broad global trend for sustainable procurement, an interest of large firms servicing and benefitting their local communities, and the existing FLEGT process piloted by the European commission with their Member States. This outcome is achieved through implementing three outputs: assessment of FLEGT completed and circulated (Output 2.3.1); awareness raising and capacity building of forest administrations and forest concessionaries on the concept of HCVF delivered (Output 2.3.2); and 40 auditors trained on certification (Output 2.4). The Outcome 2.3 “National strategies on FLEGT, REDD+ and PES are endorsed in 2 Congo Basin Countries” assumes individual country support for the schemes and relies on a main driver, which is the global support for conserving forest for their carbon financial value. Achieving this outcome is based on implementing three outputs: national strategies for linking SFM into FLEGT/REDD+ (Output 2.5); The analyses of economic, social and environmental costs and benefits of national fiscal incentive schemes for SFM and REDD+ completed (Output 2.6); and Regionally-replicable models for multi-stakeholder collaboration in design and implementation of REDD+, FLEGT, SFM and forest certification processes (Output 3.4). Achieving those three direct outcomes allows to reach the medium-term Outcome 2. A positive supportive trend in reaching this medium-term outcome is the overall support for carbon finance and the existing work from multilateral agencies (World Bank/UN) on REDD+. This medium term outcome is also dependent on four main assumptions: First, that there is an increasing global demand for FSC certification and more generally for SFM products; Second, that REDD+ becomes operational and mainstream, which means putting in place institutions and mechanisms to collect and share the revenues as well as monitoring carbon emissions; Third that there is a strong national market demand for sustainable wood products; and lastly, that a competitive pricing and quality for legal wood products is in place.

133. The third pathway towards the medium-term Outcome 3 of getting an “Effective benefit sharing of forest value, including carbon implemented in the Congo Basin region” is based on achieving three specific outputs: the elaboration and dissemination of a programme on local participation, governance and representations in relation to SFM, REDD+ and biodiversity conservation in production forests (Output 3.1) and the development and analysis/ policy recommendations on land rights and resource access issues with regards to benefit sharing accrued from forest concessions, off-reserve forestlands and REDD+ (Output 3.2); and the Capacity building programme for the promotion of improved governance models for SFM and REDD+ (Output 3.3). Implementing Outputs 3.1 and 3.2 leads to the direct Outcome 3, “The necessary institutional conditions are given and legal conditions identified for equitable participation, sustainable and legal forest management and benefit sharing among all forest stakeholders”. A main driver to achieve this is the global donors’ community support and a main assumption is that these tools become a priority for COMIFAC’s secretariat. Achieving the direct Outcome 3 and Output 3.3 also leads to the medium-term Outcome 3. Achieving this medium-term outcome depends on two main drivers: a general trend towards decentralizations in the six countries with legal provision in each of the six countries for “community forestry” and effective implementation in Cameroon, as well as a broad international donor support for increased participation of the main stakeholders especially firms and communities in forest governance (e.g. the Congo Basin Forest Fund). To achieve this medium-term Outcome 3, the interventions also depends

on four assumptions: that for each country the institutional mechanism for benefit sharing is effective; that there are adapted procedures for access rights and benefit sharing; that there is a support from large-firms and administration for this process; and finally that there is an effective judicial system that can arbitrate between parties. This medium-term Outcome 3 is mainly considering behaviour changes that can take years to happen. As such, this medium-term outcome has been moved closer to the medium-term state. For the very same reason, the Output 3.3 on capacity building programme has no direct outcome and that these capacities take time to materialize.

134. The three medium-term outcomes (logging firms adopting SFM practices, mainstream technical/fiscal incentives, effective benefit sharing) should lead to the intermediate state, with a cycle between a “Local socio-economic status and legal implementation is improved in the Congo Basin Countries” and “Increased forest areas in the Congo Basin countries with approved sustainable management plans in place”, each one reinforcing the other. This virtuous cycle at the intermediate state allows the successful achievement of the overall impact.

V. EVALUATION FINDINGS

135. These key findings are given below for each criterion by the Evaluation Office of UN Environment (EOU), as per the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the terminal evaluation of this project. The answers to the “key strategic questions” which are specific questions of interest to UN Environment defined in the TE ToRs are found in each relevant criterion and in the main conclusion section of the report.

A. Strategic Relevance

Alignment to MTS and POW

136. The project is highly relevant to the UN Environment mandate and aligned with the UN Environment Medium Term Strategy (MTS) (2010-13) and expected accomplishments in the Programmes of Work (POW) (2010-11; 2012-2013), including for three Sub-Programmes (Climate Change, Ecosystem Management, Environmental Governance).

137. The project mentions the relevance for UN Environment in the front cover of the project document, for four Sub-programmes: 1 (Climate Change, Expected Accomplishment a and c), 3 (Ecosystem Management, Expected Accomplishment c), 4 (Environmental Governance, Expected Accomplishment c) and 6 (Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Production and Consumption, Expected Accomplishment c). The document itself, other project documents and progress reports did not define the project’s alignment with the MTS 2010-13 or the POWs (2010-11; 2012-13).

Alignment to UN Environment/Donor Strategic Priorities

138. The project is strategically relevant for the GEF-4. It contributed to the GEF-4 Objectives and Priorities (biodiversity strategic Objective 2, sustainable forest management strategic Objective 2). As such, the project is a component of the GEF-4 Trust Fund “Strategic Program for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin - CBSP”. This \$200m (USD) programme sought to strengthen sustainable management of forest ecosystems of the Congo Basin as a contribution to the conservation of the globally relevant biodiversity and ecosystem services.

139. The project document did not explicitly align with the UN Environment strategic priorities (including Bali Strategic Plan and South-South Cooperation). In practice the project provided some limited capacity development, for example, the EQMBO -Entreprises (Centre d'aide technique et technologique en meuble et bois ouvré)⁵ from Canada which provided training and material to a small number of woodworkers in Pointe Noire (Republic of Congo).

Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities

140. The project was directly relevant at the regional level, to the “convergence plan” of the Central African Forest Commission (Commission des Forêts d’Afrique Centrale – COMIFAC) for the Congo Basin adopted for the period 2005-2015. The plan sought coordinating

⁵ Since then called INOVEM. This is a training center based in Québec (Canada) whose objective is to increase the productivity and competitiveness of firms in the woodworking sector at national and international levels. More : <http://www.inovem.ca/>

countries' interventions and a focus on areas such as i) harmonizing forest and environmental policies, ii) managing and valorising forest resources.⁶ However, in practice, COMIFAC only provided some in-kind co-financing (US\$ 95,000 instead of US\$200,000 pledged). And the countries that are part of COMIFAC didn't provided additional co-financing in cash, and only two that hosted pilot projects provided some in kind contributions (Equatorial Guinea US\$114,000 instead of US\$400,000 and Republic of Congo US\$400.000 as pledged).



Figure 3: COMIFAC Convergence plan

141. At the national level, the project complemented the “Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs)” – strategies and actions contributing to climate mitigation and adaptation. The project is also relevant for the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), - strategies and actions to halt biodiversity loss. However, neither strategies were mentioned in the project document nor in the project implementation reports, and there is no evidence to support or explain how the project has actually contributed to those national strategies and actions.

142. Finally, using most of the funds for international staff and travelling, the project made only very little contribution to South-South cooperation and Bali Strategic Plan on technology transfer.

⁶ COMIFAC, 2017. Qu'est-ce que le plan de Convergence ? <https://www.comifac.org/fr/content/quest-ce-que-le-plan-de-convergence>



Figure 4: PPECF programme from the German cooperation on forest certification

Complementarity with Existing Interventions

143. In its implementation, the project omitted to effectively involve four fundamental stakeholders for any achievement: the most powerful economic actors (especially the large-scale logging firms), the administration (local and national levels), the politicians (Ministers, head of districts), and beneficiaries (omitted especially in the governance and decision-making).

144. The project document detailed well the donor/funding agency priorities and the other work from UN agencies and bilateral aid working on similar issues, such as the EU with FLEGT, DFiD on legality, World Bank on REDD+, and the UN Environment on REDD+ or on great apes with Great Apes Survival Partnership-GRASP. However, the project did not involve these actors in implementing the project, missing the opportunity to involve donor agencies and UN Environment divisions working in the same area on similar issues.

145. To a certain extent, those projects focussed more at country level while this intervention worked at a regional and country level. As such, there was some complementarity on the interventions, without having collaboration or coordination.

Conclusion on the Strategic Relevance and Rating

146. In conclusion, the project is strategically very relevant for UN Environment and GEF. It was somewhat relevant for the region (COMIFAC), and is practically relevant for national strategies (on climate and biodiversity). A key practical aspect is that the project omitted the fundamental stakeholders (large firms, politicians, administration and beneficiaries). Finally, the project was not particularly relevant with regards to UN Environment's efforts towards enhancing the South-South Cooperation and Bali strategic plan on technology transfer.

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)

B. Quality of Project Design

147. The Quality of Project Design is the assessment from the project document and information from the Mid-Term Review. This assessment found some key strengths and weaknesses.

148. Of key strengths, there are:

- The project addressed three core issues: lack of harmonization, lack of economic incentives; and poor governance. This problem analysis is adequate and clear.
- It was politically very timely, with the emerging issue of REDD+ in 2008 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- It was highly relevant for the COMIFAC Convergence plan, GEF and UN Environment.
- It was executed by WRI and RA, both used to fulfilling UN requirements in terms of project and administrative reporting.
- The international donor community had similar projects at national level in the region (e.g. USAID, DFID, CIDA, EU).
- A wide range of environmental actors (conservation NGOs, multilateral environmental organizations) had similar projects at sub-national or national levels.
- It showed some considerations towards indigenous peoples, even though it was only in an Annex and the practical consideration into the project execution remained unclear.
- The overall level of base-line and key performance is clear: 45 million hectares under SFM (in the process), including 10 million hectares under FSC certification.
- The project promoted strategies to scale up, replicate and encourage coordinated catalytic action.
- The project has had a successful resource mobilization strategy with US\$13,483m in co-financing. It remained however unclear if this co-financing would be secured.

149. Of key weaknesses, there are:

- The underestimation of external context: the forest sector in Congo Basin countries is challenging, especially when it deals with legality, finance, and governance.
- The poor relationship between outputs and overall impact of the project. Several key milestones, drivers and assumptions are missing. As such, the project is too optimistic and ambitious.
- The lack of addressing key project issues: partnership, communication & outreach, sustainability (Financial, political, institutional) and identification of risks and social safeguards (including gender, participation of marginalized peoples).
- Vague definition of key terms and an unclear understanding of activities (eg. description of beneficiaries) left a lot of room for interpretation.
- Overlooked key actors: 1) the political and economics actors directly involved in sustainable forest management at the different scales; 2) French speaking development actors, and more generally European actors, who are prominent in the area.

- A missing description of the local level context and beneficiaries in each country. The project document proposes to assess the situation at its beginning, which could not be found.
- Initial number of staff was adequate, however, in practice most of the staff were operating remotely from outside the project's region. Financial arrangements did not include important aspects such as communication, outreach, networking and lobbying.

Rating for Project Design: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)

150. The rating indicates, however, that the project document omitted or underestimated key issues. As we shall see in the next sections, these issues have had very serious impacts on the desired outcomes and overall impact. In other words, the executing agency (WRI) and its main partner (RA) faced very serious challenges in project implementation despite their best efforts.

C. Nature of the External Context

151. Internal war prevented CAR from undertaking pilot projects.

152. The region has also faced an un-expected economic crisis. In the Republic of Congo, the current economic depression linked to low price of oil may actually lead to an increase of illegal activities. Also, the different countries did not provide their agreed financial contribution to COMIFAC. As a result, COMIFAC operated with inadequate resources.

153. By addressing illegal trade, governance and economy in the forest sector, the project worked within a very sensitive political environment. This is especially true in the field where deforestation takes place. Local people can be intimidated; some activities or whistle blowers could have been killed. As a sober reminder, DRC is the second most dangerous country in the world for activists defending their natural resource just after Brazil.



Figure 5: Illegal logs at the Ministry of forestry in Republic of Cameroon

Rating for Nature of the external context: Unfavourable (U)

154. For the sake of being inclusive, it also may be worth to mention the visa restrictions in Equatorial Guinea, even though this is not an expected political or natural event. Indeed, in this country, partners had difficulty to enter the country because of strict visa restrictions which made it more difficult to support the local partner properly. It was not expected for the situation to last throughout the implementation of the project. Fortunately, in this specific context, citizens of USA had an easier access to the country which benefited several staff working at WRI.

D. Effectiveness

Delivery of Outputs

155. This section on outputs is validating the project’s deliverables and providing evidence from assessing and contribution to the outcomes and then further impact. As such, we have hereby provided a detailed analysis of each output as per TOC (Table 5 below) to determine the extent of delivery of each output – not delivered, partially delivered and fully delivered.

Table 5 – Detailed analysis of each output as per TOC

Output	Level of delivery
1.1 COMIFAC Strategy document completed and circulated amongst key stakeholders	<p>The document “La gestion durable des forêts de production du Bassin du Congo et perspectives d’harmonisation des politiques associées” was completed in 2012. It was then circulated for peer-review among a very restricted number of stakeholders (7 people from 5 organisations, including 1 from WRI and 3 from COMIFAC Secretariat) in December 2012. The document was finalised in May 2014 after approval from COMIFAC. Findings in the documents were later discussed in March 2015 with COMIFAC but not circulated to Ministers or administration at national level. COMIFAC found that this document was a useful source of information. But, this strategy was finalised late (in 2015), and as a result, COMIFAC did not endorse it because it was no longer of value. The forest policies were fast evolving and the different actors were already working on different aspects of this strategy. As such, COMIFAC did not put the document on its website or even further circulate it.</p> <p>Given the above, this output is unsatisfactory.</p>
1.2 Regionally agreed definition and strategy on logging	<p>The initial output was about the development of a “methodology/strategy to monitor illegal logging” and a “Glossary on agreed definitions”⁷. However, it was impossible to develop a Methodology/strategy to monitor illegal logging from the partners’ perspective, even though this was a key output that could have supported other efforts (e.g. on governance). As such, partners only concentrated on a “glossary”. The document “Termes usuels utilisés dans le secteur Forêt/Environnement en Afrique centrale” was peer-reviewed by 7 people and then approved by COMIFAC in April 2015. COMIFAC found that additional meetings would be necessary to clarify some terms such as “illegal” and “informal”. As such, the glossary was not put on COMIFAC website and further circulated. The UN</p>

⁷ The project team notes that in the revised logframe, Output 1.2 was only about the glossary. The strategy was captured in Output 1.3. “Regionally agreed definitions and strategy documents on informal and illegal logging” as per the project’s M&E system based on the revised logical framework

Output	Level of delivery
	<p>Environment developed a website called InforMEA that has some useful information in this regard.</p> <p>In summary, half of the output was moderately unsatisfactory, and the other half was not executed.</p> <p>Given the above, this output was unsatisfactory.</p>
<p>1.4.1 Assessment of national electronic timber tracking system</p>	<p>The document “Stratégie pour le développement d’un projet pilote De traçabilité des flux matières bois en Afrique centrale” was completed in March 2013 with regional and country assessment. It was discussed with COMIFAC in March 2015 (5 of its staff). RA later shared the findings of the document at the meetings of the partners for the forest of the Congo Basin in June 2015.</p> <p>COMIFAC did not endorse this document on the basis that it was not relevant anymore as different countries had already taken note of lessons learnt from past failures, and were implementing new approaches. As such, the assessment was not uploaded on the COMIFAC website nor further circulated because it was not considered useful anymore.</p> <p>Given the above, this output was moderately unsatisfactory.</p>
<p>1.3 Harmonized sub regional methodology for monitoring of illegal and informal logging completed</p>	<p>The document “méthodologie sous régionale harmonisée pour la surveillance de l’exploitation forestière illégale/informelle” was drafted in August 2013 and finalized in April 2014. The document was then peer-reviewed by COMIFAC in March 2015. COMIFAC never endorsed this document, and it was not uploaded on the website nor circulated further. Also, the document was not reviewed at country / sub-regional level.</p> <p>Given the above, this output was moderately unsatisfactory</p>
<p>1.4.2 Identification of conceptual parameters for the development of sub-regional tracking system</p>	<p>The document “Vers un système de traçabilité transnationale efficace pour la région du bassin du Congo: les limites et les leçons apprises de la mise en place des système nationaux” was completed in July 2014. The document was peer-reviewed by COMIFAC in March 2015. As each country decided on its tracking system, it is not the role of COMIFAC to develop a sub-regional tracking system. As such, COMIFAC did not upload the assessment on its website, even though COMIFAC agreed that the information is interesting. Potentially interesting to sub-regional and national entities, the document was not reviewed nor shared with them.</p> <p>Given the above, this output was moderately unsatisfactory.</p>
<p>2.1 Training, outreach activities and field exchanges on benefits achieved from SFM</p>	<p>The report «Etats des lieux sur la situation des secteurs informels/communautaires de base de la gestion durable des forêts» was elaborated in December 2012. A consultant then prepared capacity building training modules to engage communities and actors on forest governance including FLEGT/REDD+ in 2013. Finally, in 26-29 May 2014 in Cameroon, the partners organized a training workshop for civil society organisations to fight illegal logging, improve participation, and access to benefit from REDD+/FLEGT. 32 participants attended the training workshop: (2 from Republic of Congo, 2 from Equatorial Guinea, 2 from RCA, and 26 from Cameroon), most of them were from local NGOs and five were from communities.</p> <p>In summary, only one training took place in one country (Cameroon), while the focus on informal/illegal logging that mainly interested another country for this project (Republic of Congo). In addition only 32% of the target audience were</p>

Output	Level of delivery
have been delivered in RoC ⁸	<p>trained (100 participants were expected to attend as per the indicator logframe), with mainly local NGOs and only five from local communities.</p> <p>Given the above, this output was unsatisfactory.</p>
2.2 Regionally replicable training programmes on artisanal woodwork delivered	<p>EQMBO (a firm based in Canada) rehabilitated a woodworking training centre linked to the secondary school called “Centre d’Enseignement Technique mixte du 12 août 1965” located in Pointe Noire. They provided the necessary tools for the factory and a solar system to dry the wood. The project funded the power generator (to secure electric supply) and the local partner (the Ministère de l’Economie Forestière) procured it.</p> <p>EQMBO revised the training curriculum, provided training to trainers, provided the woodworking tools and a solar system to dry the wood. EQMBO trained trainers in 2014 and 2015, each time two weeks for about 15 participants, including 2 women. Tools and power generator were still functioning at the time of the evaluation to the satisfaction of the beneficiaries. The solar system to dry the wood however was not functioning at all, and therefore it was impossible to get high quality of wood from this process.</p> <p>Participants benefiting from these trainings were the teachers of the schools and members from the National wood carving association. Those training programmes were delivered at the full satisfaction of the participants (teachers or association members). In the logframe, 50 informal or community-based forest operators were expected to be trained by year 2, as such 30% of the output was accomplished.</p> <p>The other issue is the fact that the focus of this output is the “regionally replicable model”. From this angle, it remained unclear how training 15 participants contributes to delivering a ‘regional replicable training programme’.</p> <p>Given the above, this output was moderately unsatisfactory.</p>
2.3.1 Assessment FLEGT completed and circulated	<p>A consultant drafted the report “Etude bilan du processus APV FLEGT dans le bassin du Congo: acquis, défis et perspectives”. He presented its findings during a workshop at the Governance working group of COMIFAC organized in Cameroon 29-30 July 2014. In January 2015, the project partners organised a specific two-day workshop in Douala (Cameroon) on the findings of this study in partnership with COMIFAC and the European Commission. The event gathered 40 participants (firms, administration and associations) from the 6 Congo basin countries.</p> <p>Given the above, this output was highly satisfactory.</p>
2.3.2. Awareness raising and capacity	<p>Partners explained that this training programme was not done because FSC certification was revising the HCVF concept. However, this may be rather weak</p>

⁸ The project team notes that the output reads Systematization, training, outreach program and targeted research for linking informal and/or community-based groups to benefits from SFM’ in the monitoring system. However, this phrasing lacks specificity as it has no verb and no targeted location.



Output	Level of delivery
building of forest administrations and forest concessionaries on the concept of HCVF delivered	<p>explanation as the project lasted four years, much longer than the negotiations around the HCVF. In addition, HCVF is a concept that is rather established, even though some of its indicators have indeed evolved.</p> <p>Give the above, this output was highly unsatisfactory.</p>
2.4 40 auditors trained on certification	<p>Benefiting from the long experience on RA on certification, the project partners could quickly prepare the 3-day training module and organize the workshops. As such, workshops took place in Cameroon in 2012 (20 people), Republic of Congo in 2013 (20 people), Gabon in 2014 (20 people) and Equatorial Guinea in 2015 (7 people). Most of the participants were consultants or civil servants. Some were from NGOs (WWF) or from firms (Rougier). In total 67 auditors were trained (including 12 women). About 75% passed the exam.</p> <p>Given the above, this output was highly satisfactory.</p>
2.5. National strategies for linking SFM into FLEGT/REDD+ developed	<p>In Equatorial Guinea: the project partners organized a 3-day training workshop for 29 participants on the issues of FLEGT/REDD+/certification in April 2013. In September 2014, the local partner ANDEGE took the lead for a training workshop linking international trade with FLEGT/REDD+/Certification. Finally, ANDEGE with project partners organized a 3-days workshop in 2015 on the issue of promoting legality and sustainable management with FLEGT/Certification for 50 peoples.</p> <p>In Cameroon: the project organised a training workshop on “community forests” with 10 people in April 2013.</p> <p>In CAR: WRI organised a discussion over land rights for 16 people, in April 2014.</p> <p>In summary, efforts were made to raise stakeholder capacity for linking SFM into FLEGT/REDD+, especially in Equatorial Guinea. However, national strategies were not developed.</p> <p>Given the above, this output is unsatisfactory.</p>
2.6 Analyses of economic, social and environmental costs and benefits of national fiscal incentive schemes for SFM and REDD+ completed	<p>There are two analyses about economics and REDD+.</p> <p>The first report deals with REDD+: “Options for realizing REDD+ on a sustainable forest management platform”. This document was reviewed in January 2014, and then finalized in March 2015 after being reviewed by COMIFAC. This analysis was a desk study, without a specific section on the national context. COMIFAC considered this report as a useful background information, but did not consider it necessary to upload it on their website as the field was evolving too quickly.</p> <p>The second report produced in 2015 was: “analysis of taxation for forest management” with detailed information at national levels. The report was presented in Pointe Noire in a workshop in September 2015. COMIFAC found this analysis on fiscal instruments particularly important and to be a basis for future work. As such, they decided to place this report on their website.</p> <p>Given the above, this output is highly satisfactory.</p>
3.1 Programme on local participation, governance and representations in relation to SFM, REDD+ and Biodiversity	<p>WRI/RA designed a programme and training modules to improve the local participation in forest governance and access to benefit sharing within production forests.</p>

Output	Level of delivery
conservation in production forests elaborated and disseminated	<p>In March 2015, COMIFAC endorsed this document and training modules as an effective instrument to implement the sub-regional directives on local public participation. As such, it put this report on the COMIFAC website.</p> <p>Given the above, this output is highly satisfactory.</p>
3.2 Analysis and policy recommendations on land rights and resource access issues with regards to benefit sharing accrued from forest concessions, off-reserve forestlands and REDD+ developed	<p>Initially elaborated in 2012-13 through field visits and a desk study, this publication was finalised in 2014 under the name “Problématique de l’harmonisation des politiques et lois influençant le secteur forestier: risques et opportunités pour la production durable des bois dans les forêts du bassin du Congo”. The document was peer-reviewed by COMIFAC in March 2015, that acknowledged that this was a key issue for the sub-region. As such it put the report on COMIFAC website. COMIFAC also requested that this document is restructured as a policy brief for wider dissemination, which did not happen.</p> <p>Given the above, this output is highly satisfactory.</p>
3.3 Capacity building programme for the promotion of improved governance models for SFM and REDD+	<p>WRI/RA organised two workshops in May 2014 (two-day workshop with 15 participants in Cameroon in May 2014 on improved governance models for civil society and governments including people from CAR, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, DRC; two-days workshop for civil society organisations in Cameroon with 32 participants). In summary, capacity building took place in Cameroon, but very little in other countries. Also, four days of training are much less than a capacity building programme that could have interested many stakeholders.</p> <p>Given the above, this output is moderately unsatisfactory.</p>
3.4 Regionally-replicable models for multi-stakeholder collaboration in design and implementation of REDD+, FLEGT, SFM and forest certification processes	<p>At the start of the project in 2002-03, WRI/AN undertook a field mission and developed a reproducible model in CAR for further multi-stakeholder collaboration at regional level in REDD+/FLEGT/SFM. Due to civil war in CAR, this initial approach was abandoned. Instead, with RA taking over the field implementation after the Mid-Term Review of 2014, the activities were re-assigned to two directions.</p> <p>Firstly, WRI/RA organised a sub-regional workshop on Community forestry in Congo Basin. The event took place in Kinshasa (RDC) 27-28 May 2015 gathering around 40 participants from government and civil society in 3 countries (Cameroon, Gabon, Republic of Congo and DRC).</p> <p>Secondly, WRI/RA supported a community around the Dja biosphere (Cameroon) in April 2015. The support included initial process towards cacao certification (22 families) and REDD+. As such, they could develop locally based replicable model for stakeholder collaboration in agricultural certification and REDD+ based on RA vast experience. At the evaluation in March 2018, 135 farmers were involved in the cacao certification process. However, cacao certification was in fact not part of this output 4.3 that focusses stakeholder participation in forest management. The modified 2015 work plan US\$24,000 to support local community around Dja biosphere reserve for REDD+ and certification. It did not mention cacao which is about agriculture and not forest. Other issue is that cacao certification and REDD+ schemes were yet to be operational and there were no established plan to become so.</p> <p>Finally, the link between the community support and the sub-regional workshop with the overall output of “regionally-replicable model” were not so clear. This may be explained by these activities being undertaken late in the project cycle, and therefore, there was not any more a possibility to link these activities to a regional process.</p>

Output	Level of delivery
	Given the above, this output is moderately unsatisfactory.

156. From the table, we can see that after Mid-Term Review, partners made impressive efforts to take up the delays, as the project was evaluated being about one year late at the Mid-Term Review in March 2014. During that period (March 2014–August 2015), they strengthened the supporting team in RA, especially by hiring a regional coordinator, and followed very closely the evolution of each outputs.

157. With these efforts, the project fully achieved 5 outputs (5 highly satisfactory) within the project time-frame (August 2015), these outputs are directly linked to studies or training in FSC certification where RA had a strong expertise. But, despite those efforts from the partners, the delivery of 10 outputs remained low (5 moderately unsatisfactory and 5 unsatisfactory); In addition, one of the outputs was not achieved at all, which is the Output 2.3.2. regarding training on HCVF (therefore noted highly unsatisfactory). In conclusion, 31% of the outputs were fully delivered; most of the outputs delivered that would affect the outcomes were delivered late/of little utility; and there was a low user ownership.

	
<p>Revitalization of the woodworking centre at the CETM in Pointe Noire</p>	<p>Regionally-replicable models for multi-stakeholder collaboration with pilot case in Cameroon</p>
<p>Figure 6: woodworking centre in Pointe Noire</p>	

Rating for Delivery of Outputs: Unsatisfactory

Achievement of Direct Outcomes

158. As explained earlier in the TOC chapter (Section 4), the initial outcomes from the projects were too ambitious. In the reconstructed TOC, direct outcomes were added as a logical path from outputs which the project can be held directly accountable. The

reconstructed TOC found five direct outcomes with related indicators of achievement. The extent to which these direct outcomes are achieved is analysed below.

159. **Direct outcome 1: COMIFAC and member countries endorse a regional consensus on how to address illegal and informal logging.** COMIFAC secretariat did not endorse and put on its website the document dealing with definitions (Output 1.2), legal gaps (Output 1.4.2.) to curb illegal logging. COMIFAC found that either more work needed to be done or that the issues were already taken on board by other partners. This suggests a low level of buy-in. In the same vein, COMIFAC did not endorse the strategy and monitoring plans to increase trans-boundary cooperation to curb illegal logging. This illustrates that illegal logging and harmonization is a difficult and sensitive matter. This shortcoming could be directly linked to the fact that the project's interventions did not engage with some key stakeholders to achieve this direct outcome, in particular, the different administrations dealing with legal aspects, political leaders, and the large-scale logging firms. In summary, this direct outcome 1 was not achieved.

160. **Direct outcome 2.1: informal and/or community-based groups apply technical skills and integrate Sustainable Forest Management practices in Republic of Congo.** On the positive side, the National Federation of Woodworkers was keen to manage the woodworking factory jointly with the Ministry of Education. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Forestry worked together incorporating the woodworking into the formal curriculum (Brevet d'Etude Technique) which takes two years for students in middle school (students of 13-14 years old or 4th and 5th grade in French academic system) to complete. This is a two-years curriculum to get the "Brevet". About 15-20 students were trained in the first year, and 10-15 in the second year, due to drop outs in the second year. On the weaker side, the woodworking factory is under sole management of the school that uses it to collect cash, without any business plan. There are no maintenance plans for machines, which are used until they break down. In addition, access to dry supply of good quality wood is yet to be solved. The installation of the dryer was not completed when the project came to an end, and it has not been done since then: the ventilator is lacking and the heating capacity is too low. On an even weaker side, it remains unclear if the skills that have been learnt are effectively applied by the students. Students tend to continue their studies after their BET, and follow another curriculum that does not include the woodworking. In addition, it remains unclear if their new skills are of high quality for woodworking, as some stakeholders, especially from the National Federation for Woodworkers complained of their level of skills. A last problem remains how the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Forestry will upscale and replicate this site (Pointe Noire) specific initiative in other parts of the country. In summary, the activities associated with this outcome were partially completed (given the delayed start, management changes, etc) and hence outcome 2.1 was not achieved.



Figure 2: Cacao field in Cameroon

161. **Direct Outcome 2.2 Logging firms in 4 countries are deemed to conform to approved national FSC certification standards including HCVF areas.** The project overlooked the logging firms which are fundamental for this effort. Rather, it focussed on FSC certification generally (for auditors, administration). This work complemented the existing interventions on FSC certification (Cameroon with German cooperation) or SFM (Republic of Congo with DFID). This approach assumed that the logging firms found it economically beneficial to adopt FSC certification which was actually not the case because the European market for FSC certified tropical timber products was declining. Asian firms that now control more than 50% of the market are not complying with legal permits or SFM because these are not yet demanded from the market in Asia. This approach also assumed that the EU FLEGT process would support SFM as well as FSC certification which was not the case. In fact, by forcing FLEGT compliance the firms were satisfied with this “legal permit” and did not feel the need to also adopt the FSC certification. This is an example where a legal requirement undermined the more voluntary FSC certification process. Finally, a main driver is not yet in place that is the financial regime to protect the rainforests’ carbon stock. In summary, this direct outcome 2.2 was not achieved.

162. **Direct Outcomes 2.3 National strategies on FLEGT, REDD+ and PES are endorsed in two Congo Basin Countries.** COMIFAC Secretariat found the reports on fiscal incentives very useful, uploading it on its website, showing its commitment to engage further on this direction. The other documents on national strategies for REDD+ were seen as an interesting background document, but not endorsed by COMIFAC. This was due in part to the plethora of other related documents emerging since 2011 on REDD+, while the report on fiscal incentives was new and timely. At country level ANDEGE supported the Ministry of Forestry in Equatorial Guinea to revise the legal framework to take into account REDD+, FLEGT certification, even though the REDD+ strategy was yet to be finalized in March 2018, at the time of the evaluation. Other countries are also formulating REDD+ strategies, in particular the Republic of Congo (yet to be formally adopted), even if the project did not participate directly. The formulation of such strategies is directly linked to a global support for carbon finance. A key issue to note is that the REDD+ mechanism is not yet globally adopted. Therefore, this supporting driver does not exist yet. The project worked on establishing regionally-replicable models for multi-stakeholder focusing on community forestry for collaboration in REDD+, FLEGT, SFM and certification. The model was operationalized with 135 cocoa farmers organized towards certification in the biosphere du Dja (Cameroon) and REDD+, however both schemes (and therefore the overall model) are yet to become operational. Also, the link between this local activity and national/regional processes is yet

to be established. Regionally, WRI/RA organised a Congo basin workshop on “community forestry”, this is laying the ground for a model on this issue. In summary, this direct outcome 2.3 was partially achieved.

163. **Direct Outcome 3. The necessary institutional conditions are given and legal conditions identified for equitable participation, sustainable and legal forest management and benefit sharing among all forest stakeholders.** COMIFAC secretariat endorsed documents on building capacity for local participation and on benefit sharing, adding it on its website. This proved that equitable participation and benefit sharing are of key interest to COMIFAC. However, the active communication of this information by COMIFAC and project partners to forest stakeholders remained an issue. As such, the tools were not readily shared to the critical organisations such as, the logging firms, the certification bodies (FSC), the national administration and other similar projects. In summary, this direct outcome 3 was not achieved.

164. Overall, one¹⁰ direct outcome was partially achieved and the four others were not achieved at all, because they are at national/regional level, but the project delivered few workshops to a narrow group of individuals and produced some documents, some of which were useful but most out-of-date or not needed. There is no evidence of the project interacting with the relevant ministries in the countries, no evidence of the project working with the logging firms that are key for the project. In addition, some assumptions for progress from outputs to direct outcomes didn't hold (e.g. the proactive attitude of countries, see below). Finally, some key drivers were not in place: support from large firms remained to be seen, REDD+ was not yet functional (sustainable finance yet to be implemented), or legal implementation remained as issues.

Rating for Achievement of Direct Outcomes:	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)
---	-----------------------------------

Achievement of Likelihood of Impact

165. The UN Environment office use the OECD definition for impact, that is “the positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly”. We analyse here the likelihood that the interventions had or will have some impacts. Analysing, the global trends towards FSC certification and SFM in the Congo basin the following was observed: In 2011, 5.5 million hectares (Ha) were under FCS and in 2017 it was about 5.65 million Ha (+3% during the period), while the project was aiming for 10 million Ha. The areas under FSC certification remained stable with some projects (e.g. German cooperation) supporting existing logging concessions so that they remain certified FSC. To illustrate the economic difficulties for FSC compliant firms, the French Rougier group filed for bankruptcy in March 2018 stopping its activity in Cameroon.

166. In 2011, about 15.4 million Ha had approved SFM plans with 22.0 million Ha in 2017 (+42%). The project was targeting 45 million Ha. This increase demonstrates the growing interest for logging firms in complying with FLEGT and establishing SFM plans in order to get permits of legal compliance. This also shows that progress still remains rather slow (about +6% a year), because 50% and 70% of the firms and total forest areas are now

⁹ The Evaluation Office considers this outcome ‘partially achieved’. This does not alter the overall rating for Achievement of Outcomes.

¹⁰ The Evaluation Office assesses two outcomes as partially achieved and three as not achieved.

controlled by Asian firms (especially Chinese) and that Asian market does not require legal permits, SFM plans or FSC certificates.

167. The project seeks to contribute to the overall impact through the implementation of three medium term outcomes (A significant number of logging firms adopts sustainable forest management practices in line with those outlined in the COMIFAC strategy plan including FSC certification; Technical and fiscal incentive strategies are developed and mainstreamed through multistakeholder process linked to SFM in all Congo Basin countries; and effective benefit sharing of forest value including carbon implemented in the Congo Basin region) that together should make a virtuous loop at the intermediate state. On the one hand local, socio-economic status and legal implementation is improved in the Congo Basin Countries. On the other hand, increased forest areas in the Congo Basin countries have approved sustainable management plans.

168. In practice, the project faced serious challenge to contribute towards the achievement of desired impact for a number of reasons. First, as explained above, (Section 5.4.2), one of the five direct outcomes was partially achieved, and the other four not achieved at all. Second, the assumptions to progress direct outcomes to intermediate state(s) did not hold. Indeed, for the pathway leading to intermediate State1 (implementing SFM plans), the cooperation of the ministries within (and between) a country remains a challenge, the political leadership remains to be seen, the law is poorly enforced and activists are routinely threatened. For Intermediate state 2 (implementing technical and fiscal strategies) the global FSC certification/ SFM market demand is decreasing. FSC certification market in Europe/US is shrinking and the Asian market that consumes/demands more than 50% of the exported logs does not request any kind of certification. REDD+ is yet to be operational, the local (national) market demand does not exist yet, and finally, legal wood does not necessarily have a competitive advantage in pricing nor quality when compared to wood from illegal origins. For Intermediate state 3 (getting effective benefit-sharing) the procedure for secured access rights have not been simplified yet, the institutional mechanism for benefit sharing is non-existent, the support of logging firms and administration is often lacking and the judicial system is not yet effective.

169. In addition to the above, the three intermediate states were not achieved and the drivers to support transition from intermediate states to impact are not yet in place. This requires a conducive governance system at national level and a financial mechanism for forest conservation globally, all of this requiring to engage stakeholders that were largely missing in the project (e.g. administration, politicians, large-scale firms, communities) at different levels (local, national, international).

Rating for Likelihood of Impact: Highly Unlikely (HU)

E. Financial Management

Table 6: Financial management components and their rating

Financial management components ¹¹		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Completeness of project financial information		U	See below
Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the responses to A-G below)		MS	RA/WRI managed funds very closely and reported it quickly and accurately to UN Environment. As such, this overall rating doesn't give justice to their hard work, as this overall rating also includes the work of UN Environment.
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	MS	Co-financing from WRI and RA clear by budget line at design. Co-financing at design for others remained general.
B.	Revisions to the budget	U	The Mid-term review recommended to revise the logical framework and the budget. But it was not possible to track the amounts re-allocated by budget line and by activity in the revised logical framework. RA/WRI could not clarify.
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	MS	WRI/RA have legal agreements. No legal agreement with the Ministry of Forestry in Republic of Congo/ANDEGE was made accessible. All financial audits were made yearly for WRI. For partners (ANDEGE, Ministry of forestry in Congo) there only were financial audits at the end of the project. Audit in Republic of Congo fund reported a mismanagement of funds.
D.	Proof of fund transfers	HS	FMO provided the proof including a useful summary.
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	MU	Co-financing was clear in general for RA/WRI, not for the others (governments). In addition, co-financing cash/in-kind was mixed. Some proofs were lacking, and some were only Excel sheets or general letters.
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	S	For GEF co-financing and WRI/RA contribution, there are summary reports by budget lines at quarterly and annual level. But there is no summary report at overall project level and by component.
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses (<i>where applicable</i>)	U	TE did not get access to financial audits from the TM and UN Environment. TE got access to these documents from the Executing Agency towards the end of the evaluation. There was no management response from UN Environment (TM and FMO) about TE questions on financial management regarding the potential mismanagement of funds as per the audit report.

¹¹ See also Criterion E "Financial management" with its Rating.

Financial management components ¹¹		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list): access to internal UNEP website "ANUBIS" where all the information about PMIS are updated	HU	The "Periodic progress reports" and "periodic expenditure reports" on ANUBIS are not filed. In ANUBIS portal, no information after June 2014 has been uploaded. To be granted access to this ANUBIS was very difficult All the information on ANUBIS has been uploaded the very same day in August 2014. As such, there is no information on the project after June 2014. In addition to financial information, quarterly reports, semi-annual reports and annual PIR reports for 2014 and 2015 are missing. RA prepared quarterly report, semi-annual and PIR reports to UN Environment for the entire period (09/2011-08/2015) which could have been uploaded on this portal.
	Any gaps in terms of financial information that could be indicative of shortcomings in the project's compliance ¹² with the UN Environment or donor rules	MU	There was a transfer of funds (US\$172,941) in December 20, 2016 from UN Environment to WRI as the remaining of GEF grant. This transfer happened close to a year after the project's activities were closed (February 2016) and about 1.5 years after the project had finished its activities.
	Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the evaluation process	U	FMO was quick in providing the fundamental financial information. PM (in WRI) responded to queries, somewhat in a general form. TM did not reply to any financial requests. This created some unnecessary delays, but did not prevent to access the information ¹³ .
2. Communication between finance and project management staff		MU	See below
	Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status	MS	Project Manager with partners (in RA) highly aware of project's financial status; Project manager in Executing agency (WRI) highly aware of financial status. For Task Manager in UN Environment, it seems there was not much awareness of project's financial status (as suggested by the long delay for WRI in accessing fund in 2012, and the very late transfer of funds

¹² Compliance with financial systems is not assessed specifically in the evaluation. Nevertheless, if the evaluation identifies gaps in the financial data, or raises other concerns of a compliance nature, a recommendation should be given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

¹³ Further financial information was provided to the evaluation team by the TM as the report was being finalised. However, upon further analysis, it was not deemed to be 'evidence' (and rather information) to support a change to a higher rating.

Financial management components ¹¹	Rating	Evidence/ Comments
		from UN Environment to WRI in December 2016 close to a year after financial closure)
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done	U	Fund Management Officer (FMO In UN Environment) had very clear overview of financial aspects when disburbing. But evidence suggest the FMO did not have much knowledge on the operational status of the project, as this information was not necessarily sent to them.
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager	S	From information gathered on ANUBIS between 09/2001-06/2014 it can be seen that Fund Management Officers try to resolve all financial issues so that disbursement could be done and project executed. After 07/2014, it was not possible to assess such information on ANUBIS. Also, evidence suggests that for the late financial transfer in December 2016, the FMO made a clear analysis of the financial situation to then transfer the funds to WRI.
Contact/communication between the Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports	N/A	This has been impossible to clearly assess. The fact that there was a request for fund transfer in December 2016 after the financial closure of the project would tend to indicate that the communication remained low, limited to moment when transfer from UN Environment to WRI occurred (9 transfers).
Overall rating	MU	

170. The table 6 gives an overview of the financial management. The overall rating is Moderately Unsatisfactory. In general, the project benefited from good communication between finance and project managers in WRI/RA, as well as dedicated FMO in UN Environment. However, there were two issues. At implementation level, the issue is the link with the local partners, with their difficulty to report on co-financing and get the financial information. At UN Environment level, with a lack of financial reporting to ANUBIS (and no information uploaded after June 2014) and a lack of communication between FMO and TM (and therefore still financial transfer after financial closure of the project).

Completeness of Project Financial Information

171. WRI prepared and submitted to UN Environment the quarterly financial reports. These quarterly financial reports provided a detailed project budget by budget line for secured funds presented at annual/quarterly level and project expenditure sheets at quarterly level signed by the WRI project manager, without presenting result levels (outcomes/output). All the quarterly reports were completed until June 2015. There was no quarterly report made available from July 2015 and in 2016, the project being completed in February 2016. And, a final transfer in December 2016 for remaining funds. In ANUBIS portal, the quarterly financial reports were not uploaded after June 2014 and the "periodic expenditure reports" were not filed.

172. Other documents completed and made available to the evaluation were the proof of transfer from UN Environment to WRI. The report on in-kind and financial contribution was also made available by WRI (Executing Agency). The Executing Agency explained that they had difficulty to access this information from the sub-grantees (implementing partners in each pilot countries) who were poorly reporting on these contributions to them. The audit report reports mismanagement of funds in Republic of Congo, with a gap between expenditure and reporting. There is no management response to this audit report.

173. Annual audits were made available for WRI. There were also financial audits for project partners after the closure of the projects (Ministry of Forestry in Congo, ANDEGE, WRI and RA).

174. Financial revision after mid-term and revised log-frame was not made available. There was still a fund transfer (US\$172,941) in December 2016 from UN Environment to WRI after the operational closure of the project (February 2016) which was a reimbursement from already incurred expenditures in the final stages of the project¹⁴.

Rating for Completeness of Project Financial Information: Unsatisfactory (U)

Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

175. At operational level, evidence suggests that the project manager at field level (In Congo Basin) had strong awareness of the financial status of project all the time during the project and especially from the time of the mid-term review when RA began to be in charge of implementing the project within the Congo basin. Indeed, RA project manager sat next door to the fund manager in RA dealing with financial issues.

176. At the executing agency level (WRI) the finance officer was based at their headquarters in Washington, and was not involved in the yearly planning. However, this was partially overcome by a close relationship between WRI and RA. Communication with WRI and RA was particularly smooth, with WRI/RA setting out detailed yearly work plans, with quarterly advanced reports and daily discussion. This reduced any overlapping of roles between the executing agency (WRI) and main partner (RA). As such, the lead programme officer in WRI had a strong awareness of overall project progress and therefore financial disbursements needs. The financial officer was able to make disbursements to project partners against good quality financial and technical progress reports.

177. At the UN Environment level, financial disbursement from the UN Environment (Implementing Agency) to WRI (Executing Agency) was done with long delays – after disbursing a first instalment 29 September 2011 at the beginning of the project, WRI only received as second disbursement 18 March 2013. As a result, the project partners were short of cash to implement activities at the beginning of the project. Evidence suggests that UN Environment FMO strived to transfer the funds quickly when receiving the request from WRI taking into account UN Environment financial rules but the disbursement was delayed because the request was not as per the standard. After a period 2013-14 where the relationship was smooth and disbursement done in a timely manner, this smooth

¹⁴ The FMO confirmed that the transfer was legitimate as the evaluation report was being finalised. However, given the other shortcomings described, the Evaluation Office of UN Environment maintains the rating as Unsatisfactory for this sub criteria.

communication stopped in 2015, most likely with the departure of WRI regional manager. As a result, it is only in December 2016 that the remaining funds were transferred to WRI.

178. In summary, evidence shows that programme officers and finance officers in both WRI and RA were proactive in raising and resolving financial issues, as evidenced that the project was completed on time with most funds transferred and spent within the project time frame by July 2015. Both finance and project staff members in WRI and RA reviewed all narrative and financial reports (quarterly, semi-annual and annual) prior to submission to UN Environment. This is indeed a remarkable achievement as the potential for delays was significant even after the Mid-Term Review because of 1) complex layers of decision-making in WRI and RA and 2) operations in three countries as well as regionally. This demonstrates the excellent good will among project partners and the strong project management. On the other side, there is no evidence that TM or FMO were involved in this process, as such it is not clear that FMO had overview of this project. The fact that 1) there was a no cost extension until February 2016 and then still fund transfer in December 2016 and 2) it took more than a year for the second disbursement reinforces this observation, especially that early financial delays may have huge impact at the end of the project

Rating for Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff:

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)

F. Efficiency

179. The project was implemented with an eight month no cost extension against the originally intended timeframe and against an appropriately revised results framework specified by a formal revision as requested by the Mid-Term Review. WRI/RA clearly set out yearly work plans with associated costs and outputs. The monitoring & evaluation system followed the evolution of the project carefully and allowed adaptive cost-effective measures to achieve project outputs.

180. The initial set up of the project was extremely complicated in six locations (overall responsibility in Washington, regional responsibility Kinshasa for WRI, main project partner in Yaoundé, and three pilot projects in other countries (CAR, Equatorial Guinea). This generated very high carbon footprint of the project. After Mid-Term Review, the intervention reduced its foot-print by favouring regional and national support with RA working closely with COMIFAC (both in Yaoundé) and with partners based in Cameroon, Republic of Congo and Equatorial Guinea. However, the initial legal arrangements remained the same and as such too much of the funds were spent in the project administration, with field activities remaining structurally underfunded with only US\$ 669,252 (or 4% of US\$ 16,918,748) of the overall pledged funds being used for pilot activities at local or national level. This percentage spent on pilot activities increases to 8% if the GEF grant and secured co-finance (US\$5,106,000) is considered and 22% if the GEF grant only (US\$3,075,681) is considered.

181. It could have been much more cost effective if RA was directly handling funds from UN Environment which was not possible in the current set up as WRI was the executing agency with UN Environment. As such this situation was beyond the reach of the actors implementing the project and therefore it cannot be taken into account when evaluating the efficiency.

182. The ability of project partners to make use of existing institutions, foster agreements and partnerships (including with other UN agencies, related project on REDD or ecosystem

services, French speaking stakeholders very present in the region), share data and complement other initiatives is another key issue linked to the efficiency. For all of them, project was rather not efficient as detailed in section below (5.9.3. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation)

Rating for Efficiency: Unsatisfactory

G. Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring Design and Budgeting

183. Initially, most of the indicators for the outputs and some for the outcomes were SMART¹⁵. The project envisioned a person in charge of the monitoring but no specific budget line was attached to this position. At the design phase, there was no monitoring system in place to follow the progress against indicators, including a disaggregated level of relevant stakeholder groups, including gender.

184. Funds for Mid-Term Review and above all Terminal Evaluation had been underestimated, and were not considered adequate by the Evaluation Office. The terminal evaluation is complex because 1) activities took place in three countries as well as regionally, 2) the analysis is done against a reconstructed TOC and not at the time; 3) it has taken two years after the project's completion for the evaluation process to have taken place. This meant that the project could not support any cost for the evaluation (logistic, support staff) and that extra work had to be done to find relevant stakeholders to interview and access data.

Rating for Monitoring Design and Budgeting: Unsatisfactory (U)

Monitoring of Project Implementation

185. The Mid-Term Review provided nine recommendations. Eight of these were fully implemented by the Executing agency (WRI) and its main partner (RA). The Table 7 on recommendations from the Mid-Term Review and their implementations give the details of the implementation of each recommendation. The implementation of those eight recommendations allowed for a much smoother administrative and financial delivery as they clarified the complex relationship between UN Environment, WRI and RA (Recommendations 1, 3, 5, 6). The implementation of those recommendations also allowed better implementation of the field activities (Recommendations 4, 7, 8, 9) resulting in an enhanced project performance as detailed below.

186. Recommendation 3 "Negotiate an MOU between UN Environment and COMIFAC, especially in order that the project targets political leaders" was not implemented. However, RA office's close proximity to the Secretariat of the COMIFAC during the lifetime of the project led to a strengthening of the RA relationship and access to COMIFAC (Recommendation 1,3,5,6) and its political leaders in an informal way.

¹⁵ SMART refers to indicators are Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic, and Time-specific

Table 7: Recommendations from the Mid-Term Review (Page 26, June 2014) and their implementations

Key findings from Mid-Term Review	Action by the project partners
Renegotiate project management between WRI and RA to give more executing power to RA, suppress additional transactional and international staff costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RA was granted full executing power to implement the project, WRI remained the agency managing finance and contracts with partners.
Negotiate an MOU between UN Environment and COMIFAC, especially in order that the project targets political leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not done. RA, based in Yaoundé, enhanced its communication with the secretariat of the COMIFAC. However, UN Environment did not negotiate a MOU with the COMIFAC and the project did not target the political leaders.
Revise project's logical framework, with budget and new annual work plan, and specific milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Done. Outputs 1.4 was modified; Outputs 2.3 deleted, and replaced by outputs 2.3.1. and 2.3.2. Output 2.6 was deleted and replaced by output 2.6.1 and 2.6.2. Indicators of outputs were adapted accordingly. Outcomes were not changed. However, the budget was not revised¹⁶.
Suspend the pilot project in RCA until the political conditions allows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCA project has been suspended and could not start again has the political conditions did not allow.
Open bank account in Yaoundé for regional coordination in Yaoundé	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Done
Give proper working contracts to staff in Yaoundé and hire a regional coordinator based in Yaoundé	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Done
Include the GEF focal point in the Congo republic Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The GEF focal point in the Republic of Congo has been invited to be part of the Republic of Congo Steering Committee and has been kept informed on the advance of the pilot project. However, the GEF focal point did not attend the annual steering committee meeting that took place in Pointe Noire nor send an alternative person in their place.
Ensure electricity supply and develop a business plan for the wood-work training centre in Pointe Noire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electricity supply is working, either through the public supply or by a generator; RA and the Ministry of Forestry has drafted a business plan.
Strengthen pilot project in the Republic of Congo and Equatorial Guinea, including strengthening technical assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget in Republic of Congo was raised to US\$280,000 (from US \$260,000) and capacity building programmes took place with two seminars (one for training the trainer with two peoples; and one for the wood-worker) each of one week by EQMBO from Canada.

187. A year after the start of the project, and therefore before the Mid-Term Review in March 2014, the intervention developed a user-friendly monitoring plan and system that was i)

¹⁶ During the commenting process the project team notes that the budget was revised as follows: 'A budget review was performed in 2014, reviewing subgrants of EG, Congo and RA, after the pilot committee decided to close down activities in CAR and after reviews to the logframe were approved by the Pilot Committee'

online, accessible to all project partners in real time, and continuously updated (Dropbox system); and ii) evidence based, with MoVs hyperlinked to each Outcome and Output. This user-friendly system on excel covered all indicators in the logical framework. It benefited from a dedicated budget and staff for monitoring progress. The staff not only monitored but also trained the partners in using the monitoring system for implementing their activities.

188. Initially, the project document did not pay much attention to gender and marginalized people. These issues are only mentioned in annexes. In the implementation process, partners decided then not to collect this data¹⁷. The logframe and Monitoring & Evaluation plan were never revised to include specific results and indicators for gender or relevant groups. However, in the different reports linked to the outputs, the partners have added a specific indicator (men/women) to take into account gender. It remains as such quite a challenge to get a global aggregated overview on gender.

189. Complete, relevant and detailed monitoring data were collected in accordance with a monitoring plan and work plan. These data were analysed and shared with appropriate project managers and steering partners. Detailed data by indicator were made available to the evaluator in a timely manner.

190. Information generated by the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation system during the life of the project was used to adapt and improve project execution, achieve outputs, and outcomes. The monitoring system supported decision-making, explaining partially why project partners had only one no cost extension to finish the project.

Rating for Monitoring of project implementation: Unsatisfactory

Project Reporting

191. RA/WRI generated timely reports to UN Environment: Quarterly reports, semi-annual reports and annual reports to the Steering Committee (UN Environment and COMIFAC), and annual report for GEF (PIRs-Project Implementation Reviews) from July to June the next year (a fiscal year). RA/WRI also elaborated global working plans and pilot projects working plans each calendar year for approbation by the Steering Committee. In summary, RA/WRI fulfilled all project reporting requirements from UN Environment, GEF or COMIFAC in an accurate and timely manner.

192. UN Environment uploaded some of the project documents elaborated by RA/WRI on ANUBIS web portal as up June 2014 as per request to GEF. There was no reporting after that date despite the fact that the project was closed technically in August 2015, and financially in February 2016. The periodic progress reports and periodic expenditures reports in ANUBIS are missing. Tracking Tool was not completed at all and UN Environment did not complete the final PIR (2015).

193. Quality of the reports remained an issue throughout the project when it is about reporting to UN Environment and GEF. Level of achievements or the outputs are overrated (most achieved at 100% at the end of the project) and the associated risks seriously lower (most considered low). As a result, the reports depicted a very positive picture of the project as moving steady forward far from the findings of the Terminal Evaluation. In doing so, the

¹⁷ The project team note that this was not a decision to not collect gender disaggregated but rather a lack of awareness that such data should be collected.

reports also overlooked fundamental issues, and therefore didn't propose corrective activities to increase project's performance.

Rating for Project Reporting: Moderately Unsatisfactory

H. Sustainability

Socio-political Sustainability

194. Regionally, at COMIFAC Secretariat level, there is a lasting interest in "sustainable forest management", either with community forestry or large-scale logging. However, the practical implementation depends on the will from governments (National political leader and administration) and from firms (especially large-scale logging firms from Asia). Their commitments remain to be seen. Funds from REDD+ may change the situation, but those funds are not yet secured as the international architecture and national institutions are not functional at present. Work on "community forestry" may be another avenue. Workshops and models raised interests from governments and civil society organisations, who agreed on the importance to implement it given the fact that there are already legal provisions in each country. However, as the participants noted, this agenda is nearly funded in totality by international donors, the effective commitment from countries within the Congo basin remain to be seen.

195. In the pilot country, for the woodworking project, there is a strong political commitment from the three main partners: National Woodworking Association, Ministry of Forestry and Ministry of Education. They are able to help each other in sustaining efforts, however the practical implementation with collaborative arrangement through a Memorandum of Understanding is still pending. In case of success, the partners indicated their interest to duplicate this project in other parts of Republic of Congo.

196. In summary, evidence suggests that the sustainability of project outcomes has a high dependency of the project to social or political factors. At project level, there was not a strong ownership, interest and commitment among governments and other stakeholders, which to some extent have the power to sustain project outcomes. At pilot country level, there was some ownership at the site level, but this might be subject to government changes, especially the change of persons in the administration and politically. There are few mechanisms in place to adapt to changes in the social or political context. The project started top-down on its approach, but then developed with a much greater emphasis on supporting pilot project locally as illustrated by the cacao certification project and the focus on community forestry towards the end of the project. However, the socio-political link between local site, national level and regional level remains to be seen.

Rating for Socio-Political Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely

Financial Sustainability

197. From the start of the project until its completion, leading partners (WRI/RA) and national partners tried to generate financial incomes to ensure sustainable forest management.

198. The outcomes linked to developing new market or fiscal incentive are highly dependent on external funding. At regional level (COMIFAC) and in the pilot countries (CAR, Equatorial

Guinea), the project directly promoted REDD+ schemes. However, globally and within the countries progress remained slow. At country level, the Republic of Congo is yet to finalize its legislation for an effective mechanism to collect funds from REDD+. The country is implementing its first pilot REDD+ on Cacao agro-forestry. With donors' pledges for forest carbon financing in the follow up of the Paris Climate agreement in 2015, Congo Basin countries expressed a sustained interest for REDD+ schemes to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Potentially, there will be funds for conserving rainforest for its carbon value.

199. The outcomes linked to acquiring new technical skills also depended on securing finance. At the pilot site of the Republic of Congo, the school established a financial mechanism to get revenue from the use of the factory. The collected revenue is used to finance repairs and general maintenance of the school. However, a business plan still needs to be in place for investments of machinery and other assets (e.g. chain saws, generator for when there is no electrical supply).

200. The outcomes linked to getting a harmonized approach to curb illegal logging and accessibility of tools for equitable participation needed some further financial inputs. Indeed, funds would have been necessary to enforce the policy and actively disseminate the knowledge to all forest stakeholders but the exit strategy did not include a financial component.

201. In summary, the project intervention showed a high dependency of project outcomes on future funding (or on financial flows) to persist. But there is no sign of funding coming through. There is no plan how to seek this require funding, even it REDD could be a possible source in the coming years. An exit strategy was developed for the pilot site in Congo but there was no yet functioning financial component.



Figure 8: Generator for the woodcarving factory

Rating for Financial Sustainability: Unlikely

Institutional Sustainability

202. This section assesses how the project outcomes (especially those relating to policies and laws) are dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance. It

considers whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure.

203. Since the start of the project until its completion, project partners worked diligently to ensure that the outcomes of the project remained in the institutional landscape. Remarkably, the executing partners WRI/RA worked with an intergovernmental body (COMIFAC), national associations (ANDEGE in Equatorial Guinea and National Woodworking Association in Republic of Congo, and Ministries (Ministry of Forestry and Ministry of Education in Republic of Congo).

204. Regionally, they strengthened COMIFAC. In a way, project effectively lobbied to integrate its concerns (REDD+, sustainable forest management, benefit sharing) in the revised COMIFAC plan 2015-2020.

205. At country level and in particular the pilot activities, the interventions built on existing institutions. In the Republic of Congo, the wood work is an integral part of the curriculum of the school, supporting as such the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Forestry and Economics. The project also strengthened the National Woodworking Association. What remains pending is the legalization of the somewhat “informal” partnership between Ministry of Education/Ministry of Forestry/National Woodworking Association. This would give clear roles over managing the woodworking factory and beyond. This would also have given ground for replication of the scheme in other parts of Republic of Congo, which remains to be seen. Also, it remains unclear how the students will really apply these new skills in the professional world. To date, students continue their academic background using other paths. In Equatorial Guinea, the project strengthened the Ministry of Forestry and social local institutions, in particular ANDEGE, allowing the country to develop a robust REDD+ policy. Finally, in Cameroon, the activities from Tropical Forest and Rural Development in Cameroon are likely to be sustained towards cacao certification, a positive step even though this is not about forest certification and is not one of the outputs of the project.

206. In general, regionally and in the pilot countries, the project actively participated to the global trend towards “Sustainable Forest Management-SFM” plans and carbon financing with institutions emerging to manage those funds. Therefore, there may soon be workable mechanisms to economically conserve forest with SFM plans for its carbon value.

207. In summary, the sustainability of project outcomes shows a quite high dependency on institutional support. The intervention achieved the development of a complete but still weak



Figure 9: Joint effort from Ministry of forestry (right) and Ministry of education (Center) (Republic of Congo)

mechanism to sustain the institutionalisation of direct outcomes (e.g. all MOU have been drafted but not yet approved, REDD+ legislation prepared but not yet finalised). The capacity of relevant stakeholders of project beneficiaries appears to have been sustained (i.e. new skills practised) but targeted individuals are likely to move to other assignments. Finally, an exit strategy with an institutional component has been developed at pilot site level, but no formal legal/signed agreements, with clear responsibilities. The integration of the outputs and outcomes in the national governmental institutions and how these institutions have been strengthened through the project also remain to be clearly seen.

Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely

I. Factors Affecting Performance

Preparation and Readiness

208. Before commencement, the project had overlooked some fundamental issues as explained in the Section B. regarding the quality of the project design. Omitting those issues greatly affected the start of the project.

209. The GEF approved the project in July 2011 with the grant awarded to WRI in September 2011 as well as a cash advance. Only in March 2012 did WRI launch the project with a regional inception meeting. This meeting was held and reported on but did not cover all required elements because there were no contracts in place with possible national and regional partners. In addition, even though there was a contract with the main partner RA in March 2012, it is only in 2014 that staff had proper contracts. As such, the period between project approval and first disbursement to local partners was about a year.

210. The project's governance also remained an issue. The project established a Steering Committee in March 2012 but the relevant representation remained an issue during the entire project. While the representation included a "civil society" and a "private actor" on the board, their roles were never clarified. As such, both social and economic actors remained outside the Steering Committee during the entire life-span of the project.

211. The project at its inception phase developed an annual work plan but only at the first annual Steering Committee meeting in January 2013 (one and half year after the start of the project) was a detailed annual work plan developed. In the same vein, while the institutional context was quickly evolving regarding the issue of forest carbon financing, the initial project showed little adaptation to those changes. As a result, the securing of funds and project mobilization remained a problem. For example, the financial pledge from some donors (especially Canadian CIDA, European Commission and USAID) did not materialize. This meant that the GEF and the main partners (WRI and RA) provided most of the finances.

212. Finally, the social and environmental safeguards assessments carried out before the start of the project were too partial (e.g. not all relevant groups targeted) and superficial (depth of analysis). This situation impeded the project to engage with the most relevant stakeholders such as the firms, social movements, and political leader. Along those lines, most (nine) of the United Nations Environment Project Review Committee (PRC) (the internal UN Environment committee that approves new projects) were poorly addressed in the initial project document.

- The PRC requested that the document is made clearer, that “All sections are complete” and that “The contents of each project section are clear and meet requirements”. The project document remains unclear in some parts.
- The PRC requested “assessment of the current FSC schemes in region”. The project responded by giving number of hectares certified FSC, but it does not mention if the FSC schemes clearly get positive social or environmental lasting impact and whose actors are benefitting the most. This is a critical issue as this is the fundamental argument why the project is taking place.
- The PRC requested to have clear Monitoring and Evaluation (Component 4). The project document included then an “International Expert in Monitoring and Evaluation Washington-based staff” (Appendix11), but he/she is not included in the budget.
- The PRC requested that all the posts with their role and responsibilities are “correctly referenced in the narrative of prodoc” which is not the case.
- The PRC requested that “Gender equality is adequately addressed” in the document. Gender has only been added in the “social (including gender)” safeguards, not in the document itself.
- The PRC requested that the project partners with institutions working on the issue of curbing the demand side on illegal product (ex. The IFCCC group), in particular towards China and India. This concern was not included in the final prodoc.
- The PRC asked to strengthen the environmental safeguards. These safeguards remain rather weak (e.g. no mention of environmental impact of governance, negative spill-over effect of creating new market).
- The PRC requested to get information of the partners at country levels. The prodoc only gives some names as footnotes. The description of Rainforest Alliance is also very reduced (four lines).
- The PRC requested clarity “Institutional arrangements and project decision making”, in particular on the role of RA. In the prodoc RA roles kept unclear (The role was clarified after the mid-term review).

Rating for Preparation and readiness: Unsatisfactory

Quality of Project Management and Supervision

213. From Mid-Term Review, the project benefited from committed partners at global (WRI), regional (RA) and pilot sites (Ministry of Forest in the Republic of Congo and ANDEGE in Guinea Equatorial) who supervised the implementation. For the implementation of the pilot projects in Pointe Noire, National project leader (from Ministry of Forestry and Economics) based in Brazzaville combined phone discussions with bi-monthly visits to achieve proper supervision. The turnover of key staff in each organizations was low and the staff had technical and management capacity aligned with this complex project. Main partners RA/WRI provided excellent leadership towards achieving the planned outputs and outcomes.

214. Yearly Steering Committee Meetings, annual work plan and quarterly feed-back against the monitoring and evaluation systems focused attention on delivering outputs and outcomes.

215. The relationship between WRI (as executing agency) and RA (as main partner) was smooth and collaborative both technically and financially. The leading project regional partners showed excellent adaptive management skills, as evidenced by the speed of response to contextual change, accuracy of response and close monitoring of the project implementation. Lastly, RA partners showed openness to discuss all technical and financial issues during the evaluation, understanding the value of this assessment and commitment to learn and improve.

216. This excellent project execution by RA/WRI explained that the project was able to complete the planned activities within the deadlines, despite an initial delay (about one year). However, of course, even with this conducive execution, it was not possible to achieve all outputs with a high quality and all the direct outcomes in such a short time frame, this it to say a bit more than year from the project mid-review to the end of project in July 2015.

217. Project execution by RA/WRI was also made difficult because of lack of supervision from UN Environment. On the positive side, UN Environment participated to each annual Steering Committee and maintained positive atmosphere with WRI/RA. On the negative site, UN Environment did not show any sort of supervision: it did not share UN policy guidelines on gender or indigenous peoples, did not draw attention on some fundamental issues for UN Environment (such as communication and outreach, engagement with beneficiaries, correct incorporation of the PRC review). UN Environment did not show any leadership in communicating and collaborating within UN Environment units/divisions working on similar issues (climate, ecosystems). UN Environment did not guide the partners to develop partnership with other agencies (GEF executing agencies, bilateral aid, firms, NGOs) implementing similar projects. As a result of this lack of supervision, the Executing Agency (WRI) and main partner (RA) did not make any effort in some key issues for UN Environment and for achieving the project's objective itself (such as communication, stakeholder engagement, partnership, gender, indigenous peoples). Without supervision, the partners were also able to engage in activities that were not within the scope of the project, such as the pilot project on cacao farming.

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Moderately Unsatisfactory

Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

218. Project partners collaborated very well together to achieve outputs. Annual workshop meetings in pilot countries and annual meetings of the Steering Committee provided momentum to finalise annual work plans, exchange knowledge and move forward.

219. The project made efforts to partner with COMIFAC. After the Mid-Term Review and the strengthening of the RA office in Yaoundé (Cameroon), relationships between COMIFAC and the partners have been strong, as COMIFAC has its headquarters in the same city.

220. Partnership with COMIFAC was Operational. COMIFAC co-chaired the Steering



Figure 10: COMIFAC Secretariat (March 2018)

Committee, participating at each annual meeting of the project so that project remained relevant for COMIFAC; COMIFAC staff was involved in the studies at two levels: in the selection of candidates and in the peer reviews of the draft documents (that often happened two years later in 2014); the project had a dedicated section on COMIFAC website where three of the nine project studies were uploaded (APV FLEGT, legal gaps, on capacity building for NGOs); RA participated in COMIFAC's monthly partners meeting, dealing with the working group on forest governance. RA also invited COMIFAC at the 2015 Kinshasa regional workshop on "Community forest". The content of the 9 thematic documents elaborated at draft between 2012-13 were circulated among COMIFAC secretariat, and therefore were used for the revised version of the Convergence plan 2015-2025.

221. The partnership with COMIFAC was not so strategic: Project engaged with COMIFAC secretariat, not political leaders (Ministers from the member countries); Project did not have a clear strategy on how to effectively liaise with COMIFAC. Most studies drafted in 2012-13 remained as draft until final review by COMIFAC's Secretariat two years later. This meant that most of the reports had become obsolete. Although COMIFAC had accepted to upload three studies in 2015 to its website, they were not available (as at February 28, 2018) because the website has been redesigned. In addition, no analysis¹⁸ was done on how these studies and involvement with COMIFAC contributed to the revised Convergence plan 2015-2025; COMIFAC itself has been underfunded by its member states, as such COMIFAC Secretariat is lacking necessary resources to duplicate projects outputs and outreach to others to gain lasting direct outcomes.

¹⁸ The project team note that this was done at the Project Steering Committee meeting in Feb 2015.

222. Cooperation with stakeholders that were not project partners remained very weak throughout the project. The initial implementation began with a poor analysis of the affected or potentially affected groups with no assessment at local and country level. The initial project document and the logical framework mentioned this assessment would be done at the inception phase. However, even after the Mid-Term review and the revised logical framework, this activity still remained to be executed. With respect to the issue of “Communication and Public Awareness” (see 5.9.6. in detail), there were few efforts to promote stakeholder ownership. It was clear that the engagement with large-scale logging firms, the donor governments, the bodies promoting certifications, the social NGOs working on equity and rights, local politicians and the administration were key success factors. However, communication with those groups was only done on an ad hoc basis through monthly meetings that the COMIFAC organized regionally. Finally, the project assumed a positive impact of its intervention but it was not measured in any way. The project had given some consideration between poverty alleviation, environmental protection and livelihood development but this remained very superficial. It was insufficient to address the complex interrelated issues such as equity of opportunity to participate in the project, human rights or poverty alleviation. In particular, the evaluation findings indicate a strong gender bias in the beneficiaries (see below) and that the project supported vulnerable peoples but not the most vulnerable (e.g. forest dwellers access to the cacao certification programme in Cameroon) or those representing these people (e.g. the association representing the marginalized peoples) were not involved in the project.

223. Cooperation with other UN Agencies also remained poor. Among the projects under the same GEF-4 Trust Fund, three may have had an impact on the project to some extent: the GEF/FAO on bush meat, the GEF/UNDP on wetlands and the GEF/World Bank (WB), with the GEF/WB having a significant overlap on the Component 2 of the project (financial incentives) and 3 (governance). Before starting, the project team consulted with other projects under this Trust Fund, especially the World Bank REDD+ project. There was an understanding that UN Environment would focus more on assessment at the regional level (COMIFAC) and the World Bank at the national levels. This led to a re-design of the pilot project activities in the Republic of Congo to be focused on wood processing instead of REDD+ activities that the World Bank was undertaking. At the implementation stage, there was no evidence to suggest that strategic or operational work done with other projects that could have linked under this GEF-4 Trust Fund. There was also no collaboration with other GEF agencies on related issues (FAO, UNDP, World Bank).

224. There also was no strategic or operational work done with other GEF projects (from GEF-5 or 6). Some of those projects were on very similar issues, such as FAO on communal forestry in Cameroon. At the same time GEF projects or their executing agencies also did not seek strategic and operational relations with this UN Environment/GEF project.

225. Overall, communication with other GEF projects and GEF agencies was limited to a) invitation to review the assessment on financing (World Bank attended) and b) ad hoc exchanges during the monthly meetings for partners organised by COMIFAC at regional level (in Yaoundé). To a certain extent, personal relationships between project staff at national and regional levels allowed informal levels of coordination which avoided overlapping activities. Good coordination also happened because all projects had involvement with the same ministries (Forest Ministry in the countries and COMIFAC secretariat regionally).

Rating for Stakeholder Participation and Co-operation: Unsatisfactory

Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity

226. In the project document, gender equity is only mentioned as an annex in the “social (including gender)” safeguards, not in the document itself. This happened despite the fact that gender equity was approved in the MTS in 2010 and that the PRC requested that “Gender equality is adequately addressed” in the document. The project document did not mention human rights.

227. Despite the rising issue of gender equity and human rights during the period of the project, the subsequent revision after the Mid-Term Review in 2014 did not identify human rights and gender equity, showing no consideration in project implementation.

228. At the same time, the main project implementation partner RA showed direct interest in gender issues. RA, itself has a policy on it and the national coordinator for the pilot project in the Republic of Congo is also the gender focal point in Ministry of Forestry (Figure 11). Being sensitive to gender issues RA requested that all outputs include gender (i.e. number of men/women trained) even though it did not get a guidance from the implementing (UN Environment). Project partners did not go any further than recording gender by output and on the ground that there were no specific activities nor a budget for it.



Figure 11: The focal point for the pilot project in Republic of Congo is the gender focal point within the Ministry of forestry.

229. Interestingly, women made up about a third of the project staff and fulfilled the most important positions during the entire project. The project coordinator in RA, the regional coordinator for WRI, the national coordinators in the Republic of Congo and Equatorial Guinea, the monitoring manager with RA were all women.

230. In pilot countries, the project supported marginalized peoples but not the most disadvantaged ones. For example, in Cameroon, Baka (the forest dwellers) did not engage in the project, despite it being opened to them. They were not interested in certification schemes which were seen as extra work with no clear benefit. The woodworking capacity building programme at the Ministry of Education in Pointe Noire (Republic of Congo) also tried to include marginalized people in the curriculum. These were youth neither working or studying that were sent by the social services. But, most of them abandoned the course during the year. This illustrates that to support the most marginalized peoples in a society,

extra efforts and budgets are required to address the root causes of the marginalization and work from their perspective. This was well beyond the scope of the project.

231. In summary, despite UN Environment stressing the importance of gender and marginalized people even before the start of the project, these issues overlooked both in the design and in the implementation of the project. RA partially addressed the gender issue by adding a column to record men and women in the Monitoring and Evaluation system, but did not take any specific actions. The project however stood out in having all important positions in the project staffed by women, including the project focal points in Congo and Equatorial Guinea.

Rating on Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity: Unsatisfactory

Country Ownership and Driven-ness

232. The focus here is on forward momentum, either: a) from outputs to direct outcomes or, b) from direct outcomes towards impact. The project had initially secured an in-kind contribution from each of the three pilot countries of US\$400,000 which equates to US\$100,000 per year and per country. In addition, the COMIFAC committed to an in-kind contribution of US\$200,000 for four years.

233. Countries struggled to fulfil their commitment. WRI did not record any in-kind from the three countries which may be due a lack of both commitment and reporting from the countries. The pilot project in CAR was suspended and therefore there was no in-kind contribution from them. In the Republic of Congo, the focal point with the Ministry of Forestry actually received extra resources to the work from the project. As a result, it stopped working on the project from August 2015 when the project and therefore resources ended. On the positive side, the Ministries of Forestry and Education endorsed the results. The curriculum for alumni set up by the Ministry of Education with support from Ministry of Forestry is recognized as a "Brevet d'Etude Technique" within the Ministry of Education. Both Ministries expressed their interest that the project continues and is being replicated in other parts of the Republic of Congo. However, they do not have their own budget to do so. In Equatorial Guinea, ANDEGE worked closely with the Ministry of Environment to develop a REDD+ policy. More generally, REDD+ issues are gaining momentum in all Congo Basin countries with regulations and institutions being established.

234. At regional level COMIFAC supported the project with an in-kind contribution of US\$95,000. COMIFAC however had no specific funds for this project and is directly dependent on the Congo Basin countries for any activities. The financial situation of COMIFAC is dire with countries paying late to pay basic running costs (e.g. salaries) with any activities wholly dependent on donors. COMIFAC, more positively, endorsed the results of the projects by promoting the results on its website. However, COMIFAC did not actively work to drive or advocate for change to achieve better results.

235. From the above, the assessment demonstrates that the project was not driven by the countries, they showed no interest in supporting it. However, for this project to be successful, it needed engagement with Government Ministries/ public sector agencies. Moving from outputs to direct outcomes or from direct outcomes to intermediate states needed leadership, especially in: provision of in-kind and / or cash co-financing contributions; strategic guidance of project delivery; and endorsing / accepting project results; and driving for change to achieve higher level results; all of this was lacking.

Rating on Country Ownership and Driven-ness: Unsatisfactory

Communication and Public Awareness

236. Communication and public awareness was identified as a criterion of evaluation of the project's performance in the initial project document. However, it was not detailed in the project document, there was no budget line, and hence no dedicated persons or activities undertaken.

237. Communication about the learning and experience was done on a yearly basis during the Steering Committee meetings. Through formal interviews and informal discussions with various stakeholders, it was noted that beyond project partners, few people knew about the project. Even the main project partners WRI/RA did not use their website or their own communication resources to raise awareness on the project. Only at the end of the project in 2015 did RA produce a booklet with some of its main activities and a billboard (Figure 12). The regional workshop on "Community forestry" in Kinshasa provided another good opportunity to raise regional awareness on this project and the specific issue but there was no input from the project or its partners despite some local media coverage. COMIFAC agreed to have a dedicated webpage for the project on its website and added three documents that it had endorsed. However, when COMIFAC updated its website a few months later, those documents were no longer available (and are still not accessible). On a positive note, in the pilot site of Republic of Congo, the National association of wood carvers disseminated information to all its members. In the pilot site of Equatorial Guinea, the association ANDEGE facilitated discussion on REDD+ for the whole country.

238. Evidence suggests that project audience barely knew of project's main messages, the



Figure 12: Billboard describing the main project components

project did not undertake meaningful communication activities or established communication channels. The Communication/public awareness was wholly ineffective to drive change towards results beyond outputs. In addition, there was no experience sharing between project partners and other interested groups (especially donors, social and environmental NGOs, logging firms, UN agencies) and more broadly the project did not prepare a communication strategy/plan.

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Unsatisfactory

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

239. The overall evaluation rating is Unsatisfactory. The rating should have been Highly Unsatisfactory, but giving the fact that the external context was rated Unfavourable, the rating has been upgraded. This is a weighted score from the evaluation of the different criteria (see Table 8 below). Given the wide range of ratings from highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory, the overall project needs to be understood in its history, from its start to its completion with a focus on some key criteria detailed below.

240. In the beginning, the project had established over-ambitious outcomes. The partners assumed that with key policy assessments (e.g. on REDD+, fiscal incentives, on legality, on benefit sharing) directed at COMIFAC level, combined with some pilot projects and the supportive overall global trends to conserve forest for its carbon value, it would drive sustainable forest management practices in the Congo Basin.

241. The initial project design had overlooked some fundamental issues, such as the exact beneficiaries and local partners, a budget/human resources for activities such as monitoring, communication and public awareness, stakeholder participation and cooperation, and responsiveness to human rights and gender equity. In addition, it underestimated the challenging context in which the project was operating. Moreover, the project did not address main assumptions locally and internationally. At the local/national level, a key issue is the importance of good governance. This entails working with the administration to enforce law, protecting the whistle-blowers, engaging with political elites, or partnering with logging firms.

242. At the international level, Asian firms became market leaders with the global logging market shifting towards Asia, a market that was not requiring SFM products, including FSC certification. Finally, the initial project took very long to be approved, with more than three years between the initial concept note, and the final approval in 2011. This meant the project design was already out of step, for instance with the up to date market context. In addition, the final project document did not incorporate most of the UN Environment recommendations from the Project Review Committee (PRC). To add to all those challenges, the initial institutional set up was overly complicated with actors in six locations: an Executing Agency (WRI) in Washington, a regional coordination in DRC, a sub-contract for regional technical back-stopping with RA in Cameroon and pilot activities in CAR, Equatorial Guinea, and Republic of Congo.

243. This challenging start explains the initial delays of one year linked to finalizing all contracts with the local partners and setting up the Steering committee, with a first Steering Committee meeting organized 1.5 years after the start date. When implementing the project and to their credit, WRI and RA quickly understood the difficulty to implement the project components. As a result, WRI, the original lead on the project, focused its efforts on regional policy assessments where it has a recognized expertise in environmental policy and RA focused on the pilot activities. After the Mid-Term Review in March 2014, RA was officially nominated as project lead focusing more on implementing the pilot projects and on community forestry, a topic on which it has a solid expertise. To achieve the expected outputs and outcomes, WRI and RA developed tools and implemented effective strategies. First, they established a tailor-made monitoring system with a dedicated staff and budget. In addition, they presented work plans at the yearly Steering Committee (in 2013, 2014, and

2015), involving the projects managers, the financial managers and the monitoring expert. Combined with a diligent and supportive supervision from WRI and RA as well as an excellent communication between managers and accountants, those tools and measures allowed WRI and RA to quickly adopt recommendations from mid-term review, disburse funds and take adaptive measures to reach outputs. This also allowed them to report quarterly, semi-annually and annually to donors on a timely basis. They overcame some of the institutional complexity of the project avoiding administrative or financial delays. With these efforts, the project fully delivered 5 outputs (5 highly satisfactory) within the project time-frame (August 2015), these outputs are directly linked to studies or training in FSC certification where RA had a strong expertise. But, despite those efforts from the partners, the delivery of 10 outputs remained low (5 moderately unsatisfactory, 5 unsatisfactory). In addition, one of the outputs was not delivered at all.

244. Moving from outputs into outcomes, however, remained even more problematic. The sustainability of the outcomes was rated Unlikely because it depended on socio-political, financial and institutional sustainability conditions that were not yet fulfilled. Countries did not provide additional funds, not even in-kind financing, from their own budget to implement and sustain the actions, COMIFAC remained structurally powerless to impose policies on countries and pilot activities could not be financially sustained. There was no evidence of the pilot activity being taken up anywhere else or being actively promoted. As an example, the woodworking factory would have benefited from the implementation of a proper business plan and of a secured supply of quality wood with a proper dryer. In addition, it was implemented only at one location, and trained some individuals, which is a minor contribution for a project of this scale. A key reason why outputs did not turn into outcomes was due to the initial set up, poorly designed outputs which did not match the ambition of a full-size project, not identifying and engaging with the key stakeholders, and the long delays during the time of the project, especially due to a lack of knowledge of socio-political local stakeholders and the initial difficulty to access GEF funds. Therefore, it was impossible to reach quality outcomes in two years (i.e. the time from pilot projects implementation to the end of the project). This life-span is far too short to show high quality outcomes in the forest sector, because these are policy issues (for instance legality, governance and economic instruments) that require time for agreement and implementation.

245. Obtaining long-lasting results was even more challenging especially due to the fact that the project did not deal with two underlining assumptions mentioned above: local/national governance and a level playing field in the global wood market. Drivers were also not yet in place: The market to reward developing countries to protect their forests for carbon value was yet to be operational and the FLEGT effort was not supporting FSC certification contrary to expectation. Both these issues remain to this day. To contribute to lasting impacts, the project needed to have acted strategically around two issues: stakeholder's participation and cooperation, and the communication and public awareness. As explained earlier, the initial project did not include those issues.

246. The stakeholders' cooperation remained very low. There was no strategic or operational work to support key groups to disseminate widely, to replicate initiatives that would have address the drivers or assumptions, even not with the other GEF-4 projects. Practically no local administration, politicians, representative of indigenous networks or large-scale logging firms were involved in the project implementation and its governance (Steering committee). The communication and public awareness remained also a low priority. COMIFAC agreed to put some of the outputs on their website, but then it was

removed. There were no plans or actions that raised awareness, improved understanding, created shared knowledge and built relationships with other entities. These two shortcomings (stakeholder's participation and cooperation, and the communication and public awareness) were understandable because the initial project overlooked it and the implementing partners were too busy in delivering outputs. However, by omitting them it had a negative feedback to project partners and their delivery. For example, their inability to secure co-financing or to effectively lobby logging firms to adopt FSC certification.

247. To conclude, the main project partners (RA/WRI) managed the criteria they were responsible for rather well: they scored between Unsatisfactory and Satisfactory (project implementation). This was an achievement considering the challenging initial situation, the lack of adequate supervision from UN Environment and a rather difficult context in the forest sector. Despite this good work, the project was not able to achieve the direct outcomes and the likelihood of impact is rated Highly Unlikely. Some issues such as pilot project, gender, engagement with marginalized peoples, required a better allocation of time/budget within the project and others – communication and outreach – had been omitted in the project design. If the role of RA/WRI can be rated as moderately satisfactory overall, the role of the UN Environment as Implementing Agency during the project was not up to par. The project document did not mention the role of the UN Environment. The recommendations from the Project Review Committee were hardly incorporated. The different UN Environment sections did not know about this project (despite the fact that GRASP or UN-REDD+ for example had a particular interest in it). The only recommendation from the Mid-Term Review that was addressed to the UN Environment was not fulfilled (elaboration of a MOU between UN Environment and COMIFAC to address political elite) and the criteria where UN Environment could have contributed with its convening power (stakeholder participation and cooperation) and world outreach capacity (communication) were rated Unsatisfactory. Finally, UN Environment did not raise the capacity (or understanding) of the Executing agency on how to access GEF funds. As a result, it took one year and four months for WRI to get the GEF grant at the start of the project, which had a dire impact on executing the project at a critical early stage.

B. Lessons learnt from project experiences

248. Based on evaluation findings, we have considered the lessons learned from project experiences. Those lessons have the potential for wider application describing the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful.

Lesson 1. Ensure that Executing Agency and its partners understand UN Environment expectations in the implementation of projects.

249. UN Environment support (and supervision) was considered non-existent from partner's point of view. As a result, they were rather lost in the implementation process, and even engaged in activities that the project was not supposed to finance (cacao farming). All the partners claimed not to be aware of the existing guidelines from UN Environment (on gender or indigenous peoples) as well as the importance of communication or collaboration. In implementing the project, they were unaware of their initial commitments (annexes for gender, communication and outreach, monitoring, indigenous peoples). There is a strong need to tighten the UN Environment supervision over projects so that they stay focused and are executed in line with UN Environment policies and practices (e.g. stakeholder

engagement, cooperation, communication, gender, indigenous peoples). Ensuring the Executing Agency and its partners properly understand the UN requirement will also help partners in managing the monitoring and evaluation system and in improving their reporting to UN Environment. This is fundamental to improve both supervision and take adaptive measures. At the moment, the executing partners see the reporting requirements (quarterly, semi-annual, annual and PIR reports for GEF projects), more as an administrative burden to access funds than as a useful tool to improve performance.

Lesson 2. Build on already functioning projects for upscaling

250. The range of activities and the number of pilot projects was very low. In addition, the project developed the pilot projects from the start, having to overcome all of the associated administrative-political and institutional hurdles, instead of building on existing initiatives. As a result, the pilot projects were not finalized, they left hardly any lessons, and thus their value in showcasing approaches for upscaling and replication was limited (see section H). As a lesson to be learned, when it is possible, projects should 1) build on existing local initiatives and support their uptake and replication at national level; 2) support conducive national process to upscale the piloted approaches at the regional level.

Lesson 3. Stay focused on a specific policy area

251. The activities of this project were scattered from local to regional level covering several aspects of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) (e.g. economics, legislation, technical skills, governance), resulting that the influence on one particular aspect of the SFM was very low and that there was no influence at all on the overall SFM in the region. In other words, the project could not adequately achieve its outcomes, and its influence on promoting SFM in the region was low. As a lesson to be learned, similar initiatives would do better if they stayed focused on a specific policy area and engaged much closer with the respective decision makers, administrators and the private sector to strengthen the link between local results (pilots) and regional level decision making.

Lesson 4. Ensure that the key stakeholders are identified and engaged throughout the project cycle

252. The TE found that the causal links between the outputs, outcomes and intended impact were weak. Because of this, drivers and key stakeholders were not adequately identified and hence there was little to no engagement with the relevant Ministries at national level or the relevant bodies at the regional level. Engaging the key stakeholders from the start would also have had many positive effects on outreach, collaboration, and co-financing. Thus, a lesson to be learned is that project design needs to have a well thought through theory of change, and roles and responsibilities of the identified stakeholders need to be carefully considered. At the project implementation stage, these stakeholders need to be adequately engaged.

Lesson 5. Increase transparency and collaboration among all actors implementing the project

253. In this project, there would have been real need to increase transparency and collaboration among all actors implementing the project. The TE found that during the implementation process, both the Executing and Implementing Agency tended to over-rate the project (outcomes and impacts) as reported in the PIRs and lower the risks the project

was actually facing. This might have happened in the fear of affecting the release of funds. However, this situation has impeded the project to take corrective measures. In this context, increased trust and shared knowledge among all stakeholders would have been essential. As a lesson to be learned, the Task and Portfolio Managers of GEF-funded projects should carefully assess and verify the information presented in PIRs and maintain close communication with the executing partners to be able to form a realistic picture of the project progress and to be able to take corrective measures.

Lesson 6. Streamline project management layers

254. In this project US\$ 669,252 or 22% of the GEF grant (US\$3,075,681) were spent on field activities at national or local level. Considering the secured co financing (US\$5,106,000) and GEF grant, the figure is about 8% spent on field activities. In addition, the initial set up of the project was complicated (overall responsibility in Washington, regional responsibility Kinshasa for WRI, main project partner in Yaoundé, and three pilot projects in other countries (CAR, Equatorial Guinea). Most of the funds were used to cover administrative and management costs. This prompts the question of the efficiency of the project. A lesson to be learnt is that project design needs to be carefully reviewed also from the perspective of cost-effectiveness, this includes streamlining project management layers and appropriate selection of partners.

Lesson 7. Ensure that communication is a central aspect of a project

255. Communicating to the wider audience is fundamental to develop understanding, establish trust, foster partnerships, and ultimately ensure that the project is supported in the wider society and its results are shared. As this project demonstrated well, in the absence of virtually any communication, very few stakeholders knew about the project, its activities were not integrated in the wider society, and the outputs literally died out at the end of the project. A lesson to be learned is that carefully planned communication needs to be central to all projects, and communication activities need to be budgeted for.

Lesson 8. Allocate sufficient funds for Evaluations

256. Budget for the TE was underestimated when approving the project in 2011. The TE needed extra time and resources because of additional parameters: The Use of TOC and evaluation office tools, the complexity of the project, the lack of support from the TM, and the difficulty to access information because the evaluation took place two years after the completion of the project. The TE requires more resources than the Mid-Term Review/Evaluations that can still get the logistical/technical support from the implementing partners.

C. Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Clarify project financial information

257. Context: Despite several requests, this Terminal Evaluation was not provided with complete information on the financial aspects of the project. The project was completed in February 2016, with the final transfer being made from UN Environment to the Executing

Agency in December 2016. However, the TE was not granted access to financial reports after June 2014¹⁹, and no information has been provided in regards the purpose of the final funds transfer. Especially since the audits reported on mis-management of funds, the financial status of the project should be clarified.

258. Recommended Action: The TE recommends the Ecosystems Division to ensure that all of the required financial information is provided by the Executing Agency and the audit findings, especially when a mis-management of funds is mentioned, is communicated and discussed with the Division management.

Recommendation 2. Analysis of the project shortcomings

259. Context: The Terminal Evaluation found shortcomings in the way the project was designed and implemented (omitted to involve some of the fundamental stakeholders, did not involve actors working on similar initiatives in the countries, most funds were used for project management instead of implementation on the ground) and the way the project was supervised. These factors contributed to the project being provided an overall evaluation rating of “unsatisfactory”, with the likelihood of impact being rated as “highly unlikely”.

Recommended Action: the TE recommends that the findings of the terminal evaluation are discussed by the Ecosystem Division with a view of clarifying Divisional-level processes and practices which might have contributed to the shortcomings of this project.

Recommendation 3. Make use of existing knowledge exchange/best practice platforms within UN Environment to discuss projects relating to forestry and forest management.

260. Context: Key people interviewed within UN Environment in different divisions and units, including all those who had a direct interest on the project for working on sustainable forest management with the same countries (GRASP, UN-REDD/ UN Environment) were aware of the project. However, they all show interest in the project. In this context, there would have been a strong need for all staff have a mechanism to get access to this information, so that it can learn from the project or participate to it.

261. Recommended Action: The TE recommends to make use of existing knowledge exchange/ best practice platforms within UN Environment to discuss projects relating to forest management. This could, for example, be established through the Ecosystem Management and /or Climate Change Sub-programme coordination function.

Recommendation 4. Ensure that projects implemented in the Congo Basin promote, not impede, gender equity and equality.

262. Context: In the Congo Basin, women play a vital role in forest management (e.g. collecting wood and fruits, using traditional medical products, small scale agriculture within agro-forestry system, carving wood). However, it appears that in projects concerning sustainable forest management, women are systematically excluded and the perception that forest management is about land issues, political issues, and logging issues that are dealt

¹⁹ Some Information was given as the report was being finalised and was not deemed to be ‘evidence’ as it was received from one source only.

with men is retained. This was the case also in this project. As a result, women are further marginalized through the execution of the project. In this context, proactive measures must be taken to address these imbalances.

263. Recommended Action: UN Environment, through the Ecosystems Division and the Ecosystem Management Sub-programme Coordinator, should develop a mechanism which ensures that any project implemented in the Congo Basin fully promotes gender equity and equality. This includes, 1) ensuring that Executing Agencies and other project partners have a proper gender policy compatible with the UN Environment Gender Policy before project approval; 2) providing guidance to project partners on what it practically means to mainstream gender into project activities; 3) ensuring the project has a specific budget line to undertake activities promoting gender equity and equality; and 4) ensuring a gender balanced representation in the project governance.

Recommendation 5. Ensure that projects implemented in the Congo Basin include, not exclude, indigenous communities.

264. Context: Indigenous peoples and their communities have been managing the forest in the Congo Basin sustainably. However, due to the current development, they are becoming marginalized and losing their access to the land without getting a fair share of the forest revenue. As this project showed, there is a tendency to omit the indigenous communities as the main project stakeholders and not to include them in the project governance. As a result, this project might have further marginalized these people both in decision-making and implementation processes.

265. Recommended Action: UN Environment, through the Ecosystems Division and the Ecosystem Management Sub-programme Coordinator, should develop a mechanism which ensures that any project implemented in the Congo Basin 1) includes representatives of indigenous peoples in the project governance (Steering Committee); and 2) ensures that the project activities support the inclusion, not exclusion, of indigenous communities, with a specific budget line attached to these activities.

D. Summary of project findings and ratings

266. The table below provides a summary of the ratings and finding discussed in Chapter 0.

Table 8: Summary of project findings and ratings

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Evaluation Office Comments	FINAL RATING
Strategic Relevance		MU		MU

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Evaluation Office Comments	FINAL RATING
1. Alignment to MTS and POW	The project is highly relevant to the UN Environment mandate and aligned with the UN Environment Medium Term Strategy (MTS) (2010-13) and expected accomplishments in the Programmes of Work (POW) (2010-11; 2012-2013), including for four Sub-Programmes (Climate Change, Ecosystem Management, Environmental Governance, Consumption).	HS	No further comment required.	HS
2. Alignment to UN Environment /Donor/GEF strategic priorities	The project contributed to the GEF 4 Objectives and Priorities (biodiversity strategic Objective 2, sustainable forest management strategic Objective 2).	MU	The Evaluation Office acknowledges that the project was not in line with UNEP's policies on the Bali Strategic Plan and South-South Cooperation. However, apart from contributing to the GEF objectives listed, it was relevant to the wider GEF project on the Congo Basin.	S
3. Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	The project is relevant at the regional level, to the "convergence plan" of the Central African Forest Commission (Commission des Forêts d' Afrique Centrale – COMIFAC). However, in practice, the countries that are part of COMIFAC did not provide additional co-financing in cash, and only two that were hosted pilot projects provided some in-kind cofinance.	MU	In addition to the low rate of contributions in relation to county pledges, it appears that the project, while potentially relevant to the COMIFAC Convergence Plan, did not work closely or strategically with/within this plan. However, the Evaluation Office has awarded a rating of MS, based on the level of involvement COMIFAC had in the project, as presented in the evaluation report.	MS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Evaluation Office Comments	FINAL RATING
4. Complementarity with existing interventions	The project missed the many opportunities to involve actors (donor agencies and UN Environment divisions) working in the same area on similar issues. Somewhat, without coordination, it complemented some of these activities that were more at national level.	U	It is disturbing to find that the project did not work in conjunction with, or liaise closely with, other relevant UN Environment projects such as 'Greening the Cocoa', nor with other similar projects in the region (e.g. DFID funded projects), nor with any of the 12 projects implemented by four different GEF implementing agencies (FAO, UNDP, UN Environment, World Bank) falling under the GEF funded Strategic Programme for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin (CBSP), a multi-focal area six-country initiative with a total funding of more than \$200 million (\$46 M from GEF and \$160 M from co-finance).	U
Quality of Project Design	The project was politically very timely, with main actions being interested in SFM, addressing three core issues (lack of harmonization, lack of economic incentives; and poor governance). However, the project document overlooked the involvement of the main actors (logging firms, policy-makers, administration), omitted some budget lines (for communication, collaboration, gender), missed the description of the local level context and beneficiaries in each country.	MU	It is noted that the over ambitious nature of the project was identified during the evaluation and the reconstructed TOC at evaluation contains adjustments that reduce the level of ambition at outcome level.	MU
Nature of External Context	Internal war prevented CAR from undertaking pilot projects. The region has also faced an unexpected economic crisis.	U	For clarification: there is an expectation that projects will be designed with the prevailing external context in mind. This criterion is to allow for the capture of unexpected and additional external factors such as civil unrest, natural disasters etc.	U
Effectiveness		HU		U

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Evaluation Office Comments	FINAL RATING
1. Delivery of outputs	31% of the outputs were fully delivered; most of the outputs delivered that would affect the outcomes were delivered late/of little utility; and there was a low user ownership.	U	There is an unusual level of variance in the delivery of outputs, which has posed a question of aggregation. In this internal review the method of aggregation was described and, while valid, results in a rating of Unsatisfactory (U). Given the challenging operating context and the efforts made to respond to the recommendations of the Mid Term Review, the evaluation will adopt an aggregation method that results in a rating of Moderately Unsatisfactory	MU
2. Achievement of direct outcomes	Transition from outputs to direct outcomes was not achieved because some key drivers were not in place: support from large firms remain to be seen, REDD+ is not yet functional (sustainable finance yet to be implemented), or legal implementation remained as issues	HU	In any project, without delivering the majority of intended project outputs or delivering them in a way that affects their utility (e.g. delivering behind the rate of change), intended outcomes are unlikely to be achieved. If the outcomes were achieved without the delivery of most/the most important outputs it would suggest other factors were driving those changes, and not the project itself. The Evaluation Office amended the rating of one outcome to 'partially achieved' thereby affecting the overall rating here.	U
3. Likelihood of impact	The intermediate states were not achieved and the drivers to support transition from intermediate states to impact were not yet in place. This requires a conducive governance system at national level and a financial mechanism for forest conservation globally, all of this requiring to engage stakeholders that were largely missing in the project.	HU	Similarly, if intended outcomes are not achieved then it is highly unlikely that any potential benefits from those outcomes can be long-lasting.	HU
Financial Management		U		MU

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Evaluation Office Comments	FINAL RATING
1. Completeness of project financial information	Financial revision after mid-term and revised log-frame was not made available. There was also no explanation why there was still fund transfer (US\$172,941) in December 2016 from UN Environment to WRI after the financial closure of the project (February 2016); co-financing was poorly reported.	U	The rating of Unsatisfactory (U) is kept here largely because of the lack of a management response to an audit report that raised questions about financial processes within the project. The lack of documented management action is a serious gap in the financial information.	U
2. Communication between finance and project management staff	<p>Executing Agency: Programme officers and finance officers in both WRI and RA were proactive in raising and resolving financial issues.</p> <p>Implementing Agency: There is no evidence that TM or FMO were involved in this process, as such it is not clear that FMO had overview of this project. The fact that 1) there was a no cost extension until February 2016 and then still fund transfer in December 2016 and 2) it took more than a year for the second disbursement (only in 2013) reinforces this observation, especially that early financial delays may have huge impact at the end of the project</p>	MU	<p>Information gathered from various sources during the evaluation supports the conclusion that there were varied levels of performance on communication depending on the point of focus (Executing Agency or Implementing Agent).</p> <p>The evaluand here is the project and so a rating is given that is relevant for the combined effect on the performance of the project. The aggregation however, warrants an MS rating for this sub-category.</p>	MS
Efficiency	The project was extremely complicated, being in six locations (overall responsibility in Washington, regional responsibility Kinshasa for WRI, main project partner in Yaoundé, and three pilot projects in other countries (CAR, Equatorial Guinea). In total, only about US\$669,252 million (or 8%) of the US\$8 million (US\$ 3 million GEF grant and US\$ 5 million in co-financing) were allocated to pilot projects. Very little funds were allocated for concrete activities in the field, and most of it spent on administration and traveling, generating a high carbon footprint.	U	Under Efficiency we consider time and cost. In this case, although the project did require only one extension, its cost-effectiveness is low, given a) the way the budget is allocated and b) the low delivery rates of planned outputs.	U
Monitoring and Reporting		U		MU

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Evaluation Office Comments	FINAL RATING
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	At the design phase, there was no monitoring system in place to follow the progress against indicators, including a disaggregated level of relevant stakeholder groups, including gender; Funds for Mid-Term Review and above all Terminal Evaluation had been underestimated.	U	No further comment required.	U
2. Monitoring of project implementation	A year after the start of the project, the intervention developed a user-friendly monitoring system. Information generated was used to adapt and improve project execution, achieve outputs, and outcomes. It explained partially why project partners had only one no cost extension.	U	The report provides sufficient evidence to suggest that the project implementation was properly monitored, at least after the Mid Term Review. This may not have been according to UN Environment expectations, but the online system was effected and warrants a rating of Satisfactory.	S
3. Project reporting	RA/WRI generated timely reports to UN Environment. UN Environment uploaded some of documents elaborated on ANUBIS web portal as up June 2014, Tracking Tool was not completed at all. Quality of the reports remained an issues: Level of achievements were overrated and the associated risks seriously lower, impeding to get a correct overview of the situation and take corrective measure.	MU	Similar to communication between finance and project staff, this rating relates to the combined effect on the performance of the project under project reporting.	MU
Sustainability		U		U
1. Socio-political sustainability	The sustainability of project outcomes has a high dependency of the project to social or political factors. At project level, there was not a strong ownership, interest and commitment among governments and other stakeholders. At pilot country level, there was some ownership at the site level, but this might be subject to government changes. There are few mechanisms in place to adapt to changes in the social or political context. the socio-political link between local site, national level and regional level remains to be seen.	MU	The method preferred by the Evaluation Office for assessing sustainability has been followed in the evaluation (i.e. an assessment of the project's dependency or sensitivity to one of the sustainability dimensions combined with an assessment of what the project has done to mitigate against the effects of this dependency).	MU

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Evaluation Office Comments	FINAL RATING
2. Financial sustainability	The project intervention showed a high dependency of project outcomes on future funding (or on financial flows) to persist. But, there is no sign of funding coming through. There is no plan how to seek this require funding, even it REDD could be a possible source in the coming years. An exit strategy was developed for the pilot site in Congo but there was no yet functioning financial component.	U	No further comment required.	U
3. Institutional sustainability	The sustainability of project outcomes shows a quite high dependency to institutional support. The intervention achieved to develop a complete but still weak mechanism to sustain the institutionalisation of direct outcomes. The integration of the outputs and outcomes in the national governmental institutions and how these institutions have been strengthened through the project also remain to be clearly seen.	MU	No further comment required.	MU
Factors Affecting Performance	The project even rated Highly Unsatisfactory. But due to the Unfavourable external context, it is rated Unsatisfactory.	U	Text to the left should be deleted (not in the right place).	U
1. Preparation and readiness	Social and environmental safeguards assessments carried out before the start of the project were too partial (e.g. not all relevant groups targeted) and superficial (depth of analysis). This situation impeded the project to engage with the most relevant stakeholders such as the firms, social movements, and political leader. Along those lines, most (nine) of the United Nations Environment Project Review Committee (PRC) (the internal UN Environment committee that approves new projects) were poorly addressed in the initial project document	U	No further comment required.	U

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Evaluation Office Comments	FINAL RATING
2. Quality of project management and supervision	Excellent project execution by RA/WRI, especially towards the end of the project, explained that the project could finish most of the planned outputs within the deadlines. However, UN Environment didn't show any sort of supervision. Without supervision, t and quality most of outputs remain low and the partners. even engaged in activities that were not at all within the scope of the project.	MU	No further comment required.	MU
3. Stakeholders participation and cooperation	Project partners collaborated very well together to achieve outputs. Project made efforts to partner at regional level (with COMIFAC), but was not strategic. Cooperation with stakeholders (logging firms, large ONGs, administration, representatives of indigenous peoples) remained very weak. Cooperation with other UN Agencies also remained inexistent, including with other GEF projects.	U	No further comment required.	U
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity	UN Environment stressed the importance of gender and marginalized people even before the start of the project. But, these issues overlooked both in the design and in the implementation of the project. RA partially addressed the gender issue by adding a column to record men and women in the Monitoring and Evaluation system, but did not take any specific action.	U	The recommendations from the Project Review Committee on gender were not addressed. The MTS (2010-13) under which this project was initiated, makes a clear statement of UN Environment's commitment to gender equality: "UNEP is committed to the integration of gender equality and equity in all its policies, programmes and projects and within its institutional structures."	U
5. Country ownership and driven-ness	Project was not driven by the countries, they showed no interest in supporting it. However, for this project to be successful, it needed engagement with Government Ministries/ public sector agencies. Moving from outputs to direct outcomes or from direct outcomes to intermediate states needed leadership	U	No further comment required	U

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Evaluation Office Comments	FINAL RATING
6. Communication and public awareness	Project audience barely knew of project's main messages. The project did not undertake meaningful communication activities or established communication channels. The Communication/public awareness was wholly ineffective to drive change towards results beyond outputs. In addition, there was no experience sharing between project partners and other interested groups and more broadly the project did not prepare –and then use - a communication strategy.	U	No further comment required.	U
Overall Project Rating	The overall rating is 1.76, which is Highly Unsatisfactory. However, it is rated U because of the external context that is Unfavourable	U	The internal review does not find any reason for further adjustment due to the external context. The rating on Delivery of Outputs has already considered the challenging context.	U

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Table 9: Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the reviewers, where appropriateRESPONSES TO EMAILED COMMENTS FROM THE CO-IMPLEMENTING PARTNER (RAINFOREST ALLIANCE), ON 8th May, 2019

COMMENTS ON THE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	EVALUATION OFFICE RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They do not take into account that issues at project design stage may have impeded the team's ability to rectify during project implementation. 	<p>Any evaluation can only assess performance or results achieved against the approved plans (i.e. what was committed to).</p> <p>The original project design was used to assess the 'quality of project design' and rated Moderately Unsatisfactory.</p> <p>The Mid Term Review was an opportunity to revise the project's design and some changes were made as a result. This revised version of the project was taken as the relevant formulation of the project at evaluation.</p> <p>The evaluation offered a 'reconstructed TOC' to again adjust the project according to reality. This TOC was endorsed by both the Implementing Agent and the Executing Agency/Co-implementing partner and was thereafter used to guide the assessment of the project's performance.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The limited cash contribution of the COMIFAC countries does not reduce the relevance and the contribution of the project to the COMIFAC's convergence plan and to the national strategic priorities. 	<p>Comment relevant to the sub-category <i>Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities</i> under the evaluation criterion Strategic Relevance (rated HS in draft and MU in final).</p> <p>The cash contribution of COMIFAC, rather than being 'limited' represents 47.5% of their pledge (USD95,000 against a pledge of \$200,000). Equatorial Guinea provided 28.5% of its pledged \$400,000 and only the Republic of Congo provided its full pledge.</p> <p>This <i>reduced commitment</i> to the project has to call its recognized relevance into question. The issue of over-promising co-finance is a significant one because the results are linked to the expected funding envelope – when the funds aren't forthcoming the likelihood of the agreed results being achieved are reduced and the potential effectiveness of those funds that are provided (e.g. a GEF grant) is compromised.</p>

COMMENTS ON THE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	EVALUATION OFFICE RESPONSE
	<p>However, the Evaluation Office accepts a rating of MS, based on the level of involvement COMIFAC had in the project, as presented later in the evaluation report.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outputs are often times evaluated as outcomes: For example, all the 9 studies were reviewed by COMIFAC national coordinators as well as OFAC and GIZ in April 2013, then validated during the validation workshop in 2014 and finally endorsed by COMIFAC in 2015. The fact that some of those studies could not be published on COMIFAC’s website, because their recommendations became outdated, means that we did not achieve the outcome. The output, being the production of the reports and their validation by stakeholders was however achieved in full. 	<p>The assessment of the delivery of outputs considers both their provision and their utility. Outputs are important results on the pathway to achieving outcomes and, in many cases, if the output is not made available to the appropriate people then it cannot fulfill its role in a change process. Where products are generated but are either too late to play a significant role, are not ‘owned’ or deemed useful by those who should use them or are not disseminated to those who should use them, then their utility is limited.</p> <p>No adjustment strategy was made known to the evaluation (e.g. alternative form of dissemination; revision to the recommendations to make the outputs relevant etc)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Table 5, Detailed analysis of each output, we do not recognize the wording used for outputs as they do not correspond to the revised logframe validated by the Steering Committee nor to our M&E system, which was the basis for evaluation throughout project implementation. With some outputs formulated as outcomes, it is clear that the evaluation claims we did not achieve some those outputs to the contrary of what our M&E system says. 	<p>The formulation of the outputs in the evaluation report are as they appear in the reconstructed TOC at evaluation. The original outputs are largely without verbs, which cannot be evaluated and, in line with GEF evaluation policy, adjustments had to be made. Verbs were included in the TOC and the TOC was endorsed by all relevant parties prior to data collection or analysis. The formulation in the TOC has been used within this evaluation. The outputs in the TOC are set, appropriately, at dissemination level and are not set at outcome level (i.e. uptake or use of outputs).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the ratings were revised downwards without any additional insights/evidence. 	<p>The ratings in evaluation reports are reviewed to maximise the consistency of applying ratings across all the evaluations UN Environment carries out. In some cases in the initial draft of this report it was found that the ratings were not consistent with the UN Environment Evaluation Office guidelines and were adjusted accordingly.</p> <p>The ratings were reviewed as part of the process of reviewing the comments made on the draft. The ratings were adjusted based on all the cumulative evidence at that time. Some of the ratings in the initial draft were not consistent with the evidence already presented in the report and the commenting process did not, in those cases, present any further evidence.</p>

COMMENTS ON THE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	EVALUATION OFFICE RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While we appreciate that our September 2018 comments were taken into account, we feel that the ratings do not reflect the comments that are supporting them. 	<p>The text in the ratings table will be reviewed as part of this internal review process. A column to the table will be added for the Evaluation Office comments and final ratings.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We do not understand the statement that only 4% or 22% of the project was used for local or national activities estimated at just about \$600,000. This is for example incongruent with Rainforest Alliance’s budget for activities that were implemented in the different countries, and support to national partners in the implementation of their activities. 	<p>Evaluation Consultant: Local and national initiatives refer to the pilot projects carried out by local/national partners at local and national levels. Most of Rainforest Alliance activities are of a coordinating and administrative nature. Those activities are not counted as local/national activities.</p>
COMMENTS ON TECHNICAL CONCEPTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total lack of understanding of “replicable models”. For example, replicable models for the CSO capacity building program did not primarily aim at performing training of CSOs (hence should not be measured with the number of people trained) but creating the model/methodology for such a capacity building program. Also, the training of trainers delivered in RoC and the equipment of the woodworking shop/vocational school, validated by the ministry of vocational training, is a replicable model. 	<p>This comment relates to two outputs: 2.1 Training, outreach activities and field exchanges on benefits achieved from SFM have been delivered in RoC <i>Target</i> 100 trainees in the Republic of Congo <i>Achieved</i> 32 trainees in Cameroon (32%)</p> <p>2.2 Regionally replicable training programmes on artisanal woodwork delivered <i>Target</i> 50 trainees <i>Achieved</i> 15 trainees (30%)</p> <p>Whichever definition of ‘replicable model’ one takes, these outputs reached, at most, 32% of their targeted numbers and as such, cannot be considered more than Moderately Unsatisfactory. The evaluation process did not set the targets.</p> <p>In absolute terms, the number of trainees involved (32 and 15) are not appropriate as a basis for generating any evidence to support replication.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The activity on sustainable cocoa production was linked to forest certification instead of linking it with REDD+. Agriculture is the main driver of deforestation in Congo Basin countries with cocoa production 	<p>Evaluation Consultant: We agree that agriculture is the main threat to rainforests and could be linked to REDD+ activities, therefore as a mean to reduce deforestation. However, the support on cocoa production was not initially planned and was not thought through. It was undertaken without proper follow up (regarding</p>

COMMENTS ON THE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	EVALUATION OFFICE RESPONSE
<p>playing a significant role. This activity was then fully in line with the Output as it relates to REDD+ and not on SFM.</p>	<p>certification or sustainable management). Farmers were left alone after an initial training in 2015. As assessed in March 2018, this has led to negative outcomes, with deforestation increasing on the pilot site. It happened because farmers went further in deforesting to increase cocoa areas. Indeed, one key aspect of cocoa plantations for REDD+ is that it grows not in a thick rainforest, but in a partially cleared rainforest.</p> <p>More broadly, different actors that were interviewed questioned the effectiveness of cocoa for REDD+. This pilot project tends to give ground to their worries.</p>

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON THE TEXT FROM THE TASK MANAGER AND CO-IMPLEMENTING PARTNER (RAINFOREST ALLIANCE) ON 8th MAY, 2019

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
Author, page 1	The report as it stands, can it be considered as independent report from Denis?		<p>No change required.</p> <p>Independence in an evaluation context relates to the separation of line management lines so that evaluation office staff are not within the line management structure of the evaluands.</p> <p>The relationship between the Evaluation Office and the Evaluation Consultant is described, in relation to the evaluation report, in the front pages of the report.</p>
Project Identification Table	The last steering committee was 01 to 02 October 2015 at Pointe Noire, Republic of Congo .	Report of this steering committee is missing on the Monitoring & Evaluation system (gef-unep-wri-ch-tracking kit).	<p>Lack of documentation noted.</p> <p>The date has been accepted in the Project identification Table.</p>
Executive Summary Para 10	This contradicts many of the project outputs which show evidence of engaging these stakeholders.	<p>As explained below, for the “large logging firms”, the project engaged very few actors compared to the large number of actors. In addition, it missed the main emerging actors (especially from China and national actors). “Administration” corresponds to the different levels of administration (local, district, national) and type of administration (environment, economics, forest, education etc.) to be involved to achieve the project. The project made efforts to engage them, but it remained ad hoc (e.g. the steering committee meetings,</p>	The justification of the Evaluation Consultant is accepted (namely that ‘ <i>fundamental stakeholders were omitted</i> ’)

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
		<p>for some activities), and not strategically planned and implemented consistently in the long term on a more daily basis.</p> <p>“Beneficiaries” refer to the ultimate actors which benefit from the project. For instance: in the case of the “Cacao certification”, the project benefits Bantu farmers, it doesn’t benefit the Ba’Aka who are the forest-dwelling hunter gather peoples in the region, the project even further marginalized them.</p> <p>Furthermore, in the case of pilot project in Pointe Noire (RoC), 15 people were trained, the students do not use their learned skills (they change academical pathway leaving woodworking) and the National Woodworking Association has been excluded from the implementation process. In March 2013, this association was still waiting to sign an MOU so that it can work with the school and manage the factory.</p>	
<p>Para 10</p>	<p>Staff from industrial logging companies were trained in Forest Certification to help them understand the requirements and apply them in their day-day managements and preparation of their FSC and chain of custody audits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st training 16-19 july 2012 Cameroon: 4 companies (Vicwood, Alipicam, TRC, groupe rogier) (2 people trained). 6 participants from the administrations See deliverable 2.4.2 attached - 2nd training RoC: 2 companies (CIB, SODEFOR), 6 participants from the adminsitratons - 3rd training 23-26 june 2013 in Gabon: 1 OAB, 1 OIBT, 9 from the forest adminsitration 	<p>Indeed, the project strove to include logging firms. However, this engagement is very minimal compare to overall issue in the Congo Basin. There are more than 200 logging firms in the Congo Basin (8 companies had 1 or 2 people trained).</p> <p>In addition, the project mainly focussed on the few already engaged in the FSC process (i.e. Groupe Rougier, Alpicam, CIB, SODEFOR). More fundamentally, the project missed the new dominant chinese firms (holding more than 50% of the concession areas in region) and the national logging firms.</p>	<p>The justification of the Evaluation Consultant is accepted (namely that <i>‘fundamental stakeholders were ommitted’</i>).</p>

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
Para 10	Not sure what beneficiaries are here. There is evidence of supporting wood processing school and wood processing firms in Rep of Congo and in Equatorial Guinea the whole stakeholders involved in APV FLECT	Detailed above	Based on the responses above the justification of the Evaluation Consultant is accepted (namely that <i>'fundamental stakeholders were omitted</i> including beneficiaries).
Para 10	What about the role of EQMBO on equipment in CETM and training of staff and Woodworkers association AMC in the use and maintenance of timber processing equipment's?	EQMBO trained very few (about 15 people), this cannot really qualify. In addition, some of the tools were not of use: duplication from what the RoC Government had bought, the dryer was not well through and therefore is not used). Finally, maintenance of processing equipment remains a huge and un-solved issue. There is no maintenance, and the tools are getting old and not replaced when broken.	The justification of the Evaluation Consultant is accepted (namely that <i>the work of EQMBO on training staff on woodwork and providing equipment in CETM does not does not make this project 'particularly relevant with regards to UNEP's efforts towards enhancing the South-South Cooperation and Bali Strategic Plan on technology transfer'</i>)
Effectiveness Para 11	Done in CAR, Congo and CAR. Done at regional level with community forestry department of Cameroon, Gabon, DRC. see All Mov on capacity strengthening shared have been shared with the consultant on this		Addressed in the comment for para 13 below.
Para 11	It will be good to know how these governments should be engaged. Through their Embassies? Did the project has mandate to do so? This option will be bring more complication with a project dealing with sensitive issue such illegal logging	Involvement of Asian actors could have been done in various ways: in the project as firms to be part of the certification trainings; by outreach to raise awareness of all that this problematic and is deeply affecting the project; by strengthening cooperation with stakeholders (working on trade issues; focussing on rights of indigenous peoples); by enhancing cooperation with UN Environment divisions working on similar issues (trade/REDD) and other UN agencies; by discussing with governments (including from Asia and donors) directly or through the involvement of UN Environment.	Text remains as is: Asian actors (government and firms) should have been involved.
Para 11	This is a various serious allegation which needs to be clarified. We need evidence for such kind of statement This particularly false as the Project Cooperation Agreement signed with WRI has clearly included clauses related to such issues	See section I "Factors Affecting Performances"	See paras 145 and 222. Full assessment of quality of project design was done during inception phase.

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
Para 11	This is not true. National reports for the project preparation phase show evidence of consultation with relevant partners in each country	Beneficiaries (and especially indigenous peoples and their communities) and logging firms (especially from Asia) which are both fundamental are lacking	The text stands: 'The initial project ... did not properly identify the main actors to engage with prior to the project's implementation (including communities logging firms, political or administrative elites)
Para 13	How can it be? - In Congo: partner is the ministry of forest. Direct beneficiary the ministry of technical education. They all participate in the National steering committee together with the private sector (AMC) and CSO - In EG, all activities targeting capacity building of staff from the forest and environment sector - In CAR; before the crisis 100% directed to community engagement in sustainable management through REDD+ and community forestry - After the crisis in CAR, activities towards community participation in forest management in central Africa (regional meeting involving representative of local communities), and REDD+ through sustainable agriculture (in Cameroon around the Dja reserve). Participation of the administration in national steering committee - For all the 5 countries, national coordinator of COMIFAC are coming from the administration and deeply involved through their participation in the regional steering committee to the planning of all projects activities and budget All MOV shared with the consultant!!!!	By the end of the project efforts had been made to involve in particular COMIFAC, ministries and some associations linked to the project (but not beyond obvious ones such as development aid agencies, UN bodies, other universities, social-environmental NGOs from international scope). More fundamentally politicians, representative of indigenous networks or large-scale logging firms were hardly involved. These three types of stakeholders are directly involved (as beneficiaries, victims, or main perpetrators) of the illegal timber trade the project strived to address. These comments also highlight a key point here is the good will of RA to involve more with local communities throughout the project. But this only could really happen towards the end of the project (2015) when it was unfortunately too late (because all this takes time to build trust, relationships, change national policies etc)	Engagement of stakeholders needs to be relevant to the scope and nature of the issue being addressed.
Para 13	Media coverage on all steering committee and workshops, we use the PFBC website several times to communicate on the project, COMIFAC news letter, participation to conferences+ presentations of the results of the project etc.	Beyond the project partners (that got finances or goods/services) no other stakeholders interviewed (see annex) know that the project was existing, although they all work on the very same subject in the region.	Findings are triangulated and reflect an analysis of combined views – i.e. including those of funded partners as well as other interviewed stakeholders who could have been expected to have known about the project.

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
	All MOV shared with the consultant!!!!		
Para 13	The project was member of COMIFAC Forest Governance Working Group where it has shared lessons. All the thematic studies have been shared with 6 countries Government representatives and with COMIFAC		Shared knowledge and relationships need to go beyond a small steering group on an issue like illegal timber logging.
Para 14	During the discussion with the consultant, it was clear that he did not understand how co-funding works in GEF. The consultant did not really get the complementary concept with other organisations managing their own funds. The weakness' here is more on the monitoring of these co-funding than on the co-funding itself.	<p>There were two sorts of co-funding. The cash co-funding US\$11,668,067 from USAID, EU and Canada SIDA in the initial project document. Partners did not report on this funding during the implementation phases and in the final report (October 2015) that list all the co-funds. According to the interviews, those fundings didn't materialize for two reasons: some funds were spent before the project started and therefore cannot be taken into account as part of the funding envelope of the project (the project only started in September 2011); some other funds never materialized because donors (ex. USAID/SIDA) changed their priorities from 2011.</p> <p>For the in-kind co-funding that came from national governments and COMIFAC, the figures come from what those actors sent to WRI/RA and that were then sent to UN Environment. WRI/RA did not express concern about these figures when reporting them to UN Environment. If WRI/RA believed that this in-kind contribution was poorly reported, they should have alerted UN Environment and requested that the partners (ex. Governments, COMIFAC) provided improved figures.</p>	The Evaluation Consultant has explained the co-funding figures and pledged cash funding was not provided. The fact reported by the Evaluation Consultant that USD5m out of USD14m has not been questioned so the conclusion stands – i.e. there was a negative financial impact on the project only being able to secure 5 out of the USD14 m
Strategic Partnership Para 16	COMIFAC was chairing the Project Regional Steering Committee and it was anticipated that the project cooperation with other initiatives should be covered by COMIFAC Furthermore, the first Project Steering Committee has made a recommendation for		The sentence challenged is: <i>'Beyond that [contributing to the convergence plan], the project did not contribute to, nor cooperate with, the growing list of actors working on similar issues, including the multilateral implementing agencies from the Global Environment Facility-4'</i> . Text remains as is.

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
	synergy and complementarity with other projects and initiatives		
Efficiency Para 17	<p>If the co-funding part is said to have not been mobilised and that activities of other partners were not monitored does not implies that all this co-funding partners was inactive in the subregion for the overall project life. So I don't see the logic of using the pledge funding in this calculation.</p> <p>the previous draft in September was talking about 1 million for field activities.</p> <p>RA subgrant itself is 1 387 121 for regional RA office directed at 100% towards activities in the region for training and direct support to other subgrantees in Congo and Equatorial Guinea. How was the \$669,252 calculated?</p>	<p>Most of Rainforest Alliance activities are of a coordinating and administrative nature. Those activities are not counted as local/national activities.</p>	<p>Three different calculations are given and it is relevant to refer to the figures at design (i.e. the secured and pledged sums) because it points to a design/structural weakness, which is then reflected in the actual implementation.</p>
Para 18	<p>How can we manage project implementation rather well and score unsatisfactory? This is contradictory</p>		<p>This paragraph is summarising the overall findings. UN Environment evaluations focus on results (i.e. the intended positive effects) and not just delivery (i.e. project implementation). Achieving the intended positive effects requires several factors/conditions to be effective.</p>
Para 18	<p>RA never complain on lack of supervision from UN(-Environment. This statement is false on our side. There are evidence of the task manager participation in all steering committee, but also on monitoring visits in Congo, several skype discussions for its feedback on the preparation and implementation of field activities, preparation of the regional meeting on community forestry, etc.</p> <p>This is a false statement as we shared evidence of project supervision reports and Steering Committee regularly conducted.</p>	<p>We understand that attending meetings and participating in discussions on the project and outputs is important.</p> <p>However, project supervision refers to providing effective guidance towards the goal of the project (for example UN Environment policy on gender or indigenous peoples), checking if guidance is implemented, keeping track of the initial project goal, providing support on specific issues where UN-Environment can provide a comparative advantage (communication & outreach, convening power, collaborating with other UN divisions).</p> <p>All of this is detailed below in the conclusion and recommendations.</p>	<p>The text does not say that RA complained of a lack of supervision?</p> <p>Evaluation findings are based on more than a single source of information and this refers to whether the project supervision was effective.</p>
Para 18	<p>This is beyond the project mandate. However, the Project Task Manager has recommended to COMIFAC to come to Nairobi to engage in a</p>	<p>This is a fundamental concern. Why is a MoU/ collaboration with UN Environment not a priority? Would it mean that UN Environment</p>	<p>If the recommendation from the Mid Term Review (which is a process managed by the Task Manager) was beyond the project mandate then it should have been formally rejected</p>

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
	dialogue which will lead to the MoU but collaboration with UN Environment has never (and it is still) not a priority	(and its projects) is not credible or not important enough?	with a justification. Other recommendations from the MTR were adopted.
Lessons Learned Para 19	All these have been convened to Project Partners on various occasion by UN Task Manager		Comment is unclear – the report text refers to aspects of project management practices that UN Environment expects to see followed.
Para 20	Worth to note that this project has never been a request from member states or COMIFAC, rather G8 submit requested UNEP and GEF to do this project to address illegal logging in the region which become a sensitive issue given the governance situation in respective countries		Given the sensitivity of the issue (illegal logging) this comment is, in itself, a concern as it implies a top-down approach?
Para 22	This is very well done in each pilot country and the thematic reports per country can show evidence of that		This section is ‘Lessons Learned’ – these are lessons that other projects are advised to consider when implementing similar initiatives under similar conditions.
Para 23	This has always been done		
Recommendations Para 30	This already ongoing and the GEF Secretariat Gender Programme Manager positive comments on UN Environment approach to gender in project design is an evidence that Ecosystem Division is doing well in that area. The present project is a particular case addressing sensitive issue in a difficult environment		The recommendation stands. The Evaluation Office has not found that UN Environment is consistently strong in its gender responsiveness. The Ecosystem Division management can decide on the level of action it needs to take on this recommendation.
Para 31	This is already in Practice. We can show evidence from our project currently implemented in Cameroon and Republic of Congo. Project under design for DRC has already consider this issue.		As above, this is a recommendation and UN Environment has not demonstrated consistently strong inclusivity in its project implementation. While it is encouraging that one project is considering the issue, the recommendation is for a more systematic approach.
Evaluation Method Para 76	Too much results and analysis difference in this report to assume that there is only 4 steps in this methodology. With all the differences between the first version of the report in september 2018 with the methodology described here that ends in April 2018, and what we have now, there is certainly a fifth step.		Sentences on the review and commenting process has been added to the text (para 78 and 79).

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
Para 77	This methodology has to be completed with a table explaining the different scores. The perception is that on the 6 scales of individual rating (Highly Satisfactory; Satisfactory; Moderately Satisfactory; Moderately Unsatisfactory; Unsatisfactory and; Highly Unsatisfactory.) this version of the evaluation uses just HS on the satisfactory axis, and the all grades of UnSatisfactory.		The comment is made on Annex IV which is a standard table of 'People Interviewed' . Comment is not entirely clear. The ratings are based on an assessment of performance under each criterion. It is not a requirement that all six steps on the scale are applied within a single project.
The Project Para 92	Just technical management for national sub-contractors in Congo and EG,	RA was also attending the yearly committees to establish budget, including for pilot projects, and monitoring pilot project expenditures.	The comment refers to the 'management of sub-contractors'. Text remains as is, Rainforest Alliance was also part of the management mechanism for sub-contractors, as described.
Para 93	So how that " only US\$ 669,252 (or 4% of US\$ 16,918,748) of the overall pledged funds being used for pilot activities at local or national level" as stated above???		The comment refers to implementing countries allocating USD500,00 to the GEF fund. These amounts are not all used for the pilot activities under this project.
Para 111	2 level steering committee : 1 at national level in each pilot country with high representation from all stakeholders and the second regional with good representation from the host country. This is only true about the GEF Operational Focal Point in the country where the meeting is taken place. This is to give the regional nature to the project and contribute to dialogue between Focal Points in the sub region This is not true. All COMIFAC national coordinators were participating at all steering committees, national and regional	In order to highlight these two levels, the Para 111 has been reframed as follows: "Steering committee has two levels. A regional level, which in addition to UNEP and COMIFAC included a civil society representative, a focal point in the pilot countries (rotating depending on the location of the annual meeting), a representative from civil society and a representative from private sector. A national level in pilot countries which replicates the regional arrangement nationally."	Text changed.
Para 114	The activity's aim was to contribute to REED+ and not Forest certification. field activities on promotion of sustainable cacao production, as a mean to reduce deforestation and agriculture encroachment in the Dja faunal reserve. The activity conducted with cocoa producers around the Dja reserve in Cameroon was the result of the inability to perform a pilot for	Promotion of sustainable cacao production cannot be considered as an effective means for REDD+. March 2018 field assessment found that promoting cacao without proper supervision and without getting a proper certification system has led to further encroachment of the forest, as cacao production takes place in disturb forest. As such, farmers further encroached forest to establish plantations.	Footnote added to the text that the intention of the project was for the cacao production outputs to contribute to REDD+

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
	multi-stakeholder collaboration in CAR. The steering committee decided to relocate this activity to Cameroon in its 2014 meeting. and so was in line with what was foreseen in the log frame under communities and REDD+	In addition, this activity further marginalized the forest dwellers that didn't benefit from this project	
Evaluation Findings Strategic Relevance	Rating revised from HS to MU without any additional insights/evidence		<p>The criterion 'Strategic Relevance' has four sub categories. In the initial draft the aggregation of the rating for Strategic Relevance did not reflect UN Environment Evaluation Office's weighting within the sub-categories. This was addressed in the final draft.</p> <p>The Evaluation Office assesses: 'The project's implementation strategies and delivered contributions (results)' under all the sub-categories of Strategic Relevance. While this project was well aligned with other initiatives it did not demonstrate that it had worked with them closely during implementation. However, during the internal review the Evaluation Office found an error in the recording of the rating for the second sub-category and has corrected it. However the overall rating for Strategic Relevance remained at MU.</p>
Para 133	There is a contradiction in the summary that did not take this into account a contribution to the Bali strategic plan		Text edited to make the meaning clear and to remove any contradiction.
Para 134	We disagree with this analysis. Whether or not COMIFAC and COMIFAC countries did provide co-financing does not change the fact that the project was fully relevant to the Convergence Plan. Also, the lack of contribution to in-kind co-financing is further evaluated in I. Factors Affecting performance: Country Ownership and Drivenness, so it is unfair to rate it here as well. The limited cash contribution of the COMIFAC countries does not reduce the relevance and the contribution of the project to the COMIFAC convergence plan		The Evaluation Office assesses: 'The project's implementation strategies <u>and</u> delivered contributions (results)' under all the sub-categories of Strategic Relevance.
Para 135	The project did contribute to furthering Equatorial Guinea's national REDD+	There is hardly any evidence of link between national policies and project in the reports.	Text remains as is.

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
	<p>framework. It also helped furthering the community forestry frameworks in the Congo Basin countries by organizing a workshop in the DRC fostering the exchange of best practice, and as an active member of the COMIFAC's working group on decentralized forestry. These are just a few examples that are not mentioned here, and have been diligently reported on.</p>	<p>However, the point is well taken on Equatorial Guinea that contributed to NAMAs. The workshop in DRC at regional level in 2015 is usefull and is a starting point. But, it comes far too late in the project implementation to contribute to national policies, it remains exchanges of best practices among participants. Participation to COMIFAC working group remains at regional level.</p>	
Para 136	<p>We think that it is unfair to rate the lack of coordination here, since this section is about strategic relevance at project design. The lack of coordination is already rated in I. Factors Affecting Performace: Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation.</p>	<p>This section is about Complementary with existing interventions, and therefore relevant.</p>	<p>The Evaluation Office assesses: 'The project's implementation strategies <u>and</u> delivered contributions (results)' under all the sub-categories of Strategic Relevance.</p>
Para 136	<p>Not true as the local and national level were involved. * In Congo, forest administration and local education administration in pointe noir (délégué departmental) was involved in all project's activities at the CETM. The TWO ministries at national level were deeply involved in the PSC - In EG, national and local administration of the ministry of forestry received training on FLEGT, forest control, REDD= etc</p>	<p>Indeed, some local and national levels were involved. But, it was not done in a systematic/consistent manner at different scales (national, district, local) and from different complementary angles (economics, social, environmental), as such, outputs were not completed or were of poor quality. For example for the CETM, there is not yet a specific curriculum for students to graduate on wood carving. In the same vein, the National Woodworking Association complained that the level of learning from students was too low to be then employed by a firm. There were workshops and training, but what may matter more is the daily and long-term engagement and involvement so that policies can be developed/implemented and mindsets changed.</p>	<p>Evaluation Consultant has explained – text edited for emphasis.</p>
Para 136	<p>What type of beneficiaries are we talking here? administration, CSO, COMIFAC, AMC were present at the national steering committees and at the regional steering committee</p>	<p>This refers to the ultimate beneficiaries (who will get the ultimate gain from the project), which at the local levels were the indigenous peoples and local communities (not the</p>	<p>Text remains as is.</p>

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
		administration and CSO who are intermediaries of the project).	
Para 137	Again, this is about complementarity at design; not collaboration during implementation.	As written, collaboration during the implementation was missing.	The Evaluation Office assesses: ‘The project’s implementation strategies <u>and</u> delivered contributions (results)’ under all the sub-categories of Strategic Relevance. Text remains as is.
Para 139	This comment should be dealt with under A. Alignment to UN Environment/Donor Strategic Priorities. This project fostered exchange between Congo Basin countries through COMIFAC, but also, for example, with a workshop organized for the exchange of experiences in implementing national frameworks on community forestry. You could also argue that Equatorial Guinea’s efforts to refine the national REDD+ framework contributes to developing coherent international environmental policies, which is a stated objective of the BSP. Last, both the WRI project manager and RA project field coordinator were based in Congo Basin countries, fostering direct local capacity transfer, and counterbalancing international staff travels. After mid term review all activities were implemented by local RA staff at regional level and by national subcontractors. Can we have some data on this ratio “most of the funds” means how much?	139. The paragraph explains that the large amount of funds for international staff and travelling also direly negatively impacted the contribution to South-South cooperation and Bali strategic plan on technology transfer. Indeed, there were very little funds left for that. We agree, that RA/WRI made efforts to address this, especially towards the end of the project. However, these efforts were late and as such little (in term of funds or scope) compared to the magnitude of the project.	Evaluation Office assesses Bali Strategic Plan under the second sub-category of Strategic Relevance – text moved.
Para 140	Forest certification to help them understand the requirements and apply them in their day-day managements and preparation of their FSC and chain of custody audits. - 1st training 16-19 july 2012 Cameroon: 4 companies (Vicwood, Alpicam, TRC, groupe rogier) (2 people trained). 6 participants from the administrations See deliverable 2.4.2 attached	We acknowledge that the project included some logging firms. However, this engagement is very minimal compare to the overall issue in the Congo Basin. There are more than 200 logging firms in the Congo Basin. In addition, the project mainly focussed on the few already engaged in the FSC process (ex. Groupe Rougier, Alpicam, CIB, SODEFOR). More fundamentally, the project missed the new dominant chinese firms (ex.	Paragraph text remains as is.

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2nd training RoC: 2 companies (CIB, SODEFOR), 6 participants from the administrations - 3rd training 23-26 June 2013 in Gabon: 1 OAB, 1 OIBT, 9 from the forest administration 	<p>holding more than 50% of the concession areas in region) and the national logging firms. Both of these actors are becoming dominant but do not show interest in FSC certification.</p>	
Para 140	<p>And all the pilot project in the Congo?? It was 100% on technology transfer!!!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The carpenter workshop fully operational as stated in this same report. train-the-trainer events, designed new training modules etc which were facilitated by EQMBO experts from CANADA 	<p>The project in RoC is about technology transfer. However, it is not yet finalized and little compared to the overall project. The tools were provided, and therefore the workshop is operational (and in fact duplicating what the government has given at the same time). But, the workshop is not functioning for four reasons: 1) the dryer is not adequate; 2) nobody wants to pay for the fuel of the generator, and therefore the workshop only functions from times to time; 3) there is no investment plans and tools are getting old, some of them are already wasted; 4) it remains unclear on how the now knowledge is applied in practice. National Woodworking Association complained that the level of learning from students was far too low to be of use (even though teachers and students show good will).</p>	
Para 140	<p>We disagree with the change in rating from HS to MU considering above comments. This final rating does not fit with sub rating above: very relevant, somewhat relevant at regional level and national level, with \$500 in RoCongo toward technology transfer and training, the final rate can not be moderately unsatisfactory for its strategic relevance.</p>		<p>The sub-category ratings have been adjusted by the Evaluation Office to HS, S, MS and U. However, given the Evaluation Office's weighting between these sub-categories, the overall rating for Strategic Relevance remains MU.</p> <p>The Evaluation Office assesses: 'The project's implementation strategies <u>and</u> delivered contributions (results)' under all the sub-categories of Strategic Relevance.</p>
Nature of the External Context Para 147	<p>It is exactly in this context of poor governance that there is a need of a project to work on the issues of illegal trade & governance.</p>		<p>The Nature of External Context criterion considers any <u>unexpected external factors</u> such as a natural disaster or political upheaval etc (i.e. not a regular, predictable national election that follows normal processes). In this case the sensitivity of illegal logging in the Congo region was a known factor at the time of project design.</p>

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
Effectiveness Delivery of Outputs (Table) 1.1	<p>The strategy document was reviewed by COMIFAC members as well as OFAC and GIZ in April 2013. It was then validated during the validation workshop in 2014. And finally it was approved by COMIFAC in 2015. The fact that it could not be published, as its recommendations became outdated, means that we did not achieve the result, which was to have COMIFAC disseminate the report. The output, being the production of the report and its validation, was however achieved in full.</p>		<p>Without dissemination of the report to the intended beneficiaries the output has no utility and cannot be considered a result that can move the change process towards outcome level.</p> <p>Timeliness of delivery is an element of the assessment of whether outputs have been fully or partially delivered.</p>
1.1	<p>Should say “COMIFAC strategy document on harmonized regional approach to the sustainable management of production forests” as per the project’s M&E system based on the revised logical framework after the mid- term review validated by the project’s steering committee “and circulated amongst key stakeholders” is a result, not an output</p>		<p>Dissemination to intended beneficiaries is part of the assessment of an output – the use of an output is an outcome.</p> <p>E.g. a report that remains on the laptop of a project personnel and is not shared with the intended user cannot be considered as a fully delivered output.</p>
1.1	<p>False: COMIFAC national coordinators representing the forest administration in the 5 countries Output was achieved at 100%</p>	<p>The 7 participants from five organisations were: The World bank (1 participant); AGRECO (1); OFAC (1); COMIFAC (3); WRI (1)</p>	<p>Text remains as is</p>
1.2	<p>In the revised logframe, Output 1.2 was only about the glossary. The strategy was captured in Output 1.3. Should say “Regionally agreed definitions and strategy documents on informal and illegal logging” as per the project’s M&E system based on the revised logical framework</p>		<p>Footnote added</p>
1.2	<p>This output was not possible because national strategies were not in place, making it impossible to define a strategy on a regional level. This is a problem with the project design, rated separately, and not with the effectiveness of project implementation. The</p>		<p>The project carried out a Mid Term Review, after which some new outputs were added. This would have been the time to adjust this output if it has been identified as ‘impossible’. As it remained a formal part of the results framework to the end of the project it remains a valid part of the results framework to be assessed in the Terminal Evaluation.</p>

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
	second half of the output should not be evaluated for said reasons		
1.4.1	The output was the assessment, which was performed. Its lack of endorsement is an outcome, which must be evaluated as an outcome.		<p>Ownership and value-recognition by the intended user and dissemination to intended beneficiaries is part of the assessment of whether an output has been delivered in full or not. There is no value in an output that does not reach the hands of the intended beneficiary.</p> <p>The use of the output by the intended beneficiary is an outcome.</p>
1.3	<p>As per the March 26, 2015, meeting memo, COMIFAC concluded that the subregional forest control agreement provides guidance for each country to develop its own strategy to combat illegal logging. Therefore, the proposed methodology cannot be published, however quantitative and qualitative data can help those working on formalization instruments in the informal and artisanal sectors.</p> <p>Again, this is a problem with project design, not implementation. In fact, the agreement on forest control allows each country to decide on its own strategy, hence making a harmonized methodology obsolete.</p>		<p>If a harmonized methodology had become obsolete it should have been formally withdrawn from the results framework (either in the Mid Term Review or in the minutes of a subsequent Steering Committee meeting) and an alternative strategy to address the gap that would then be left in the Theory of Change, should have been designed, articulated and formally adopted.</p> <p>Text remains as is: ‘the assessment was not uploaded on the COMIFAC website nor further circulated because it was not considered useful anymore.’</p>
1.3	<p>Again, the output was produced but the problem was with the project design. this document was circulated to COMICAC national coordinators and presented at the International Conference on Illegal Exploitation and illicit trade in wild flora and fauna in Africa Brazzaville, 27-30 April 2015 (see invitation + presentation) as a contribution at the continent level and shared with all participants</p>		<p>The output is: Harmonized sub regional methodology for monitoring of illegal and informal logging completed</p> <p>However, the report was not even reviewed at country level, so this harmonised sub-regional methodology was not delivered. The rating of Moderately Unsatisfactory for this output remains.</p>
2.1	<p>Output as formulated in the revised logical framework and the M&E system: Systematization, training, outreach program and targeted research for linking informal</p>		<p>Footnote added that the text was changed, although it is noted that the revised version lacks specificity (no verb and no location).</p>

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
	and/or community-based groups to benefits from SFM We do not agree with the change		Assessment of the output remains as is.
2.2	Remember that this was training of trainers and fully embedded in the “replicable model”. the training program it self is a replicable model. The output is on “ regionally replicable training programme” and not on the number of trainers trained. So this output must be at least satisfactory		A model cannot be considered replicable when it has not provided reliable evidence of its efficacy. One group of 15 trained people cannot provide the reliable evidence needed for replication. Text remains as is
2.5	The project thorough the different training has contributed to strengthen the capacity of actors involved in the development of the REDD+ strategy, especially in EG Also what about the document “Option pour la réalisation de la REDD+ sur une plateforme de Gestion Durable des Forêts » with recommandation on linking SFM and REDD+. Délivrable 2.5.1		The output is: National strategies for linking SFM into FLEGT/REDD+ developed. National strategies were not developed. Text remains as is.
3.3	what about the capacity building of the forest administration in EG? On FLEGT, forest control and REDD+?	Those are linked to 3.4. They do not figure in the 3.3. MOVs	Text remains as is
3.4	Gabon was represented by the director of community forests and the NGO Nature + from their DACEFI community forest project and representative from communities	There were 3 people from Gabon, 17 from Cameroun and 7 from Republic Demorcatic of Congo. For the Republic of Congo, it was unclear any people came as there is no name.	Gabon added to list in brackets.
3.4	Agriculture is the main driver of deforestation in Congo Basin countries with cocoa production well positioned.This activity was fully in the output as it is related to REDD+ and not on SFM The objective of the activity was not to certify cocoa, but to trained producers on sustainable cocoa production based on a preliminary evaluation of their agricultural practices, with the sustainable agricultural standard as the main tool for the evaluation and elaboration of a capacity building strategy.	We understand that the regional workshop on for regional community forestry aims to present and discuss community forestry, but it cannot really qualify as “replicable models for multi-stakeholder collaboration in design and implementation of REDD+, FLEGT, SFM and forest certification processes”. As for the project on cacao certification, it was undertaken late in the project and not yet finalized (the farmers are not yet certified); there was no lessons learnt or models	The output is: <i>Regionally-replicable models for multi-stakeholder collaboration in design and implementation of REDD+, FLEGT, SFM and forest certification processes</i> The comments have been reviewed and the text and rating remain the same.

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
	<p>If 2 years after the activity and end of the project there are still producers engaged in sustainable practices, this mean that this was highly satisfactory.</p> <p>Not true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A regional workshop on community forestry is a regional process were stakeholders learn from each other with the aim of using the lessons learned to improve their own practices. If you read the report of the workshop you'll see experience of community forestry and FLEGT, SFM well presented and discussed. - Agriculture being the main drivers of deforestation not just in Cameroon, but in the whole Congo basin countries, an activity on sustainable agriculture is set to be a "replicable model". <p>The output says "regionally -replicable models"" and not that the models has to be replicated during the lifetime of the project. For this reason the logic and fair rating is Highly satisfactory</p>	<p>elaborated from the findings of this project. It cannot qualify as a "replicable model"</p>	
<p>Para 151</p>	<p>This part of the report is on "Delivery of Outputs" , and most of them as you said were delivered. Now the utility of the outputs or ownership must be evaluated at outcomes and impact's level, not here!!!!</p>		<p>Ownership and value-recognition by the intended user and dissemination to intended beneficiaries is part of the assessment of whether an output has been delivered in full or not. There is no value in an output that does not reach the hands of the intended beneficiary.</p> <p>The <u>use</u> of the output by the intended beneficiary is an outcome.</p>
<p>Achievement of Direct Outcomes Para 154</p>	<p>Not true. EQMBO in their June 2015 mission set up recommendations for the sustainability of the centre, y including the maintenance plans for machines. The recommendations</p>		<p>At outcome level the focus is on the uptake, use of or application of outputs. In this case it is '<i>informal and/or community-based groups <u>apply</u> technical skills</i>'.</p>

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
	were discussed with CETM and reports share with them.		As part of this woodworking machines were provided. If they are no longer in use due to poor/absent maintenance then the outcome has not been achieved.
Para 154	If students trained during and after the project (2 years) continue school, how is it possible that AMChave already used those same students who have been trained/ Have you also considered the AMC trainers trained by the project? How are they using the skills in their work?	<p>After the BET, the students get oriented in other curricula and do not continue wood working.</p> <p>The other issue is that the skills of the students that got the the BET are too low according to the National Federation for Wood Working; as such the students couldn't be employed based on these skills within the National Federation for Wood Working.</p> <p>We couldn't assess how the trainers from the National Federation for Wood Working (AMC) were trained and implemented new skills. However, the National Federation for Work Working was satisfied with the training and tools received from EQMBO.</p>	The outcome statement refers to informal or community groups applying their technical skills. The trainers applying their skills is a necessary but insufficient step towards the outcome.
Para 155	I don't share this new direct outcome as it is just focussing of FSC certificate while at the time of the implementation, and evaluation, it should have considered other certifications, such as legal source etc.		<p>Necessary adjustments were made during the development of a reconstructed Theory of Change to make the project evaluable. In particular, the outcomes were adjusted to be more realistic and to contain verbs. Such reconstruction is consistent with GEF guidelines on Terminal Evaluations.</p> <p>The Theory of Change was shared with the Task Manager, Executing Agency and Co-Implementing Partner. Comments were received from the Task Manager and Rainforest Alliance and the Theory of Change adopted.</p>
Para 155	Not true: at least 7 enterprises in the regions send their sustainability managers to the training sessions. OIBT and OAB (representing private sectors involved in timber production) were also involved	As explained above, the project strove to include logging firms. However, this engagement was minimal compare to the large number of firms in the Congo basin. In addition, the project mainly focussed on the few already engaged in the FSC process (ex. Groupe Rougier, Alpicam, CIB, SODEFOR). More fundamentally, the project missed the new dominant chinese firms (ex. holding more than 50% of the	Text remains as is.

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
		<p>concession areas in region) and the national logging firms.</p> <p>OIBT and OAB came to some meetings, but their participation remained on an ad hoc basis and these associations were not used as a means/strategic partners to raise awareness among their members.</p>	
Para 155	<p>FLEGT is in full support of SFM requirements that meet national legal requirements. it is a matter of level of compliance. Private certification such as FSC are more demanding than FLEGT. Firms are satisfied with national requirements on SFM does not implies that FLEGT do not support SFM!!!!.</p>	<p>This is a fundamental issue for the project. Direct outcome 2.2. was very high “logging firms in 4 countries are deemed to conform to approved national FSC certification standards”. In practice FSC is interlinked, and can be considered more demanding than FLEGT/SFM. But, it is still a separated process. Firms tend to do the minimum, therefore they tend to be satisfied with the minimal governmental/market requirements, which is to comply with FELGT/SFM.</p>	Text remains as is.
Para 155	<p>At the end of the project, Long term technical incentives for FSC certification were available through training in at least 7 logging companies. The outcome is partially achieved as stated the former evaluation report See the initial outcome Outcome 2: Long-term technical and financial incentives available to conserve biodiversity in the Congo Basin through training, value adding and sustainable financing mechanisms such as payments for environmental services, carbon finance, etc.</p>	<p>The direct outcome 2.2. was “<i>Logging firms in 4 countries are deemed to conform to approved national FSC certification standards including HCVF areas</i>”</p> <p>With very few logging firms engaged, the fact that the were no incentives for firms to engage in certification process (Firms satisfied with EU FLEGT/SFM, no conducive financial system), outcome 2.2. was not achieved.</p> <p>Even with the initial Outcome2, both technical and financial incentives were not yet available.</p>	Text remains as is.
Para 156	<p>Not agree with how this outcome is formulated</p>		<p>Necessary adjustments were made during the development of a reconstructed Theory of Change to make the project evaluable. In particular, the outcomes were adjusted to be more realistic and to contain verbs. Such reconstruction is consistent with GEF guidelines on Terminal Evaluations.</p> <p>The Theory of Change was shared with the Task Manager, Executing Agency and Co-Implementing Partner. Comments</p>

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
			were received from the Task Manager and Rainforest Alliance and the Theory of Change adopted.
Para 156	In the output evaluation above it is said that this was not achieved		Thanks – text amended to be clearly consistent
Para 156	Not logic after the description in the text to just have partially achieved		The outcome is ambitious: ‘National strategies on FLEGT, REDD+ and PES are endorsed in two Congo Basin Countries.’ The assessment stands.
Para 157	Contradiction with the description and the formulation of the direct outcome. This direct outcome is focussed on “The necessary institutional conditions are given and legal conditions identified”. The description says that conditions are given , identified and endorsed: this outcome is achieved. The next level that is the sharing /communication would have bring this to more than expected. The descriptions above, does not fir the rating		The Evaluation Office will accept a rating of ‘partially achieved’ for this outcome (although it notes that this is a weak outcome statement). This gives an overall rating for Achievement of Outcomes as U. This does not affect the overall rating of the project (still at Unsatisfactory).
Para 158	False: in Congo, in EG, in Cameroon. And also all COMIFAC national coordinator are representatives of the ministries.	There were involvement of persons/peoples in different ministries; in this sense the project work with the ministries. However, this remained an involvement on a very personal basis. Beyond the participation of some individuals, their ministries (or their department) didn’t know about the project and were not engaged as a Ministry of a department towards achieving the project.	Text remains as is.
Para 163	What additional evidence justifies the change in the rating, considering that the level of progress in achieving direct outcomes has already been rated in the previous sub-criteria?		The achievement of outcomes is at the level of Unsatisfactory. To assess the likelihood of longer term impact the Evaluation Office uses a theory-based approach to assess the level of likelihood that the combined effect of the achievement of outcomes and the necessary contributing conditions (assumptions and drivers) will deliver long term positive benefits. The rating stands.
Financial Management Table 6	This should say MU if average of below criteria		Agreed – the aggregation for completeness of financial information would ordinarily be U. However, the evaluation found that the audit report had a reference to the possible

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
Completeness of project financial information			<p>mismangement of funds and no management response. This is a serious issue and the aggregation will remain at U. The aggregation for communication should be MS.</p> <p>The Evaluation Office uses a weighted table for aggregating ratings. Under financial management ratings of U and MS in this order, aggregate to MU.</p>
Provision of key documents	The rate does not reflect the evidence. This must have been at least S		The aggregation of the items A-H falls between MU and MS – the rating of MS is on the generous side of the aggregation.
G. Copies of completed audit	This is quite severe considering that call audit reports were made available to the evaluator, albeit late		There is reference to a possible mismangement of funds in the audit report and no management response to this issue. The lack of a management response is a serious issue.
G. Copies of completed audit	The component here is “copies’ and the comment is that there are copies, so don’t understand why this is U it must be S? It is under component H that the evaluator must have mention that other financial information was not provided with direct impact on the rating.		
Gaps in financial info	And that indicates non-compliance with which UN Environment or donor rules?		After operational completion of a project the only expenditure allowed is for the cost of the evaluation.
PM, TM and FMO responsiveness	As this not my role but the one of FMO and he does it well which is good to know. Evaluation should learn about who should do what during an evaluation exercise and there is need to the Evaluation team to understand that TM are engaged in other issues in many cases with deadlines. During introductory meeting all information and guidance where provided to Evaluation Office, so they can not expect TM to do there job		The evaluation report records that financial information was requested of the FMO and was provided. The Task Manager was sent further financial requests and did not reply. Responsiveness to an evaluation is part of the Task Manager role.
PM, TM and FMO responsiveness	Again, very negative, considering that information was provided, even if somewhat generally or late.		UN Environment projects are required to be financial closed no more than one year after operational completion (audit requirement to UN Environment). At financial close all documentation should have been consolidated centrally and should have been easily and readily available to the evaluation, without delays.
FMO knowledge of project progress	Where is that evidence documented or summarized?		Text remains as is.

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
Contact/communication between FMO, PM/TM	Same like above. There is evidence of various email communication on this different FMO		
Overall Rating	Does not reflect the comments		The aggregation of U and MS under financial management is MU.
Para 165	Contradiction how can all reports completed until dec 2015 and then no quarterly report in 2015???	This should be read "All the quarterly reports were completed until June 2015. There was no quarterly report made available from July 2015 and in 2016.	Correction made
Para 168	To be updated as per the comments above		Completeness of financial information remains at U due to the missing management response to the audit.
Para 172	This may be an overstatement. In the case of RA, there was no delay triggered by late disbursements.	Without funding, it seems impossible to undertake activities.	The rating for communication has been raised to the higher side of the aggregation to MS.
Efficiency Para 174	The US\$16M of co-financing also included field activities, like for example all of EQMBO's contribution. Therefore, this comparison doesn't make any sense to me.		Three different calculations are given and it is relevant to refer to the figures at design (i.e. the secured and pledged sums) because it points to a design/structural weakness, which is then reflected in the actual implementation.
Para 174	It is unclear to me how this amount is calculated. RA's subgrant, for example, was partially for technical project supervision, and partially for field implementation activities, including all activities implemented in Cameroon (CSO trainings, support to cocoa farmers, etc.) but also trainings, workshops and other activities performed in Gabon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, DRC, etc.		
Para 176	Considering above comments, we do not agree with the rating		
Monitoring Design and Budgeting Para 178	How can the rating have been changed from MU to U without new evidence?		The initial draft was generous in its rating but was not consistent with the Evaluation Office matrix of ratings. In particular, the inadequate evaluation budget substantially delayed the launch of the evaluation
Monitoring of Project Implementation Table 7 – Key findings from MTR	A budget review was performed in 2014, reviewing subgrants of EG, Congo and RA, after the pilot committee decided to close down activities in CAR and after reviews to the logframe were approved by the Pilot Committee.		Footnote added.

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
Para 182	There was no decision not to collect the data; rather a lack of awareness that this data had to be collected, as said many times in this report.		Footnote added
Para 183	Also, a manual for the design and use of the M&E system (deliverable 4.1.2) was drafted to ensure quality and the robustness of the system, and served as the basis for trainings with project personnel and partners (Executing Agency, COMIFAC).		Text remains as is.
Para 183	All the elements of the evaluation are positive, with the exception of the lack of tracking of gender and Indigenous Peoples, which is a design and not an implementation issue. We disagree with the change from S to U, and are unaware of any new evidence justifying this new score.		The Evaluation Office agrees that the rating for Monitoring of Project Information should be Satisfactory.
Project Reporting Para 187	We firmly believe that we have achieved Outputs as documented in the M&E system based on the revised logframe, and as commented in point D. Effectiveness/ Delivery of Outputs.		The GEF reporting mechanism includes the annual Project Implementation Review report. This should have triggered a management response to the fact that outputs were not being delivered in a timely fashion.
Socio-Political Sustainability Para 190	See previous comments on government involvement and participation.		Text remains as is. The assessment of sustainability addresses the question of whether the continuation of benefits achieved at project outcome level are likely to be sustained. The analysis is deemed appropriate to address this question.
Para 190	This is a reality that all projects trying to work with governments are facing. Governments are staffed by political parties which change after elections.		Text remains as is.
Para 190	Sustainable cocoa production The new rating does not reflect the comments above		Text remains as is.
Financial Sustainability Para 195	The fact that the project ran out of time to implement a functioning financial system to fund the woodworking shop in the long run in		Text remains as is.

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
	Congo is largely due to delays accumulated because of the slowness of the Congolese government in securing a power line. Hence, it is unfair here to rate the project negatively for something that was outside of our sphere of influence.		
Institutional Sustainability Para 199	Not true: this is about REDD+ through sustainable agriculture. And this is one of the output of the project		Text remains as is.
Para 201	I'm not sure I understand this sentence as the integration of outputs and outcomes in the national governmental institutions has been described above.		Text remains as is.
Para 201	The rating is far below the comments above. What new evidence justifies this change in rating?		The rating is consistent with the Evaluation Office's assessment of sustainability.
Factors Affecting Performance Prep and Readiness Para 203	RA staff contracted from the early stage of the project. The type of contract of RA the project's staff did not have an influence on the project's preparation nor readiness. And did not affect project performance. And it has nothing to do with first disbursement.		The lack of responsiveness to Project Review Committee recommendations is an issue, especially when it is linked to delays in disbursements.
Para 204	All Steering Committee meetings were attended by a civil society and a private sector representative	Very few civil society organisations and private actors attended Steering Committee meetings: In 2015 (in EG) they both "remain to be identified" in the report, in 2014 (in RoC) they are not identified and in 2013 (in Cameroun) there were one organisation for the civil society and one for the private sector. Both that the civil society/private sector were hardly attending the steering committee meetings; in addition, they were not involved in the steering committee itself (the board of the project).	Text remains as is.
Para 206	While this is true, an international M&E expert was made available at no additional cost to the project, other than travel expenses. This is clearly stated in Monitoring		The provision of a budget for monitoring is a UN Environment requirement and not an optional element.

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
	of Project Implementation section. Therefore, the lack of budget for the M&E expert did not affect the project's readiness.		
Para 206	What new evidence justifies this change in rating from MU to U? We disagree with this change.		The rating is consistent with the Evaluation Offices ratings matrix.
Quality of Project Management and Supervision Para 211	RA totally disagree with this As we received regular supervision and backstopping from the TM.	This is explained above	Elements of process and performance do not support the view that this project was properly supervised by the Implementing Agent.
Para 211	Again not true: this was sustainable cocoa production deeply embedded in REDD+		Repeat. Point already covered above.
Para 211	We disagree with the change in rating, considering an excellent project execution by WRI/RA and supervision by the TM		The project execution improved after the Mid Term Review. However, the low delivery of outputs does not support the view that project execution was excellent. Elements of process and performance do not support the view that this project was properly supervised by the Implementing Agent.
Stakeholder Participation and Co-operation Para 215	COMIFAC is the official liaison with ministers		Projects are expected to have oversight mechanisms to ensure that critical elements of project implementation that is expected to be carried out by other parties, are undertaken.
Para 215	This is wrong: False. COMIFAC was involved from the ToR to the selection of consultants. And as shown by report of different steering committees, participated to the presentation of all draft reports through the national coordinator and the representative of the COMIFAC's secretariat All studies drafted in 2012-13 were validated at a workshop organized in Pointe Noire on March 10-11, 2014 attended by COMIFAC Secretariat and national representatives as well as project focal points from Congo and CAR. Those recommendations were addressed with the final review performed by COMIFAC's Secretariat in 2015.	COMIFAC was involved in the selecting of consultants, and presentation of draft reports. The problem here is the long lifespan between initial draft and final validation in 2015, which meant that many reports were of little use for COMIFAC and wider audience.	The comment confirms the Evaluation Consultants statement that studies drafted in 2012-13 were not validated until 2014. As there were several reports that COMIFAC found too outdated to load on their website, the reflection that this slow process contributed to the materials becoming obsolete, is supported.

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
Para 215	False, this was done see PSC fev 2015 at Malabo ,attached	Attachment not seen	Footnote added.
Para 216	See Rapport d'analyse d'impact du projet GEF, octobre 2015	The project gives a percentage for each output/outcome and very short reason. But, this an unrealistic percentage and a partial explanation.	
Para 217 & 219	A continuous exchange throughout the years of project implementation, with participation in respective workshops, also happened in Equatorial Guinea between the project's national focal point (ANDEGE) and FAO, as both were contributing to advancing the national REDD+ framework. Coordination enabled to identify specific activities that the GEF project could fund that were additional to FAO's work.	Point well-taken for Equatorial Guinea that the consultant couldn't visit. Collaboration is beyond participating in some ad hoc meetings. Evaluation didn't find it at either FAO or the World Bank whose staff hardly knew about this project.	Information from various sources supports the view that the project's engagement with other actors was more limited than the effective tackling of the topic required.
Responsiveness to HR and GE	Remarkably, I'd say		No response required.
Para 223	The Project Coordinator in RA and the Senior Manager, Central Africa, ...		
Para 223	M&E Manager		
Para 223	I would add here: As such, the project served as an example in a context of strong marginalization of women. The strengthening of the Congo focal point, in particular, who at the same time was the gender focal point within the Ministry of Forestry, was a direct benefit of the project.		
Para 225	I suggest rewording and reassessing: 225. In summary, despite UN Environment stressing the importance of gender and marginalized people even before the start of the project, these issues were overlooked in the design of the project. During project implementation, RA partially addressed the gender issue by adding a column to record men and women in the Monitoring and Evaluation system, but did		

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
	not take any specific actions. The project however stood out in having all important positions in the project staffed by women, including the project focal points in Congo and Equatorial Guinea.		
Country Ownership and drivenness Para 229	In contradiction with the description concerning the republic of Congo above on the training curriculum. Also in contradiction with activities in EG. It is obvious that the evaluator do not master the institutional set up of COMIFAC from the secretariat, national coordinators and the ministries.		The Evaluation Office has found the Evaluation Consultant to be well qualified in this area and well able to understand the institutional set up of COMIFAC.
Para 231	Don't understand this analysis		No response required.
Conclusions Para 233	See all comment above on how most of the downgrading rating are in contradiction with the analysis and evidence. For this reason, we totally disagree with this evaluation		The Evaluation Office has carried out an additional review of the report and finds the ratings within the Final Report largely consistent with its guidance on assessing ratings. At the sub-category level the Evaluation Office has made some changes to ratings, often where aggregations led to a score between two points on the scale. However, the overall rating of the project remains at Unsatisfactory. Given the over ambitious nature of the project design and the fact that much-needed changes to the implementation structure were only made from the mid-point onwards, this is not a surprising rating.
Para 237	We disagree with this.		Text remains as is.
Para 238	That's right		
Para 238	This comment applies to Congo only. In Equatorial Guinea, efforts were focused on furthering the REDD+ national framework. In Cameroon, sustainable cocoa production is being taken up on the elsewhere.		
Para 238	Nevertheless, some outcomes were achieved in this one location.		
Para 241	What are those?		
Para 241	???		
Lessons Learned Para 243	False statement. We never said that	It came from RA comment below. See below on "Monitoring and Reporting" para 182. "This was never requested by the donor". See also	

Section	Comment	Evaluation Consultant response	Evaluation Office response
		comments on gender where RA mentioned they didn't know. (they mentioned that was not in the MTR and not in the initial project: see below para 182 and para 225).	
Para 243	See comment above. This was sustainable agriculture, clearly described in all REDD+ strategy as a main drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.		
Para 243	What was the problem with that?		
Para 247	We have a different view that Outputs have been achieved. This evaluation have totally mixed outputs, outcome and impacts!		
Para 256	For what was in the project's sphere of influence, we did remarkably well! The project's focal points in EG and Congo were women. And so were nearly all senior staff working as technical experts or in project management at WRI and RA.		
Summary of Project Findings Table 8	Considering the previous comment, we disagree with the summary. The whole table is to be revised based on the comments above		
SR: 2	Comply with the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building ² (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (SSC).		
SR: 3	Lack of co-financing does not imply that the project is not relevant. The project is relevant with the COMIFAC countries national policies and strategies on environment, forest management etc.. Rating and assessment to be revised		Low levels of <u>pledged</u> co-financing suggests a decline in commitment from design to implementation.
Monitoring project implementation	This new grade does not correspond with the positive aspects highlighted in this text and in the corresponding section in the main text.		The rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation has been adjusted by the Evaluation Office.
Sustainability	Average of MU + U + MU = U?		The Evaluation Office aggregation of Sustainability requires that the lowest rating of the three dimensions of sustainability is taken. This is because the three dimensions are mutually dependent.

RESPONSES ON COMMENTS TO THE TEXT FROM THE TASK MANAGER (DEC 2018) AND CO-IMPLEMENTING PARTNER, RAINFOREST ALLIANCE (SEPT 2018)

Paragraph	Comment	Eval Office Response	Evaluation Consultants' response
Executive Summary			
Para 11	The regional nature of this project may not allow to that direction	Engagement with key stakeholders such as local administration on enforcement, political elite as well as logging firms helps to be able to work towards the project's objective: 'promote a harmonised approach to sustainable management of forests in the Congo Basin'	
Para 11	Not sure what this entails, but is because of this reason the project was planned to support countries toward harmonized approach	An observation was noted about changes in the demand – the consultant was highlighting the challenging context within which the project was operating and gaps in managing these changes in project design and implementation (adaptive management)	
Para 11	Good to elaborate on this as this a serious concern which need to be clarified before consideration	As per the Project Document and evidence on key stakeholders engaged, little consideration was given to human rights and gender equity. See paras 226 - 229 in the report for further details.	
Para 11	Not sure what this mean. Any evidence of UNEP being aware of these and does not act?	This sentence has been amended to reflect the evidence.	
Para 12	With this assessment, I cannot understand the overall rating Unsatisfactory	Only 31% of the outputs were delivered – this sub criteria was rated appropriately. In addition, other criteria are also assessed and together they make up the overall rating, as per the ToRs.	
Para 13	Yes, because the project intention was to work at strategic level.	On the contrary, working with key stakeholders (local and national governments, politicians, indigenous networks, logging firms) is what drives the results forward and helps formulate the strategies that will be taken up/followed/embraced to see the changes in sustainable forest management at regional level.	
Para13	As it was not the project intention. How to do this if there is no political commitment at Government level to do so?	Communication and raising awareness were part of the results framework – see outputs 2.1 and 2.3.2. The evaluation considers communication and awareness raising as important factors for the project to achieve its objective.	

Paragraph	Comment	Eval Office Response	Evaluation Consultants' response
Para 15	With this how UN Environment can influence countries? This should be linked with some of the evaluation conclusion above.	The comment is not clear, no revision is required.	
Para 16	Not totally true as the project was participating to COMIFAC monthly review meetings, participated in the Forest Governance working Group and support the development of Monitoring and Evaluation system development	Attendance and participation in meetings is one of the things. The ProDoc stated at least 12 other GEF funded projects working in the region, including those at local and national levels. However there is no evidence that the synergies were sought to enhance the regional harmonisation of sustainable management of forests in the Congo Basin.	Attendance to COMIFAC monthly meetings (especially the Forest Governance Group) really started after the mid-term review, those meetings were regularly postponed, there is on cooperation between actros found from those meetings.
Para 17	Do you mean institutional arrangement?	The legal arrangement is the contract between WRI/UN Environment, which implies also an institutional arrangement 8the way WRI/UN cooperate (with responsibilities of each others) and arrangements with partners.	
Para 17	It was not the plan of this project to fund field activities. Even those pilot sites were executed by the voluntary decision of the 3 countries to put their own GEF 4 Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) to finance pilot activities.	Paragraph has been rephrased to make it clearer. There were 3 pilot projects identified in the ProDoc, and only 4% of the GEF funds were used to finance these activities. Pilot activities demonstrate to national government the learning lessons and successes of the SFM practices so that they may harmonise their legal instruments to ensure SFM continues in the region.	
para 17:	This USD 1 million should be compared against the \$3.075.681 of GEF grant expenditures, so 33%	This is addressed, the new sentence reads "field activities remaining structurally underfunded with only US\$ 669,252 (or 4% of US\$ 16,918,748) of the overall pledged funds being used for pilot activities at local or national level. Considering only GEF grant (US\$3,075,681), the figure is about 21% spent for field activities, considering secured co financing (US\$5,106,000) and GEF grant, the figure is about 8% spent on field activities."	
Para 17	Again it was not the primary objective of this project to conduct field activities.	See the comment above	

Paragraph	Comment	Eval Office Response	Evaluation Consultants' response
Para 18	Why? Please elaborate to support this assumption	UN Environment had a key role to play in leveraging on its position as a leading environmental. The paragraph has been rephrased to better reflect this.	
Para 18	What is thatb mean? There was only one UN Environment entity involved in this project so I cannot understand where the issue collaboration within UN Environment come from?	Collaboration would have been expected with other branches and units, eg REDD+, GRASP etc who are working on similar issues in the region and which also were identified in the project document. The paragraph has been rephrased to better reflect this.	
Para 18	I can challenge this as we need evidence of lack of stakeholders collaboration, lack of outreach or issues of human rights or gender equity ?	A footnote has been added. On the contrary, there was lack of evidence to support the claims hence the rating. Where information was provided, it was done so in Dec 2018 as the evaluation report was being finalised, despite several requests during the data collection and analysis phases and even during the circulation of the draft report during the months of Dec 2017 to August 2018.	
	Totally disagree with this conclusion	See the reasons given above	
Lessons Learned	There is a clear misunderstanding of this project and its objective by the evaluation team. The lessons learn were actually in line with the evaluation misunderstanding of the project.	The lessons learned were in the process of being updated, after the internal EOU peer review process, when the comments were received and have been significantly revised	
Recommendations	Not sure what is recommended here. This project has follow all the internal UNEP project development and approval procedures which involved many Units.	The recommendations were in the process of being updated, after the internal EOU peer review process, when the comments were received and have been significantly revised	
Para 29	This is beyond this project mandate.	The recommendations were in the process of being updated, after the internal EOU peer review process, when the comments were received and have been significantly revised	
Para 27	Not clear for me.	The recommendations were in the process of being updated, after the internal EOU peer review process, when the comments were received and have been significantly revised	

Paragraph	Comment	Eval Office Response	Evaluation Consultants' response
Paras 30 and 31	Again it was not the intetion of this project to work at local or community level but rather at strategic level	The recommendations were in the process of being updated, after the internal EOU peer review process, when the comments were received and have been significantly revised	
Para 28	Not within this project mandate	The recommendations were in the process of being updated, after the internal EOU peer review process, when the comments were received and have been significantly revised	
Para 33	Again the project was addressing strategic level	The recommendations were in the process of being updated, after the internal EOU peer review process, when the comments were received and have been significantly revised	
Para 35	I do not think we can get better than the executing partners in Central African Republic, in Rep of Congo and Equatorial Guinea	The recommendations were in the process of being updated, after the internal EOU peer review process, when the comments were received and have been significantly revised. This recommendation has been removed.	
The Project Para 87	Yes as mentioned above only those countries which accepted to put their GEF resources allocation conducted pilot activities of their choice.	However, a portion of the GEF funds were used to fund these pilot activities, so the project was able to influence/advise which activities would lead to the change in line with the project's objective.	
para 87	in this respect the move to incorporate activities in Cameroon was positive, as evidenced by the ongoing certification of cocoa farmers.	This section talks about the project with no assessment. Pilot projects are discussed in the section "H. Sustainability" para 157-170. Cacao certification is problematic in the project as it was not initially agreed upon, and it is not related to the project's goal, as explained in para 118 output 3.4.)	
para 91	This was really not the case in practice. RA did this.	This is as per the project document. All changes are reflected in the next section (implementation changes)	
Para 92	RA did much more than this. See my comment above.	This is as per the project document. All changes are reflected in the next section (implementation changes)	

Paragraph	Comment	Eval Office Response	Evaluation Consultants' response
<p>Stakeholders that were not direct project partners</p> <p>Para 95</p>	<p>COMIFAC was executing the World Bank Project and Co-chairing this project steering Committee. It was expected that this strategic position of of COMIFAC should have provided this coordination role</p>	<p>Indeed – there is no evidence to show they played their part in this strategic position. No revision required</p>	
<p>Para 110</p>	<p>At project start</p>	<p>This section presents the project background and design, the Figure 1 is as per the project document. The changes in the implementation structure are discussed under section III E'</p>	
<p>ToC para 124</p>	<p>Causal pathway not evident from “COMIFAC and member countries endorse a regional consensus on how to address illegal and informal logging (Outcome 1)” to “A significant group of logging firms adopts sustainable forest management practices in response to COMIFAC initiatives, including FSC”</p>	<p>This Medium Term Outcome is a result of outcomes 1 and 2.1 from the reconstructed ToC. As the countries and COMIFAC come to a consensus on the definition of ‘illegal logging’ and more people, through the community based organisations integrate sustainable forest management practices, logging firms are able to adopt these practices as more people become educated and aware of these practices. The TE recognised this as a necessary step leading towards the project’s envisaged impact.</p>	
<p>ToC para 128</p>	<p>This is a bit fuzzy with causal pathways leading to this intermediary state not very clear. Do you mean something along the lines of: “Benefits from SFM and area under legal forest management are improved in the Congo Basin countries?”</p>	<p>These two intermediate states have positive feedback – sustainable forest management practices leads to improved livelihood which in turn leads to higher socio-economic status which boosts further uptake of sustainable forest management practices as it becomes the norm. Together with effective benefits sharing, this well lead to increased conservation of the Congo Basin Forest, a globally significant ecosystem with rich biodiversity.</p>	
<p>Strategic Relevance and Rating</p> <p>Para 140</p>	<p>Was not planned to be main project actors. The Focus was on Government of the six participating countries</p>	<p>Engagement with key stakeholders is still relevant. Logging firms largely influence governments in this region. Politicians who make up the government structure were not engaged. No revision required.</p>	
<p>Para 140</p>	<p>This contradict all the efforts done on training and regional collaboration</p>	<p>The evaluation focuses on results achieved at output and direct outcome levels. There is more than one contributing factor to the success of a project. No revision required.</p>	

Paragraph	Comment	Eval Office Response	Evaluation Consultants' response
Para 140	Based on the above comment, I disagree with this rating.	Evaluation is results-based and the evaluation evidence supports a MU rating. No revision required.	
Rating for Project Design Para 143	This rating can be questionable.	The Evaluation Office of UN Environment has robust tools and methods in place to assess the criteria rating. The weaknesses outlined in the paragraphs above justify the rating. No revision required.	
Nature of External Context Para 147	In this context how it is expected from the evaluation that UN Environment can stop these?	This section is used to highlight the social and economic situations in the project countries. It is not intended that the project team stop these negative aspects, rather to identify them as risks and include adaptation/mitigation factors where possible. No revision required.	
Evaluation Findings Financial Management – Table 6: 1	Not clear how we get to an overall MU evaluation here considering evaluation of sub-criteria	This criterion takes into account all organisations involved. Evidence/comments for each criterion has been detailed, as well as para 165-13768 that detail the completeness of financial information.	
Evaluation Findings Financial Management – Table 6: C	Not sure I understand this. Do you mean that Paulette was doing financial management/reporting and technical implementation at the same time?	There were mismanagement of funds and the new 6.C was then revised as such “WRI/RA have legal agreement. No legal agreement with the Ministry of Forestry in Republic of Congo/ANDEGE was made accessible. All financial audits were made yearly for WRI. For partners (ANDEGE, Ministry of forestry in Congo) there only were financial audits at the end of the project. Audit in Republic of Congo fund reported a mismanagement of funds.”	
Evaluation Findings Financial Management – Table 6: G	By UN Environment (to whom?)	This section 6.G has been clarified as such “TE didn’t get access to financial audits from the TM and UN Environment. TE got access to these document from the Executing Agency towards the end of the evaluation. There was no management response from UN Environment (TM and FMO) about TE questions on financial management.”	

Paragraph	Comment	Eval Office Response	Evaluation Consultants' response
Evaluation Findings Financial Management – Table 6: 2	The evaluation below says MS for Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff	The new rating is MU based on new findings detailed in para 169-172.	
Efficiency para 174	As already commented above, I think it isn't a fair comparison to include the USD 5M in co-financing to the overall budget available for pilot projects. In fact, co-financing that was secured was not specifically meant to be for pilot projects.	The para 174 has been revised as such "However, the initial legal arrangements remained the same and as such too much of the funds were spent in the project administration, with field activities remaining structurally underfunded with only US\$ 669,252 (or 4% of US\$ 16,918,748) of the overall pledged funds being used for pilot activities at local or national level. This percentage spent on pilot activities increases to 8% if the GEF grant and secured co-finance (US\$5,106,000) is considered and 22% if the GEF grant only (US\$3,075,681) is considered."	
Monitoring and Reporting Para 182	This was never requested by the donor.	This was a UN Environment requirement at the time of project implementation'	
Para 182	Gender was not considered in the project's design	The PRC did reiterate that the project adequately address gender equity and human rights issues.	
Project Reporting para 187	We find this evaluation too negative considering that reporting was done accurately and in high quality for the entire duration of the project.	This rating takes into consideration the reporting from all partners, UN Environment included. While WRI/RA may have kept good records, this was not necessarily the case across the different organisations. In addition data reported is not disaggregated by vulnerable/marginalised groups including gender, therefore, EOU agree with the EC's rating. To further justify the rating, the following information has been added "Tracking Tool was not completed at all and UN Environment did not complete the final PIR (2015). See para 187 for further clarification."	
Evaluation Findings; Quality of Project Management and	Why are these aspects part of the evaluation of Project Management if they are further evaluated in the section on "Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation"? We find the score of Moderately Satisfactory low,	The first sentence of the par. 211 is valid here (but could benefit from clarification, i.e. what does problematic mean in this case).	The new para 211 that deals with this comment has been modified to address both the concerns of the Evaluation office and the comments

Paragraph	Comment	Eval Office Response	Evaluation Consultants' response
Supervision para 211	especially if focusing on project implementation after mid-term.	<p>However, I tend to agree with the commentator that the latter part in regards other agencies, private sector etc. and the number of beneficiaries is not related to this section. They could be discussed under stakeholder participation</p> <p>Did project management improve after the project mid-term as the commentator indicates in her comment?</p> <p>For GEF projects, this criteria refers to project management performance of the executing agency (WRI/RA) and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UN Environment.</p> <p>The rating is too generous, given the evidence. The evaluation assess the project as a whole and takes into account adaptive management, which was weak in the case of this project, especially with regards to dealing with risks and challenges.</p>	<p>It is now "211. Project execution by RA/WRI was also made difficult because of lack of supervision from UN Environment. On the positive side, UN Environment participated to each annual Steering Committee and maintained positive atmosphere with WRI/RA. On the negative side, UN Environment did not show any sort of supervision: it did not share UN policy guidelines on gender or indigenous peoples, did not draw attention on some fundamental issues for UN Environment (such as communication and outreach, engagement with beneficiaries, correct incorporation of the PRC review). UN Environment did not show any leadership in communicating and collaborating within UN Environment units/divisions working on similar issues (climate, ecosystems) and remained problematic. UN Environments did not guide the partners to develop partnership with other agencies (GEF executing agencies, bilateral aid, firms, NGOs) implementing similar projects. As a result of this lack of supervision, the Executing Agency (WRI) and main partner (RA) did not make any effort in some key issues for UN Environment and for achieving the project's objective itself (such as communication, stakeholder engagement, partnership, gender, indigenous peoples). Without supervision, the partners even engaged in activities that were not within the scope of the project, such as the pilot project on cacao farming."</p>
Evaluation Findings; Responsiveness to HR and GE para 225	We find the rating of MU to be too low considering that gender was not incorporated in design nor mentioned in MTR	This criteria assess the responsiveness to both Human Rights and Gender Equity. As per the explanation given in this section of the report, despite the fact that Gender was mainstreamed into UN Environment MTS from 2010 and the PRC request to include gender equity, this was not done during the	The new paragraph 225 clarifies and emphasis this problem "225. In summary, despite UN Environment stressing the importance of gender and marginalized people even before the start of the project, these issues overlooked both in the design and in the implementation of the project. RA partially addressed the gender issue by adding a column to record men and

Paragraph	Comment	Eval Office Response	Evaluation Consultants' response
		project. In addition, the Evaluation Office of UN Environment has incorporated this criteria in assessments of projects in the TORs since 2011.	women in the Monitoring and Evaluation system, but did not take any specific actions." As a logical conclusion, the rating has been lowered to "Unsatisfactory"
Conclusion para 235	In line with this, a project that aims at harmonizing practices between countries should be able to build upon strong, clearly established practices in individual countries, which was not the case.	To a certain extent yes. However, given the context and region that the project was in, the risk assessment should have picked up on this and adaptive management steps taken.	
Conclusions: Recommendations para 251	More support from the Agency in the design phase on figuring out how best to report on co-financing would be useful considering difficulties that are known like the fact that most public and private accounting systems don't cater for project-level financial administration so it is very difficult for Ministries and companies to provide co-financing evidence; or the time lag between commitments and project implementation, which we had discussed in our call.	All recommendations including this one have been reworded to clarify meaning, and while this particular one on co-finance has been removed from the report, it is being captured by the EOU to communicate to member countries in a separate report.	

ANNEX II. RPSC'S OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED RESULTS AND OUTPUTS

Table 10: Project's objectives, expected results and outputs

Long term goal		
To strengthen sustainable management of forest ecosystems of Congo Basin as a contribution to the conservation of globally relevant biodiversity and ecosystem services		
Overall objective		
To promote a harmonized regional approach to sustainable management of production forests in the Congo Basin resulting in regulation of logging on forests and ecosystems". The project identified three paths of interventions or "components		
Specific objectives	Expected results	Planned outputs
1. Formulation of instruments that enable Congo Basin countries to tackle illegal logging in a harmonised manner	1. A harmonised approach to curbing illegal logging in Congo Basin countries	1.1 Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) strategy document on harmonised regional approach to the sustainable management of production forests; 1.2 Regionally agreed definitions and strategy documents on informal and illegal logging 1.3 Harmonised sub-regional methodology for monitoring illegal and informal logging 1.4 Assessment of national traceability systems and identification of conceptual parameters to be considered for the development of a sub regional traceability system
2. Promotion of market and fiscal incentives to make it attractive for forest users to manage production forests in a sustainable manner	2. Long term technical and financial incentives available to conserve biodiversity in the Congo Basin through training, value adding and sustainable financing mechanisms such as payments for environmental services, carbon finance, etc.	2.1 Systemisation, training, and outreach programme for linking informal and/or community-based groups to benefit from sustainable timber management 2.2 Regionally-replicable models for improving the artisanal woodworking sector in order to lessen pressures on the forest and creating a path towards the formal sector 2.3.1 The record of FLEGT VPA process in the Congo Basin is performed in order to identify the successes, challenges and prospects 2.3.2 Awareness and training of forest administrations and forest concessionaires on the concept of forests with high conservation value 2.4 A sub-regional cadre of trained auditors commensurate with the projected growth in area of certified forest 2.5 Regionally-harmonised strategies to mainstream SFM issues in production forests into FLEGT and REDD+ initiatives 2.6.1 Option for achieving REDD+ + on sustainable forest management platform 2.6.2 Analysis of forest taxation in the Congo Basin and proposed tax incentives to ensure sustainable management of production forests
3. A well regulated governance system	3. Governance conditions that permit equitable participation and benefit sharing among all forest stakeholders	3.1 Systemisation and dissemination programme on local participation, governance and representation in relation to SFM, REDD+ and BD conservation in production forests 3.2 Sub-regional analysis and policy recommendations regarding land rights and resource access issues as they relate to benefit sharing accruing from forest concessions, off-reserve forestlands and REDD+ 3.3 Capacity building programme, national and sub regional strategies and principles agreed by Governments and CSOs for the promotion of improved governance models for SFM and REDD+

Long term goal		
To strengthen sustainable management of forest ecosystems of Congo Basin as a contribution to the conservation of globally relevant biodiversity and ecosystem services		
Overall objective		
To promote a harmonized regional approach to sustainable management of production forests in the Congo Basin resulting in regulation of logging on forests and ecosystems". The project identified three paths of interventions or "components		
Specific objectives	Expected results	Planned outputs
		3.4 Regionally replicable models for multi-stakeholder collaboration in the design and implementation of REDD+, FLEGT, SFM and certification processes

ANNEX III. PROJECT BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

Table 11: Project Funding Sources Table

Funding source	Planned funding	% of planned funding	Secured funding	% of secured funding
All figures as USD1,000				
Cash				
Funds from the Environment Fund	3076	18%	3076	0
Funds from the Regular Budget	0	0%	0	0
Extra-budgetary funding (listed per donor):		0%		0
European Com (ACP)	1,948	12%	0	0
Canada (CIDA)	6,500	38%	0	0
USA (Forest service)	750	4%	0	0
World Resource Institute	2,470	15%	3,638	65%
Sub-total: Cash contributions	11,668	87%	6,714	65%
In-kind				
Environment Fund staff-post costs	0	0%	0	0
Regular Budget staff-post costs	0	0%	0	0
Extra-budgetary funding (listed per donor)		0%		
COMIFAC	200	1%	95	2%
Rainforest Alliance	775	5%	1,369	24%
Central African Republic	400	2%	0	0%
Equatorial Guinea	400	2%	114	2%
Republic of Congo	400	2%	400	7%
Sub-total: In-kind contributions	2175	13%	1978	35%
Total	16,919	100%	8,6192	100%

Table 10: Expenditure by Outcome/Output

Component/sub-component/output	Estimated cost at design	Actual Cost/ expenditure
All figures as USD		
Component 1 / Outcome 1	(17%) 517,487	Unknown
Component 2 / Outcome 2	(38%) 1.158.119	Unknown
Component 3 / Outcome 3	(29%) 877.287	Unknown

ANNEX IV. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE TERMINAL REVIEW

Organisation	Name	Position
Association des Menuisiers du Congo, Pointe Noire, République du Congo	Naasson Boueya	Président
Centre de formation agricole de Nater2, Biosphère du Dja	Rolande Mdicie	Monitrice en formation
CETM 12 Aout 1965 Pointe Noire, Ministère de l'enseignement technique et professionnel, de la formation qualifiante et de l'emploi, République du Congo	Mme Baby-Yamba	Directrice
CIRAD	Alain Karsenty	Chercheur forêt bassin du Congo
COMIFAC	Raymond Ndomba Ngoye	Executive secretary
COMIFAC	Nchoutpouen Chaïbou	Expert biodiversité et coordinateur APA
COMIFAC	Vincent Medjibe	Expert OFAC
Cooperative SCOOPSOROCAP Dja, Société coopérative simplifiée des producteurs de cacao de la périphérie de la biosphère du Dja	Pamezamer	Président and 6 membres
Coordination Nationale REDD, Ministère de l'Economie Forestière, République du Congo	Arnaud Kiese	Chef de cellule juridique
Direction de la faune et des aires protégées, Ministère de l'Economie Forestière, République du Congo	Claire Mopoundja	Chef de bureau
FAO Cameroun	Felicitas Atanga	Assistante au représentant
Fonds vert pour le climat Produits forestiers non ligneux FAO Cameroun	Armand Asseng Zé	Chargé des opérations des projets et point focal GEF
FSC Congo Basin Programme	Mathieu Auger-Schwartzenberg	Director, FSC Congo Basin Programme
Ministère de l'Economie Forestière, République du Congo	Paulette Ebina-Taraganzo	Directrice de la Valorisation des Ressources Forestières.
Ministère de l'Economie Forestière, République du Congo	Etienne Yoyo	Directeur général
Ministère de l'enseignement technique et professionnel, de la formation qualifiante et de l'emploi, République du Congo	Jacques Mabiala	Conseiller à l'enseignement professionnel Chargé de la condition enseignante
Ministère du tourisme et de l'environnement, République du Congo	Roger Mpan	Directeur général de l'environnement Point focal FEM
People from the communities linked to the cacao project in Dja	Beneficiaries in cacao plantation and community forestry	Beneficiaries : agro-forestry from four community members, a bantou chief of village ; a Bakha settlement, including one beneficiary from agro-forestry training.
Programme de promotion de l'exploitation certifiée des forêts (PPECF) – phasell, Mandaté par la COMIFAC et soutenu par le gouvernement fédéral allemand, Yaoundé	Romain lorent	Cordinateur

Organisation	Name	Position
Projet FLEGT FRM-DIFD, Appui au Ministère de l'Économie Forestière, République du Congo	Michel Gally	Directeur
Projet GCP/CMR/033/GFF gestion durable des forêts par les communes du Cameroun, FAO Cameroun	Nguenboy Kamgang Charlemange	Coordinateur technique
Rainforest Alliance	Nadège	Project coordinator
Rainforest Alliance	Carine	Financial manager
REM, WWF Cameroun et Ecosy	Laurent Granier	Conservation director, WWF Cameroun in 2016 Ecosy director 2013-now ; Team leader Resource Extraction Monitoring (REM) 2012-13– Democratic Republic of Congo
Tropical Forest and Rural Development	Romeo Fopa	Chargé de projet agroéconomiste
UN Environment	Mario Boccucci	Head UN-REDD Programme Secretariat
UN Environment	Douglas Cress	Ex-GRASP coordinator
UN Environment	Thais Narciso	UN-REDD
UN Environment	niklas.hagelberg@un.org	Senior Programme Officer Coordinator, Climate Change Programme
UN Environment	Daniel pouakouyou	Manager for Africa
UN Environment	Paul Vrontamitis	Fund manager
UN Environment	Joyce Gitehi	Assistant Fund manager
UN Environment	Adamou Bouhari	Task Manager GEF
University Liège	Cédric Vermeulen	Prof Tropical forestry (Congo Basin)
WRI Washington	Serge Kongolo	Financial manager
WRI Washington	Matthew Steil	Project director (Senior Manager, Africa Forests)

ANNEX V. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Project planning and reporting documents

- UNEP-COMIFAC, 2013. 1ère réunion du comité de pilotage régional du projet – approche régionale harmonisée à la gestion durable des forêts de production du bassin du Congo. Communiqué final. 30 Janvier 2013.
- UNEP-COMIFAC, 2014. 2ème réunion du comité de pilotage régional du projet – approche régionale harmonisée à la gestion durable des forêts de production du bassin du Congo. Communiqué final. 13 mars 2014.
- UNEP-COMIFAC, 2015. 3ème réunion du comité de pilotage régional du projet – approche régionale harmonisée à la gestion durable des forêts de production du bassin du Congo. Communiqué final. 25 février 2015.
- UNEP, 2010. Project Review Committee. Terms of Reference. Effective 25 January 2010.
- UNEP, 2011. Annex 1. Check List for the Full Proposal. Completion by SPO for submission to UNEP GEF PRC. A regional focus on sustainable timber management in the Congo Basin.
- UNEP, 2014. Letter introduisant le “Revue à mi-parcours du projet: Approche régionale sur le gestion durable du bois dans le Bassin du Congo. 12 Janvier 2014.
- UN Environment expenditure reports: Quarterly reports (2011 to 2015)
- BASSIN DU CONGO. Participant list. Comité de pilotage régional/24-26 Février 2015/Malabo-Guinée Equatoriale.
- COMIFAC 2012. Note de service. Mise en place du Comité de pilotage. 08 mars 2012
- COMIFAC, 2015. Lettre de cofinancement du project PNUE-FEM. 20 October 2015.
- Strategic Program for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin, 2017. <https://www.thegef.org/project/cbsp-strategic-program-sustainable-forest-management-congo-basin>
- UNEP, 2015. Final Report. A Regional Focus on Sustainable Timber Management in the Congo Basin (2015-09-18_UNEP-GEF Final Report)
- UNEP, 2015. Rapport Final_UNEP_GEF_Francais
- WRI 2015. Budget rev 1 to 2015. APPENDIX 1 - RECONCILIATION BETWEEN GEF ACTIVITY BASED BUDGET AND UNEP BUDGET LINE (GEF FUNDS ONLY US\$) - UNEP Portion.
- WRI, 2011. A Regional Focus on Sustainable Timber Management in the Congo Basin. Project Document.
- WRI, 2011. Copy of Co-financement UNEP-GEF. APPENDIX 2 - RECONCILIATION BETWEEN GEF BUDGET AND CO-FINANCE BUDGET (TOTAL GEF & CO-FINANCE US\$)
- WRI, 2012. A REGIONAL FOCUS ON SUSTAINABLE TIMBER MANAGEMENT IN THE CONGO BASIN. Inception report.

- WRI, 2015. GEF-WRI Monitoring & Evaluation System. UNE APPROCHE REGIONALE A LA GESTION DURABLE DES FORETS DE PRODUCTION DANS LE BASSIN DU CONGO. Project logframe and project tracking.
- WRI, 2015. UNE APPROCHE REGIONALE HARMONISEE A LA GESTION DURABLE DES FORETS DE PRODUCTION DANS LE UN Environment Medium-term strategy 2010-2013. Environment for development.
- WRI, 2012. Logframe outputs. 26 May 2012.
- WRI, Mars 2012. Project implementation team.
- WRI, 2012. Programme de l'atelier de lancement officiel du project PNUE-FEM et de son projet pilote en RCA. 27 mars 2012
- WRI, 2012. Première mission d'appui technique 7-13 Octobre 2012
- WRI, 2012. Procès verbal de l'atelier de lancement du projet pilote en République du Congo. 29 mars 2012.
- WRI, 2012. Tableau des projets proposés en Equatorial Guinea. 29 May 2012
- WRI, 2012. Rapport du Comité d pilotage. Bangui, 17 décembre 2012.
- WRI, 2012. Travila provisoire 2013.
- WRI, 2012. Primera Reunion del Comité de pilotaje del Proyecto WRI-GEF Guinea Ecuatorial. Bata, 23 Novembre 2012.
- WRI 2012. Proces verbal de l'atelier de lancement du projet. 20-21 mars 2012.
- WRI, 2013. Rapport de la 2ème reunion de pilotage, Guinée Equatoriale, Bangui, 01 avril 2013.
- WRI, 2013 à 2015. Plan de travail 2013 à 2015
- WRI, 2013. Rapport de la 2ème reunion de pilotage, République du Congo. 17 décembre 2013
- WRI. Rapport semi-annuel d'activité: 1er semestre 2012, 2eme semester 2012,
- WRI: rapport annuel d'activité 2012, 2013, 2014.
- WRI: PIR 07/2004-06/2015; 07/2012-06-2013; 07/2013-06/2014.
- WRI: rapport trimestriels 2012 à 2015.

Project outputs – Overall

- WRI-RA Baselines: folder 1,2, 3
- WRI-RA Objective indicators: folder
- WRI-RA Project outputs: folder 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3
- WRI-RA Result indicators: folder 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, 5.2, 5.4

Previous evaluations

- Financial audit MEFDD. February 2016. UNE42. Congo audit Conseil.
- Financial audit. ANDEGE. March 2016. UNE42. Special Final Audit. El Consultor
- Financial audit. February 2016. UNE42. Rainforest Alliance. Withum.

- Financial audit. June 2016. UNE42. Rainforest Alliance. Withum.
- Financial audit. September 2015. UN42. World Resources Institute. Grant Thornton.
- UNEP, 2014. Rapport de la revue à mi-parcours. Mai 2014.

Reference documents

- International Forestry Review. 2017. Recent evolutions of forest concessions status and dynamics in Central Africa. International Forestry Review 19(S2)
- Evaluation Office of UN Environment. Use of Theory of Change in Project Evaluations. Last review 26.1017
- Nasi et al., 2012. Managing for timber and biodiversity in the Congo Basin. Forest Ecology and Management 268, 103-111
- Cerutti et al., 2016. Social impacts of the Forest Stewardship Council certification in the Congo basin. 18(S1)
- UN Environment, 2018. Promoting Greater Protection for Environmental Defenders
- UNEP, 2008. Medium-term strategy. 2010-2013
- UNEP, 2009 Proposed biennial programme and support budgets for 2010-11
- UNEP, 2012. Biennial programme of work and budget for 2012-13
- UN Environment Medium-term strategy 2010-2013. Environment for development
- COMIFAC, 2017. Qu'est-ce que le plan de Convergence ?
<https://www.comifac.org/fr/content/quest-ce-que-le-plan-de-convergence>
- DRC, 2015. Democratic republic of Congo. Forêts communautaires de l'Afrique Centrale: les experts ont dressé le bilan.
- The Guardian, 2017. 188 environmental defenders have been killed so far in 2017. 13 July 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2017/jul/13/the-defenders-tracker>
- UN Environment Divisions <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/why-does-un-environment-matter/un-environment-divisions>
- Websites/ Internet based-system
- UNEP, 2018. GRASP. <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/toolkit/grasp-apeapp>
- UN Environment Divisions <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/why-does-un-environment-matter/un-environment-divisions>.
- INOVEM, 2018. More: <http://www.inovem.ca/>

ANNEX VI. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR

Name

Profession	Researcher on environmental governance and its field impact - Vice-president SWISSAID Genève - Associate researcher with University of Liège - Consultant on environmental strategies
Nationality	Belgian
Country experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Europe: Belgium, France, Switzerland • Africa: Kenya • Americas: Guatemala • Asia: Indonesia, Malaysia
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Short biography

Mr Denis Ruyschaert is an independent consultant in environmental governance. Passionate by social equity and environmental sustainability, Denis has worked on four continents from a wide range of perspectives with grass-root NGOs, local communities, international NGOs, firms, the United Nations Environment and academia. The common trait of these experiences is Denis will to get a positive socio-environmental change by addressing the link between global policy and local reality on dire issues, such as biodiversity/forest loss, climate change, food sovereignty, mining extraction, and waste management. Currently, Denis is vice-president of SWISSAID Genève and associate researcher at University of Liège. Denis holds both a PhD in sociology (public policies) and Masters in agronomy (Environment). Team player and impact driven, Denis found that much can be achieved with a good communication, clear goal, quick adaptation to reality, and, above, all a good laugh. Native French speaker, Denis is fluent in English and Spanish.

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

- Capabilities: strategic analysis, fundraising, programme implementation and evaluation.
- Specialities: social equity and environmental sustainability in the field of agriculture, biodiversity, climate, waste and governance.

Selected assignments and experiences

Independent evaluations:

1. Building an effective coalition to improve forest policy: Lessons from the coastal Tripa peat swamp rainforest, Sumatra, Indonesia. Land Use Policy 2018. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264837716312698>
2. The role and effectiveness of conservation NGOs in the global voluntary standards: the case of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm-Oil. Conservation & Society. 2016, 14, 2, 73-85. <http://www.conservationandsociety.org/article.asp?issn=0972-4923;year=2016;volume=14;issue=2;spage=73;epage=85;auiast=Ruyschaert>

3. Towards global voluntary standards: Questioning the effectiveness in attaining conservation goals. The case of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). *Ecological Economics*. 2014, 107: 438-446
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921800914002869>
4. Will funding to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and (forest) Degradation (REDD+) stop conversion of peat swamps to oil palm? *Mitig. Adapt. Strat. for Glob. Chan.* 2014, 19: 693-713. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11027-013-9524-5#/page-1>
5. Le rôle des organisations de conservation dans la construction et la mise en œuvre de l'agenda international de conservation d'espèces emblématiques. Doctorat de sociologie. Université Jean Jaurès, Toulouse, 2013. <https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-00951940/>
6. Gold in Switzerland: Certification Schemes as the New Gold Rush. SWISSAID Geneva and Graduate Institute, Genève, novembre 2015.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283718958_Gold_In_Switzerland_-_Certification_Schemes_as_the_New_Gold_Rush
7. Palm-oil production on fallow land: technical, economic, biodiversity, climate, legal and policy implications. For the Biodiversity and Agricultural Commodities Program from the International Finance Corporate. Paneco, YEL and World Agroforestry Centre, Medan. November 2011.
<https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/adf573004a682a88852cfd998895a12/BACP-PanEco.Developing-degradedland-report.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>
8. Natural Allies. UNEP and Civil Society. United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi. 2004.
9. From Process to Impact of a Voluntary Standard: The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil. In: *State of the Apes 2015*. Cambridge University Press, Arcus Foundation, Cambridge. p134-163
10. The impact of global palm oil certification on transnational governance, human livelihoods and biodiversity conservation. *UICN - Policy Matters*. 2016, 21, 45-58.
https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/policy_matters_21_chapter_3_the_impact_of_global_palm_oil_certification_on_transnational_governance_human_livelihoods_and_biodiversity_conservation_0.pdf
11. Relations homme - nature en milieux d'altitude. Institut Francais de la Recherche en Afrique (IFRA). *Cahiers d'Afrique de l'Est*. 2007
12. Situacion socio-economica en Ixcan en el 2000: balance, historia and perspectivas. Ixcan, Guatémala, Commission européenne. 2000
13. El microcredito en Ixcan: el punto de vista del beneficiario. 2000. Ixcan, Guatémala, Commission européenne. 2000.

ANNEX VII. EVALUATION TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terminal Evaluation of the UN Environment/Global Environment Facility project

“A regional focus on sustainable timber management in the Congo Basin”.

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

Executing Agency:	World Resources Institute		
Sub-programme:	Ecosystems Environmental Governance; Climate Change	Expected Accomplishment(s):	
UN Environment approval date:	August 2011	Programme of Work Output(s):	
GEF project ID:	3822	Project type:	Full Sized Project
GEF Operational Programme #:		Focal Area(s):	Biodiversity, Climate Change, Sustainable Forest Management
GEF approval date:	26 July 2011	GEF Strategic Priority:	BD-SO2 (SP 4 & 5) and SFM/REDD-SO1
Expected start date:	September 2011	Actual start date:	October 2011
Planned completion date:	August 2015	Actual completion date:	February 2016
Planned project budget at approval:	\$16,918,748	Actual total expenditures reported as of [date]:	
GEF grant allocation:	\$3,075,681	GEF grant expenditures reported as of [date]:	
Project Preparation Grant - GEF financing:	\$100,000	Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:	\$146,785
Expected Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:	\$13,843,067	Secured Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:	

First disbursement:	29 Sept 2011	Date of financial closure:	
No. of revisions:	1	Date of last revision:	
No. of Steering Committee meetings:		Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:	Last: Next:
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date):	November 2013	Mid-term Review (actual date):	Jan/Feb 2014
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):		Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	July 2017
Coverage - Countries:	Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Republic of Congo	Coverage - Region(s):	Central Africa
Dates of previous project phases:		Status of future project phases:	

Project rationale²⁰

1. The Congo Basin Ecosystem covers 1.7 million square kilometres of tropical forests with one of the most intact large tropical rivers in the world, spanning over 6 countries: Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of Congo, Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo. The ecosystem constitutes a vast carbon sink (estimated at 24 – 39GT of carbon) and regulates regional and local weather patterns, an important factor for water cycling on the African continent
2. In addition to providing a habitat to over 10,000 species of plants, 1,000 species of birds (10 endemic), 400 species of mammals (39 endemic) and 700 endemic species of fish; it is a major source of local and national economic growth. The forest sector provides 3 – 8% of the gross domestic product of Central African nations, as much as 20% of employment and supports the livelihood of more than 29 million people.²¹
3. Threats and barrier to the sustainable management of production forests are:
 1. Agriculture – the dominant and traditional slash and burn model leads to more significant loss and degradation of forests as the population grows each year by 2% to 3%;
 2. Mining – poses a threat for forest and freshwater ecosystems due to deforestation, pollution and natural resource degradation. An indirect impact linked to infrastructure development means access to intact and remote areas resulting in increased hunting for bush meat and forest degradation;
 3. Logging – at least 50% of the total timber supply is estimated to be illegal, making it difficult for Sustainable Forest Management to be effective; and

²⁰ Legend: Grey =Info to be added

²¹ Taken from the ProDoc

4. Hunting for bush meat – alters the overall function, structure and composition of the ecosystem.

4. To address the problem of deforestation and forest degradation in the Congo Basin, the aim of the project is to remove the threats and barriers through sustainable management of production forests for timber, with broad stakeholder participation, generating increased economic and social benefits, improved resource sustainability and increased motivations at national and local levels to invest in the protection of the forests and the global environmental benefits that they generate.

5. The project also forms part of the GEF Congo Basin Strategic Programme (CBSP) (a multifocal area six-country initiative with a total funding of more than \$200 million - \$46 million from GEF – and will consist of 12 projects implemented by Food and Agriculture Organisation, United Nations Development Programme, UN Environment and World Bank – and will contribute to the implementation of the Convergence Plan of the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC).

Project objectives and components

6. The goal of the project is “To strengthen sustainable management of forest ecosystems of the Congo Basin as a contribution to the conservation of globally relevant biodiversity and ecosystem services, maintaining a solid foundation for the region’s sustainable development”.

7. The objective of the project is “To promote a harmonised regional approach to the sustainable management of production forests in the Congo Basin resulting in reduction in the impacts of logging on forests and ecosystems”.

8. The project is made up of five components and corresponding outputs as summarised in the table below:

Project Components, Outcomes and Outputs

Component	Outcome	Output
<p>1. Formulation of instruments that enable Congo Basin countries to tackle illegal logging in a harmonised manner</p>	<p>1. A harmonised approach to curbing illegal logging in Congo Basin countries</p>	<p>1.1 Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) strategy document on harmonised regional approach to the sustainable management of production forests;</p> <p>1.2 Regionally agreed definitions and strategy documents on informal and illegal logging</p> <p>1.3 Harmonised sub-regional methodology for monitoring illegal and informal logging</p> <p>1.4 Assessment of national traceability systems and identification of conceptual parameters to be considered for the development of a subregional traceability system</p>
<p>2. Promotion of market and fiscal incentives to make it attractive for forest users to manage production forests in a sustainable manner</p>	<p>2. Long term technical and financial incentives available to conserve biodiversity in the Congo Basin through training, value adding and sustainable financing mechanisms such as payments for environmental services, carbon finance, etc</p>	<p>2.1 Systemisation, training, and outreach programme for linking informal and/or community-based groups to benefit from sustainable timber management (SFM)</p> <p>2.2 Regionally-replicable models for improving the artisanal woodworking sector in order to lessen pressures on the forest and creating a path towards the formal sector</p> <p>2.3.1 The record of FLEGT VPA process in the Congo Basin is performed in order to identify the successes, challenges and prospects</p> <p>2.3.2 Awareness and training of forest administrations and forest concessionaires on the concept of forests with high conservation value</p> <p>2.4 A sub-regional cadre of trained auditors commensurate with the projected growth in area of certified forest</p> <p>2.5 Regionally-harmonised strategies to mainstream SFM issues in production forests into FLEGT and REDD initiatives</p> <p>2.6.1 Option for achieving REDD + on sustainable forest management platform</p>

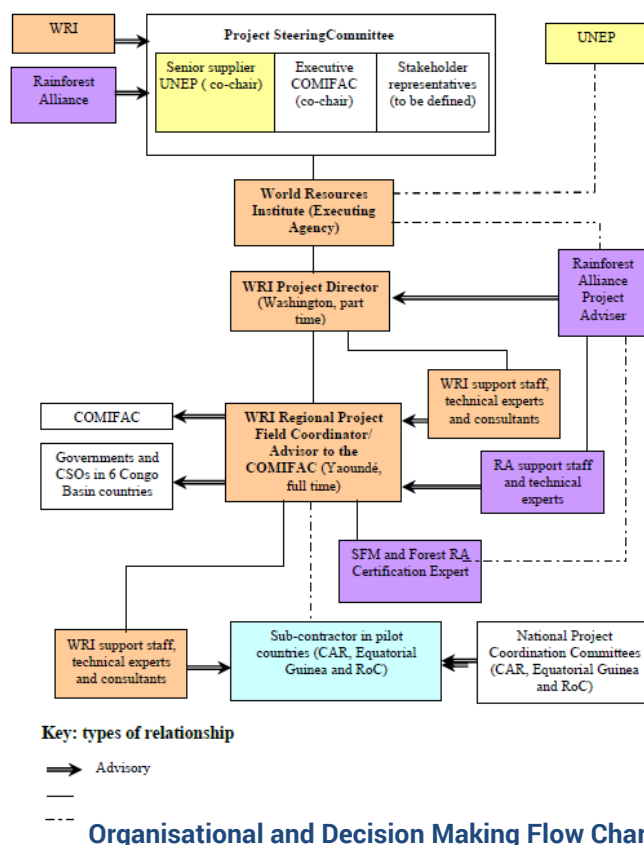
		2.6.2 Analysis of forest taxation in the Congo Basin and proposed tax incentives to ensure sustainable management of production forests
3. A well regulated governance system	3. Governance conditions that permit equitable participation and benefit sharing among all forest stakeholders	<p>3.1 Systemisation and dissemination programme on local participation, governance and representation in relation to SFM, REDD and BD conservation in production forests</p> <p>3.2 Sub-regional analysis and policy recommendations regarding land rights and resource access issues as they relate to benefit sharing accruing from forest concessions, off-reserve forestlands and REDD</p> <p>3.3 Capacity building programme, national and subregional strategies and principles agreed by Governments and CSOs for the promotion of improved governance models for SFM and REDD</p> <p>3.4 Regionally replicable models for multi-stakeholder collaboration in the design and implementation of REDD, FLEGT, SFM and certification processes</p>
4. Illegal logging Monitoring Methodologies, M&E, adaptive management and experience sharing	4. Collection of data and development of illegal logging monitoring methodologies and application of principles of adaptive management.	<p>4.1 Monitoring and Evaluation system developed and used.</p> <p>4.2 System for experience sharing</p>
5. Project Management	5. Satisfactory project implementation leading to full and timely achievement of project objectives	<p>5.1 System for staff reporting, supervision and support</p> <p>5.2 Financial management system</p>

Executing Arrangements

9. The following structure was put in place to implement and execute the project:
 1. UN Environment is the GEF Implementing Agency;
 2. World Resources Institute (WRI) is the Executing Agency, with sub contracts with Rainforest Alliance (RA) to conduct some field activities and other appropriate partners and national sub- contractors for field activities in the 3 pilot countries;
 3. Project Steering Committee (PSC) composed of the UN Environment (Co Chair), Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) (Co-chair), and stakeholder representatives identified at the beginning of the project including the GEF operational Focal Points of the country where the PSC had its sessions.

The PSC provided strategic direction and was responsible for approving Annual Work Plans and Budgets. It was advised by WRI and RA who had a voice but no votes;

4. A Project Director based in Washington DC with frequent travel to the region had overall responsibility for overseeing project execution for the executing agency;
5. Project execution was supported by a team of thematic experts (Sustainable Forest Management and Forest Certification Expert – contracted by RA and reporting to the Regional Project Field Coordinator) and technical and management advisors from WRI and RA;
6. Regional Project Field Coordinator based in Yaoundé, Cameroon had operational responsibility for project execution and who directly responded to the Project Director and worked closely with the COMIFAC in project execution;
7. National Project Coordinator coordinated the project pilot operations in the Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and Equatorial Guinea, and was provided by national sub-contractors;
8. National Project Coordination Committees (NPCC) were set up in each pilot country to discuss and recommend in collaboration with the National Host Institution, national Annual Work Plans and Budgets to be endorsed by the NPCC before inclusion in the project-wide AWPBs to be considered by PSC.



Project Cost and Financing

10. The project cost at design, broken down per component and funding source is summarised in the tables below:

Project Cost and Financing

Cost to the GEF Trust Fund	USD 3,075,681
-----------------------------------	----------------------

Co-financing	USD 13,843,067
Cash	
ACP - FLEGT	USD 1,948,067
CIDA**	USD 6,500,000
US Forestry Services	USD 750,000
WRI	USD 2,470,000
Sub-total	USD 11668067
In-kind	
COMIFAC	USD 200,000
RFA	USD 775,000
CAR	USD 400,000
Rep of Equatorial Guinea	USD 400,000
Rep of Congo	USD 400,000
Sub-total	USD 2175000
Total	USD 16,918,748 100

Project components and associated costs

Component	Budget
1. Formulation of instruments that enable Congo Basin countries to tackle illegal logging in a harmonised manner	USD 517,487
2. Promotion of market and fiscal incentives to make it attractive for forest users to manage production forests in a sustainable manner	USD 1,158,119
3. A well regulated governance system	USD 877,287
4. Illegal logging Monitoring Methodologies, M&E, adaptive management and experience sharing	USD 228,227
5. Project Management	USD 294,561

Implementation Issues

11. Discussions with the Task Manager and extracts from the Mid Term Review (June 2014) highlighted a few implementation issues:

1. The onboarding process to get member states and Central African Forest Commission involved in the project was slow at the beginning of the project
2. The original outcomes of the project overlooked the legal implication of the topic which made it difficult for countries to abandon their national legislations and the project deliverables were reviewed and revised by the Steering Committee in March 2014;
3. The selection of the three pilot countries was based on the country's interest to participate. However, activities in two of the countries were cancelled, and resources reallocated:
 - (i) The project in Central African Republic was suspended due to security reasons, where the local offices were vandalised and working materials stolen; and
 - (ii) The project in Equatorial Guinea remained a pilot country but with reduced level of activities until the end of the project.
4. Insufficient co-ordination of decision making and management between World Resources Institute and Rainforest Alliance at the beginning of the project was identified as one reason/factors that may have led to reduction in cost and time efficiency of implementing the project.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

Key Evaluation principles

12. Evaluation findings and judgements should be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

13. **The "Why?" Question.** As this is a terminal evaluation and a follow-up project is likely [or similar interventions are envisaged for the future], particular attention should be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the "Why?" question should be at the front of the consultants' minds all through the evaluation exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultants need to go beyond the assessment of "what" the project performance was, and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "why" the performance was as it was. This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.

14. **Baselines and counterfactuals.** In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the project intervention, the evaluators should consider the difference between *what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project*. This implies that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions, trends and counterfactuals in relation to the intended project outcomes and impacts. It also means that there should be plausible evidence to attribute such outcomes and impacts to the actions of the project. Sometimes, adequate information on baseline conditions, trends or counterfactuals is lacking. In such cases this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluators, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluator to make informed judgements about project performance.

15. **Communicating evaluation results.** A key aim of the evaluation is to encourage reflection and learning by UN Environment staff and key project stakeholders. The consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the evaluation process and in the communication of evaluation findings and key lessons. Clear and concise writing is required on all evaluation deliverables. Draft and final versions of the main evaluation report will be shared with key stakeholders by the Evaluation Manager. There may, however, be several intended audiences, each with different interests and needs regarding the report. The Evaluation Manager will plan with the consultant(s) which audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key evaluation findings and lessons to them. This may include some or all of the following; a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of an evaluation brief or interactive presentation.

Objective of the Evaluation

16. In line with the UN Environment Evaluation Policy²² and the UN Environment Programme Manual²³, the Terminal Evaluation (TE) is undertaken at completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UN Environment and World Resources Institute, Rainforest Alliance, COMIFAC, UNDP, FAO and World Bank. Therefore, the evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation [especially for the second phase of the project, if applicable].

Key Strategic Questions

17. In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the evaluation will address the **strategic questions** listed below. These are questions of interest to UN Environment and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution:

- (a) To what extent were recommendations from the Mid Term Review (June 2014) incorporated into the project?
- (b) The project is linked with several GEF and non-GEF interventions which are both strategically and operationally important to achieve the goal of the project for regional harmonisation of approaches to addressing illegal logging and promoting Sustainable Forest Management across the Congo Basin. Of particular importance are:
 - (i) The COMIFAC Convergence Plan – the main strategic instrument under which the project operates; and
 - (ii) The Strategic Programme for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin (CBSP) – a multi-focal area six-country initiative with a total funding of more than \$200 million consisting of 12 projects implemented by Food and Agriculture Organisation, United Nations Development Programme, UN Environment and World Bank.

Evaluation Criteria

18. All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Sections A-I below, outline the scope of the criteria and a link to a table for recording the ratings is provided in Annex 1). A weightings table will be provided in excel format (link provided in Annex 1) to support the determination of an overall project rating. The set of evaluation criteria are grouped in nine categories: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the achievement of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance. The evaluation consultants can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

A. Strategic Relevance

19. The evaluation will assess, in line with the OECD/DAC definition of relevance, *'the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor'*. The evaluation will include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UN Environment's mandate and its alignment with UN Environment's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. Under strategic relevance an assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups will be made. This criterion comprises four elements:

²² <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

²³ http://www.unep.org/QAS/Documents/UNEP_Programme_Manual_May_2013.pdf . *This manual is under revision.*

i. **Alignment to the UN Environment Medium Term Strategy²⁴ (MTS) and Programme of Work (POW)**
20. The evaluation should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW.

ii. **Alignment to UN Environment /GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities**
21. Donor, including GEF, strategic priorities will vary across interventions. UN Environment strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building²⁵ (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries. GEF priorities are specified in published programming priorities and focal area strategies.

iii. **Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities**
22. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the intervention is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented. Examples may include: national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc.

iv. **Complementarity with Existing Interventions**
23. An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project mobilization, took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UN Environment sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The evaluation will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include UNDAFs or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UN Environment's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

24. *Factors affecting this criterion may include:* stakeholders' participation and cooperation; responsiveness to human rights and gender equity and country ownership and driven-ness.

B. Quality of Project Design

25. The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the evaluation inception phase, ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. This overall Project Design Quality rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item B. In the Main Evaluation Report a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage is included.

26. *Factors affecting this criterion may include (at the design stage):* stakeholders participation and cooperation and responsiveness to human rights and gender equity, including the extent to which relevant actions are adequately budgeted for.

C. Nature of External Context

27. At evaluation inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval). This rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an Unfavourable or Highly Unfavourable external operating context, the overall rating for Effectiveness may be increased at the discretion of the Evaluation Consultant and Evaluation Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

²⁴ UN Environment's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UN Environment's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UN Environment's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes.

²⁵ <http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf>

D. Effectiveness

28. The evaluation will assess effectiveness across three dimensions: achievement of outputs, achievement of direct outcomes and likelihood of impact.

i. Achievement of Outputs

29. The evaluation will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs (products and services delivered by the project itself) and achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc). Any *formal* modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, a table should, for transparency, be provided showing the original formulation and the amended version. The achievement of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their usefulness and the timeliness of their delivery. The evaluation will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

30. *Factors affecting this criterion may include:* preparation and readiness and quality of project management and supervision²⁶.

ii. Achievement of Direct Outcomes

31. The achievement of direct outcomes is assessed as performance against the direct outcomes as defined in the reconstructed²⁷ Theory of Change (TOC). These are the first-level outcomes expected to be achieved as an immediate result of project outputs. As in 1, above, a table can be used where substantive amendments to the formulation of direct outcomes as necessary. The evaluation should report evidence of attribution between UN Environment's intervention and the direct outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UN Environment's contribution should be included.

32. *Factors affecting this criterion may include:* quality of project management and supervision; stakeholders' participation and cooperation; responsiveness to human rights and gender equity and communication and public awareness.

iii. Likelihood of Impact

33. Based on the articulation of longer term effects in the reconstructed TOC (i.e. from direct outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact), the evaluation will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality. Project objectives or goals should be incorporated in the TOC, possibly as intermediate states or long term impacts. The Evaluation Office's approach to the use of TOC in project evaluations is outlined in a guidance note available on the EOU website, web.unep.org/evaluation and is supported by an excel-based flow chart called, Likelihood of Impact Assessment (see Annex 1). Essentially the approach follows a 'likelihood tree' from direct outcomes to impacts, taking account of whether the assumptions and drivers identified in the reconstructed TOC held. Any unintended positive effects should also be identified and their causal linkages to the intended impact described.

²⁶ In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UN Environment to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UN Environment.

²⁷ UN Environment staff are currently required to submit a Theory of Change with all submitted project designs. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during an evaluation will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any changes made to the project design. In the case of projects pre-dating 2013 the intervention logic is often represented in a logical framework and a TOC will need to be constructed in the inception stage of the evaluation.

34. The evaluation will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects. Some of these potential negative effects may have been identified in the project design as risks or as part of the analysis of Environmental, Social and Economic Safeguards.²⁸

35. The evaluation will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role or has promoted scaling up and/or replication²⁹ as part of its Theory of Change and as factors that are likely to contribute to longer term impact. Ultimately UN Environment and all its partners aim to bring about benefits to the environment and human well-being. Few projects are likely to have impact statements that reflect such long-term or broad-based changes. However, the evaluation will assess the likelihood of the project to make a substantive contribution to the high level changes represented by UN Environment's Expected Accomplishments, the Sustainable Development Goals³⁰ and/or the high level results prioritised by the funding partner.

36. *Factors affecting this criterion may include:* quality of project management and supervision, including adaptive project management; stakeholders participation and cooperation; responsiveness to human rights and gender equity; country ownership and driven-ness and communication and public awareness.

E. Financial Management

37. Financial management will be assessed under three broad themes: completeness of financial information, communication between financial and project management staff and compliance with relevant UN financial management standards and procedures. The evaluation will establish the actual spend across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors. This expenditure will be reported, where possible, at output level and will be compared with the approved budget. The evaluation will assess the level of communication between the Task Manager and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach. The evaluation will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UN Environment's financial management policies. Any financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted.

38. *Factors affecting this criterion may include:* preparation and readiness and quality of project management and supervision.

F. Efficiency

39. In keeping with the OECD/DAC definition of efficiency, the evaluation will assess the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. Focussing on the translation of inputs into outputs, cost-effectiveness is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. Timeliness refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The evaluation will also assess to what extent any project extension could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The evaluation will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.

40. The evaluation will give special attention to efforts by the project teams to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other

²⁸ Further information on Environmental, Social and Economic Safeguards (ESES) can be found at <http://www.unep.org/about/eses/>

²⁹ *Scaling up* refers to approaches being adopted on a much larger scale, but in a very similar context. Scaling up is often the longer term objective of pilot initiatives. *Replication* refers to approaches being repeated or lessons being explicitly applied in new/different contexts e.g. other geographic areas, different target group etc. Effective replication typically requires some form of revision or adaptation to the new context. It is possible to replicate at either the same or a different scale.

³⁰ A list of relevant SDGs is available on the EO website www.unep.org/evaluation

initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency. The evaluation will also consider the extent to which the management of the project minimised UN Environment's environmental footprint.

41. *Factors affecting this criterion may include:* preparation and readiness (e.g. timeliness); quality of project management and supervision and stakeholders participation and cooperation.

G. Monitoring and Reporting

42. The evaluation will assess monitoring and reporting across three sub-categories: monitoring design and budgeting, monitoring of project implementation and project reporting.

i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

43. Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART³¹ indicators towards the achievement of the projects outputs and direct outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender or groups with low representation. The evaluation will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for mid-term and terminal evaluation/review should be discussed if applicable.

ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation

44. The evaluation will assess whether the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period. It will also consider how information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The evaluation should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring were used to support this activity.

iii. Project Reporting

45. UN Environment has a centralised Project Information Management System (PIMS) in which project managers upload six-monthly status reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Evaluation Consultant(s) by the Evaluation Manager. Projects funded by GEF have specific evaluation requirements with regard to verifying documentation and reporting (i.e. the Project Implementation Reviews, Tracking Tool and CEO Endorsement template³²), which will be made available by the Task Manager. The evaluation will assess the extent to which both UN Environment and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled.

46. *Factors affecting this criterion may include:* quality of project management and supervision and responsiveness to human rights and gender equity (e.g. disaggregated indicators and data).

H. Sustainability

47. Sustainability is understood as the probability of direct outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of achieved direct outcomes. Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of direct outcomes may also be included.

i. Socio-political Sustainability

48. The evaluation will assess the extent to which social or political factors support the continuation and further development of project direct outcomes. It will consider the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards. In particular the evaluation will consider whether individual capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

ii. Financial Sustainability

³¹ SMART refers to indicators that are specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-specific.

³² The Evaluation Consultant(s) should verify that the annual Project Implementation Reviews have been submitted, that the Tracking Tool is being kept up-to-date and that in the CEO Endorsement template Table A and Section E have been completed.

49. Some direct outcomes, once achieved, do not require further financial inputs, e.g. the adoption of a revised policy. However, in order to derive a benefit from this outcome further management action may still be needed e.g. to undertake actions to enforce the policy. Other direct outcomes may be dependent on a continuous flow of action that needs to be resourced for them to be maintained, e.g. continuation of a new resource management approach. The evaluation will assess the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained. Secured future funding is only relevant to financial sustainability where the direct outcomes of a project have been extended into a future project phase. The question still remains as to whether the future project outcomes will be financially sustainable.

iii. Institutional Sustainability

50. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure.

51. *Factors affecting this criterion may include:* stakeholders participation and cooperation; responsiveness to human rights and gender equity (e.g. where interventions are not inclusive, their sustainability may be undermined); communication and public awareness and country ownership and driven-ness.

I. Factors and Processes Affecting Project Performance

52. These factors are rated in the ratings table, but are discussed as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other evaluation criteria, above.

i. Preparation and Readiness

53. This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilisation stage of the project. The evaluation will assess whether appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. In particular the evaluation will consider the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, the confirmation of partner capacity and development of partnership agreements as well as initial staffing and financing arrangements. (Project preparation is covered in the template for the assessment of Project Design Quality).

ii. Quality of Project Implementation and Execution

54. Specifically for GEF funded projects, this factor refers separately to the performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UN Environment, as the implementing agency.

55. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of project management with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); communication and collaboration with UN Environment colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive project management should be highlighted.

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

56. Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs and target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UN Environment. The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups, should be considered.

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity

57. The evaluation will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the evaluation will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UN Environment's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment.

58. The report should present the extent to which the intervention, following an adequate gender analysis at design stage, has implemented the identified actions and/or applied adaptive management to ensure that Gender Equity and Human Rights are adequately taken into account. In particular, the evaluation will consider to what extent project design (section B), the implementation that underpins effectiveness (section D), and monitoring (section G) have taken into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to and the control over natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of women and children to environmental degradation or disasters; (iii) the role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

v. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

59. The evaluation will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project. The evaluation will consider the involvement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices. This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long term impact to be realised. This ownership should adequately represent the needs and interests of all gender and marginalised groups.

vi. Communication and Public Awareness

60. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of: a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large. The evaluation should consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gender and marginalised groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms have been established under a project the evaluation will comment on the sustainability of the communication channel under either socio-political, institutional or financial sustainability, as appropriate.

Section 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

61. The Terminal Evaluation will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the consultant(s) maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the evaluation implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the evaluation findings. Where applicable, the consultant(s) should provide a geo-referenced map that demarcates the area covered by the project and, where possible, provide geo-reference photographs of key intervention sites (e.g. sites of habitat rehabilitation and protection, pollution treatment infrastructure, etc.)

62. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:

(a) **A desk review of:**

- Relevant background documentation inter alia UN Environment Medium-Term Strategy 2010-2013 and 2014-2017 and respective programmes of work;
- Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
- Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and including the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool etc.;
- Project outputs;
- Mid-Term Review (June 2014);
- Evaluations/reviews of similar projects.

- (b) **Interviews** (individual or in group) with:
 - UN Environment Task Manager (TM);
 - Project management team;
 - UN Environment Fund Management Officer (FMO);
 - Sub-Programme Coordinator;
 - Project partners, including World Resources Institute, Rainforest Alliance, Central African Forest Commission;
 - Relevant resource persons.
- (c) **Surveys** as deemed necessary and defined at the inception stage of the evaluation process.
- (d) **Field visits** a selection of 2 to 3 countries will be determined at the inception stage of the evaluation process
- (e) **Other data collection tools** as deemed necessary and defined at the inception stage of the evaluation process.

Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

63. The evaluation consultant will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 1 for links to all templates, tables and guidance notes) containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.
- **Preliminary Findings Note:** typically in the form of a powerpoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings. In the case of highly strategic project/portfolio evaluations or evaluations with an Evaluation Reference Group, the preliminary findings may be presented as a word document for review and comment.
- **Draft and Final Evaluation Report:** (see links in Annex 1) containing an executive summary that can act as a stand alone document; detailed analysis of the evaluation findings organised by evaluation criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.
- **Evaluation Bulletin:** a 2-page summary of key evaluation findings for wider dissemination through the EOU website.

64. **Review of the draft evaluation report.** The evaluation team will submit a draft report to the Evaluation Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. Once a draft of adequate quality has been peer-reviewed and accepted, the Evaluation Manager will share the cleared draft report with the Project Manager, who will alert the Evaluation Manager in case the report contains any blatant factual errors. The Evaluation Manager will then forward revised draft report (corrected by the evaluation team where necessary) to other project stakeholders, for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the Evaluation Manager for consolidation. The Evaluation Manager will provide all comments to the evaluation team for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

65. Based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the evaluation consultants and the internal consistency of the report, the Evaluation Manager will provide an assessment of the ratings in the final evaluation report. Where there are differences of opinion between the evaluator and the Evaluation Manager

on project ratings, both viewpoints will be clearly presented in the final report. The Evaluation Office ratings will be considered the final ratings for the project.

66. The Evaluation Manager will prepare a **quality assessment** of the first and final drafts of the main evaluation report, which acts as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of the report will be assessed and rated against the criteria specified in template listed in Annex 1 and this assessment will be appended to the Final Evaluation Report.

67. At the end of the evaluation process, the Evaluation Office will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals by the Task Manager. The Evaluation Office will track compliance against this plan on a six monthly basis.

The Evaluation Consultant

68. For this evaluation, the evaluation team will consist of a one Consultant who will work under the overall responsibility of the Evaluation Office represented by an Evaluation Manager, Neeral Shah, in consultation with the UN Environment Task, Manager Adamou Bouhari, Fund Management Officer, Paul Vrontamitis, and the Sub-programme Coordinator of the Ecosystems Management, Niklas Hagerberg. The consultant will liaise with the Evaluation Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation. It is, however, the consultants' individual responsibility to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UN Environment Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

69. The consultant will be hired for 6 months spread over the period November 2017 to April 2018 and should have: an advanced university degree in environmental sciences, international development or agroforestry; a minimum of 10 years of technical experience, including of evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; a broad understanding of forest management systems; proficiency in French is required, along with excellent writing skills in English; and, where possible, knowledge of the UN system, specifically of the work of UN Environment.

70. In close consultation with the Evaluation Manager, the Evaluation Consultant will be responsible for the overall management of the evaluation and timely delivery of its outputs, data collection and analysis and report-writing. More specifically:

Inception phase of the evaluation, including:

- preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff;
- draft the reconstructed Theory of Change of the project;
- prepare the evaluation framework;
- develop the desk review and interview protocols;
- draft the survey protocols (if relevant);
- develop and present criteria for country and/or site selection for the evaluation mission;
- plan the evaluation schedule;
- prepare the Inception Report, incorporating comments until approved by the Evaluation Manager

Data collection and analysis phase of the evaluation, including:

- conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with project implementing and executing agencies, project partners and project stakeholders;

- (where appropriate and agreed) conduct an evaluation mission(s) to selected countries, visit the project locations, interview project partners and stakeholders, including a good representation of local communities. Ensure independence of the evaluation and confidentiality of evaluation interviews.
- regularly report back to the Evaluation Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and;
- keep the Project/Task Manager informed of the evaluation progress and engage the Project/Task Manager in discussions on emerging findings throughout the evaluation process.

Reporting phase, including:

- draft the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that the evaluation report is complete, coherent and consistent with the Evaluation Manager guidelines both in substance and style;
- liaise with the Evaluation Manager on comments received and finalize the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that comments are taken into account until approved by the Evaluation Manager
- prepare a Response to Comments annex for the main report, listing those comments not accepted by the Evaluation Consultant and indicating the reason for the rejection; and
- prepare a 2-page summary of the key evaluation findings and lessons;

Managing relations, including:

- maintain a positive relationship with evaluation stakeholders, ensuring that the evaluation process is as participatory as possible but at the same time maintains its independence;
- communicate in a timely manner with the Evaluation Manager on any issues requiring its attention and intervention.

Schedule of the evaluation

71. The table below presents the tentative schedule for the evaluation.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the evaluation

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Inception Report	December 2017
Evaluation Mission	January 2018
Telephone interviews, surveys etc.	January 2018
Powerpoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	February 2018
Draft report to Evaluation Manager (and Peer Reviewer)	February 2018

Draft Report shared with UN Environment Project Manager and team	February 2018
Draft Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	March 2018
Final Report	March 2018
Final Report shared with all respondents	April 2018

Contractual Arrangements

72. Evaluation Consultants will be selected and recruited by the Evaluation Office of UN Environment under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a “fees only” basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UN Environment/UNON, the consultant(s) certify that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project’s executing or implementing units. All consultants are required to sign the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

73. Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance by the Evaluation Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

74. Schedule of Payment for the Consultant:

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report (<i>as per annex document 7</i>)	30%
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report (<i>as per annex document 13</i>)	30%
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report	40%

75. Fees only contracts: Air tickets will be purchased by UN Environment and 75% of the Daily Subsistence Allowance for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel will only be reimbursed where agreed in advance with the Evaluation Manager and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

76. The consultants may be provided with access to UN Environment’s Programme Information Management System (PIMS) and if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the evaluation report.

77. In case the consultants are not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UN Environment Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Director of the Evaluation Office until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UN Environment’s quality standards.

78. If the consultant(s) fail to submit a satisfactory final product to UN Environment in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants’ fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard.

ANNEX VIII. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluation Title:

Terminal Evaluation of the UN Environment Project “A regional focus on sustainable timber management in the Congo Basin (GEF 3822)”

All UN Environment evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the evaluation product (i.e. evaluation report) and is dependent on more than just the consultant’s efforts and skills. Nevertheless, the quality assessment is used as a tool for providing structured feedback to evaluation consultants, especially at draft report stage. This guidance is provided to support consistency in assessment across different Evaluation Managers and to make the assessment process as transparent as possible.

	UN Environment Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Substantive Report Quality Criteria		
<p>Quality of the Executive Summary:</p> <p>The Summary should be able to stand alone as an accurate summary of the main evaluation product. It should include a concise overview of the evaluation object; clear summary of the evaluation objectives and scope; overall evaluation rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria (plus reference to where the evaluation ratings table can be found within the report); summary of the main findings of the exercise, including a synthesis of main conclusions (which include a summary response to key strategic evaluation questions), lessons learned and recommendations.</p>	A French Version of the Executive Summary has been included in the final report.	5
<p>I. Introduction</p> <p>A brief introduction should be given identifying, where possible and relevant, the following: institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, regions/countries where implemented) and coverage of the evaluation; date of PRC approval and project document signature); results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. Expected Accomplishment in POW); project duration and start/end dates; number of project phases (where appropriate); implementing partners; total secured budget and whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, part of a synthesis evaluation, evaluated by another agency etc.)</p> <p>Consider the extent to which the introduction includes a concise statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the findings?</p>		5
<p>II. Evaluation Methods</p>		5

<p>This section should include a description of how the <i>TOC at Evaluation</i>³³ was designed (who was involved etc.) and applied to the context of the project?</p> <p>A data collection section should include: a description of evaluation methods and information sources used, including the number and type of respondents; justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face); any selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited; strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation; details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.).</p> <p>Methods to ensure that potentially excluded groups (excluded by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation) are reached and their experiences captured effectively, should be made explicit in this section.</p> <p>The methods used to analyse data (e.g. scoring; coding; thematic analysis etc.) should be described.</p> <p>It should also address evaluation limitations such as: low or imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; extent to which findings can be either generalised to wider evaluation questions or constraints on aggregation/disaggregation; any potential or apparent biases; language barriers and ways they were overcome.</p> <p>Ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected and strategies used to include the views of marginalised or potentially disadvantaged groups and/or divergent views.</p>		
<p>III. The Project</p> <p>This section should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Context:</i> Overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses). • <i>Objectives and components:</i> Summary of the project's results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) • <i>Stakeholders:</i> Description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics • <i>Project implementation structure and partners:</i> A description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners • <i>Changes in design during implementation:</i> Any key events that affected the project's scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order • <i>Project financing:</i> Completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing 		5

³³ During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Design* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions). During the evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

<p>IV. Theory of Change</p> <p>The TOC at Evaluation should be presented clearly in both diagrammatic and narrative forms. Clear articulation of each major causal pathway is expected, (starting from outputs to long term impact), including explanations of all drivers and assumptions as well as the expected roles of key actors.</p> <p>Where the project results as stated in the project design documents (or formal revisions of the project design) are not an accurate reflection of the project's intentions or do not follow OECD/DAC definitions of different results levels, project results may need to be re-phrased or reformulated. In such cases, a summary of the project's results hierarchy should be presented for: a) the results as stated in the approved/revised Prodoc logframe/TOC and b) as formulated in the TOC at Evaluation. <i>The two results hierarchies should be presented as a two column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'.</i></p>	<p>A considerable amount of time was spent finessing the reconstructed theory of change.</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>V. Key Findings</p> <p>A. Strategic relevance:</p> <p>This section should include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UN Environment's mandate and its alignment with UN Environment's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. An assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups should be included. Consider the extent to which all four elements have been addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> v. Alignment to the UN Environment Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme of Work (POW) vi. Alignment to UN Environment/ Donor/GEF Strategic Priorities vii. Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities viii. Complementarity with Existing Interventions 		<p>6</p>
<p>B. Quality of Project Design</p> <p>To what extent are the strength and weaknesses of the project design effectively <u>summarized</u>?</p>	<p>Draft report:</p> <p>The PDQ table should be removed from the report (as it was assessed in the inception report). A summary of the strengths (if any) and weakness (addressed) of the design should be included here.</p> <p>Final report:</p> <p>This was done</p>	<p>6</p>

<p>C. Nature of the External Context</p> <p>For projects where this is appropriate, key <u>external</u> features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval), and how they affected performance, should be described.</p>	<p>Draft report:</p> <p>Consider sudden events that took place that were not considered during the design of the project. Make it clear the challenges faced – eg visa restrictions and civil war. As a result, it impacts on the efficiency of the project.</p> <p>Final report:</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>D. Effectiveness</p> <p>(i) Outputs and Direct Outcomes: How well does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the a) delivery of outputs, and b) achievement of direct outcomes? How convincing is the discussion of attribution and contribution, as well as the constraints to attributing effects to the intervention.</p> <p>The effects of the intervention on differentiated groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation, should be discussed explicitly.</p>	<p>Draft report:</p> <p>This section was too short and did not discuss in detail delivery of outputs. Consider organizing this section by each output as per ToC, or a table that clearly presents the level of delivery and brief quality of each output.</p> <p>Achievement of direct outcomes was addressed well.</p> <p>Final report:</p> <p>Considerable improvement in layout and clarity of the analysis</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>(ii) Likelihood of Impact: How well does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact?</p> <p>How well are change processes explained and the roles of key actors, as well as drivers and assumptions, explicitly discussed?</p> <p>Any unintended negative effects of the project should be discussed under Effectiveness, especially negative effects on disadvantaged groups.</p>	<p>Draft report:</p> <p>Final report:</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>E. Financial Management</p> <p>This section should contain an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table.</p> <p>Consider how well the report addresses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>completeness</i> of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used • <i>communication</i> between financial and project management staff 	<p>Draft report:</p> <p>Move the financial management table (table 5) from Section 2 here.</p> <p>Final report:</p> <p><i>Financial information from the project team was incomplete. Some concerns over potential mismanagement of funds from the audit report have been overlooked by the finance team.</i></p>	<p>5</p>

	<p><i>Attempts by the evaluation team were made to clarify the matter, but little information was provided in a timely manner.</i></p> <p><i>(if this section is rated poorly as a result of limited financial information from the project, this is not a reflection on the consultant per se, but will affect the quality of the evaluation report)</i></p>	
<p>F. Efficiency</p> <p>To what extent, and how well, does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency under the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implications of delays and no cost extensions • Time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • Discussion of making use of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • The extent to which the management of the project minimised UN Environment’s environmental footprint. 	<p>Draft report:</p> <p>Section was too short and did not address some factors that were to be considered here.</p> <p>Final report:</p> <p>All issues addressed</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>G. Monitoring and Reporting</p> <p>How well does the report assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring design and budgeting (<i>including SMART indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.</i>) • Monitoring of project implementation (<i>including use of monitoring data for adaptive management</i>) • Project reporting (<i>e.g. PIMS and donor report</i>) 	<p>Draft report:</p> <p>Final report:</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>H. Sustainability</p> <p>How well does the evaluation identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of achieved direct outcomes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-political Sustainability • Financial Sustainability • Institutional Sustainability 	<p>Draft report:</p> <p>Final report:</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>I. Factors Affecting Performance</p> <p>These factors are <u>not</u> discussed in stand-alone sections but are integrated in criteria A-H as appropriate. Note that these are described in the Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix. To what extent, and how well, does the evaluation report cover the following cross-cutting themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation and readiness 	<p>Draft report:</p> <p>Final report:</p>	<p>5</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of project management and supervision³⁴ • Stakeholder participation and co-operation • Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity • Country ownership and driven-ness • Communication and public awareness 		
<p>VI. Conclusions and Recommendations</p> <p>i. Quality of the conclusions: The key strategic questions should be clearly and succinctly addressed within the conclusions section. It is expected that the conclusions will highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of the project, and connect them in a compelling story line. Human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) should be discussed explicitly. Conclusions, as well as lessons and recommendations, should be consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report.</p>	<p>Draft report:</p> <p>Final report:</p>	5
<p>ii) Quality and utility of the lessons: Both positive and negative lessons are expected and duplication with recommendations should be avoided. Based on explicit evaluation findings, lessons should be rooted in real project experiences or derived from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future. Lessons must have the potential for wider application and use and should briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful.</p>	<p>Draft report:</p> <p>Final report:</p> <p>The formulation of the learning lessons were significantly improved from the draft version.</p>	6
<p>iii) Quality and utility of the recommendations:</p> <p>To what extent are the recommendations proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results? They should be feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when.</p> <p>At least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UN Environment interventions, should be given.</p> <p>Recommendations should represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations.</p>	<p>Draft report:</p> <p>Final report:</p> <p>The formulation of the recommendations were significantly improved from the draft version.</p>	5
<p>VII. Report Structure and Presentation Quality</p>		
<p>i) Structure and completeness of the report: To what extent does the report follow the Evaluation Office guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?</p>	<p>Draft report:</p> <p>The Executive Summary and Annexes were not included as they</p>	6

³⁴ In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UN Environment to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UN Environment.

	<p>were not requested. All other sections were included and complete.</p> <p>Final report:</p>	
<p>ii) Quality of writing and formatting: Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information? Does the report follow Evaluation Office formatting guidelines?</p>	<p>Draft report:</p> <p>Report is succinct and the use of English language is generally clear. Some paragraphs require edits for clarity so that the reader is better able to follow the report.</p> <p>Abbreviations such as didn't should be spelled out in full ie did not, etc</p> <p>However the report did not follow the Evaluation Office formatting: font type, numbered paragraphs making the report difficult to read.</p> <p>Final report:</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING</p>		<p>5.3</p>

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.

At the end of the evaluation, compliance of the evaluation process against the agreed standard procedures is assessed, based on the table below. *All questions with negative compliance must be explained further in the table below.*

Evaluation Process Quality Criteria	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Independence:		
1. Were the Terms of Reference drafted and finalised by the Evaluation Office?	✓	
2. Were possible conflicts of interest of proposed Evaluation Consultant(s) appraised and addressed in the final selection?	✓	
3. Was the final selection of the Evaluation Consultant(s) made by the Evaluation Office?	✓	
4. Was the evaluator contracted directly by the Evaluation Office?	✓	
5. Was the Evaluation Consultant given direct access to identified external stakeholders in order to adequately present and discuss the findings, as appropriate?	✓	
6. Did the Evaluation Consultant raise any concerns about being unable to work freely and without interference or undue pressure from project staff or the Evaluation Office?		✓
7. If Yes to Q6: Were these concerns resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager?	-	-
Financial Management:		
8. Was the evaluation budget approved at project design available for the evaluation?	✓	
9. Was the final evaluation budget agreed and approved by the Evaluation Office?	✓	
10. Were the agreed evaluation funds readily available to support the payment of the evaluation contract throughout the payment process?	✓	
Timeliness:		
11. If a Terminal Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within the period of six months before or after project operational completion? Or, if a Mid Term Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within a six-month period prior to the project's mid-point?	✓	
12. Were all deadlines set in the Terms of Reference respected, as far as unforeseen circumstances allowed?		✓
13. Was the inception report delivered and reviewed/approved prior to commencing any travel?	✓	
Project's engagement and support:		
14. Did the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and identified project stakeholders provide comments on the evaluation Terms of Reference?	✓	
15. Did the project make available all required/requested documents?		✓
16. Did the project make all financial information (and audit reports if applicable) available in a timely manner and to an acceptable level of completeness?		✓
17. Was adequate support provided by the project to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?	✓	
18. Was close communication between the Evaluation Consultant, Evaluation Office and project team maintained throughout the evaluation?		✓
19. Were evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations adequately discussed with the project team for ownership to be established?	✓	
20. Did the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and any identified project stakeholders provide comments on the draft evaluation report?		✓
Quality assurance:		
21. Were the evaluation Terms of Reference, including the key evaluation questions, peer-reviewed?	✓	
22. Was the TOC in the inception report peer-reviewed?	✓	
23. Was the quality of the draft/cleared report checked by the Evaluation Manager and Peer Reviewer prior to dissemination to stakeholders for comments?	✓	

24. Did the Evaluation Office complete an assessment of the quality of both the draft and final reports?	✓	
Transparency:		
25. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly by the Evaluation Consultant to the Evaluation Office?	✓	
26. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) the cleared draft report to the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and other key internal personnel (including the Reference Group where appropriate) to solicit formal comments?	✓	
27. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) appropriate drafts of the report to identified external stakeholders, including key partners and funders, to solicit formal comments?	✓	
28. Were all stakeholder comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the Evaluation Office?	✓	
29. Did the Evaluation Consultant(s) respond adequately to all factual corrections and comments?	✓	
30. Did the Evaluation Office share substantive comments and Evaluation Consultant responses with those who commented, as appropriate?		✓

Provide comments / explanations / mitigating circumstances below for any non-compliant process issues.

<u>Process Criterion Number</u>	<u>Evaluation Office Comments</u>
12	The provision of the required project documents was delayed initially and commenting on key evaluation documents (e.g. Terms of Reference, Reconstructed TOC, first draft report) was slow, contributing to a significant delay in the evaluation process. In addition, the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager both had unforeseen circumstances further adding to the delay in the deliverables.
15 & 16	Gaps in project documentation hampered the evaluation process and incomplete information has contributed to lower ratings, especially in the financial section of the evaluation criteria.
18	There were substantial delays in receiving responses.
20	The TM provided feedback on the draft report 6 months after initial request. Project partners that worked on the project provided comments and feedback, however, none were working for the Executing Agency at the time of finalising the draft report. A final draft was sent to an additional member of the EA, once they were identified.
30	There was an oversight on the part of the EM in not sending the final revised version back to the TM and implementing partners, after they had provided comments, before circulating it further internally. This was, in part, due to the pressure to finalise the report as the evaluation consultant's extended contract had expired.

ANNEX IX. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND RECONSTRUCTED THEORY OF CHANGE

Project Design Logical Framework as per ProDoc	Evaluation Office Reconstructed Theory of Change	Justification for Reconstruction
<p>Goal: “to strengthen sustainable management of forest ecosystems of the Congo Basin as a contribution to the conservation of globally relevant biodiversity and ecosystem services, maintaining a solid foundation for the region’s sustainable development”.</p> <p>Objective: “to promote a harmonised regional approach to the sustainable management of production forests in the Congo Basin, resulting in reduction in the impacts of logging on forests and ecosystems”.</p>	<p>Long Term Impact:</p> <p>‘The globally relevant biodiversity and forest ecosystems in the Congo Basin countries (Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Central African Republic) are sustainably managed.</p>	<p>The goal statement has been reformulated to focus on the “end-results” instead of activity/implementation strategy</p>
	<p>Intermediate State 1: Local socio-economic status is improved</p> <p>Intermediate State 2: Increased forest areas in the Congo Basin countries with sustainable management plans in place.</p>	<p>These two intermediate states have positive feedback – sustainable forest management practices leads to increased livelihood which in turns leads to higher socio-economic status which boosts further uptake of sustainable forest management practices as it becomes the norm. Together with effective benefits sharing, this well lead to increased conservation of the Congo Basin Forest, a globally relevant biodiversity and ecosystem.</p>
	<p>Medium Term Outcome/Intermediate State 3: Effective benefit sharing of forest value, including carbon implemented in the Congo Basin region</p>	<p>Benefit sharing is stated as an output in the logical framework. However, benefit sharing happens as a result of achieving the outputs and outcomes and hence moved towards a longer term outcome.</p>
	<p>MOC 1) Medium Term Outcome 1: A significant group of logging firms in the region adopt sustainable forest management practices in response to COMIFAC initiatives, including FSC</p>	<p>The original formulation was done as an indicator. The result statement was revised to more suitable form. The indicators will be utilized in the effectiveness analysis as relevant.</p>

Project Design Logical Framework as per ProDoc	Evaluation Office Reconstructed Theory of Change	Justification for Reconstruction
	(MOC 2) Medium Term Outcome 2: Congo basin countries implement a system of harmonized technical and fiscal incentives to SFM	Following on from direct outcomes 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, technical and fiscal incentives are integrated towards a more harmonised approach as per the goal and objective of the project.
Direct Outcome 1: A harmonised approach to curbing illegal logging in the Congo Basin	OC 1.1: COMIFAC and member countries endorse a regional consensus on how to address illegal and informal logging.	The original project outcome was revised to be more precise (reflecting the actual purpose and outputs of the component)
Direct Outcome 2: Long term technical and financial incentives available to conserve biodiversity in the Congo Basin through training, value adding and sustainable financing mechanisms such as payments for environmental services, carbon finance, etc.	<p>OC 2.1: Informal and/or community-based groups apply technical skills and integrate Sustainable Forest Management practices in Republic of Congo</p> <p>OC2.2: Logging firms in 4 countries are deemed to conform to approved national FSC certification standards including HCVF areas.</p> <p>OC2.3: National Strategies (FLEGT, REDD+ and PES) is endorsed 2 Congo Basin Countries</p>	<p>The original outcome statement has been broken down by “user groups” ...</p> <p>Following the actual intended project outputs and related indicators, the evaluator has identified that the change is expected appear at community level (applying technical skills), among the logging firms and government institutions. Thus, the evaluation will assess the project’s outcome achievement against these reconstructed outcome statements.</p>
Direct Outcome 3: Governance conditions exist that permit equitable participation, sustainable and legal forest management and benefit sharing among all forest stakeholders	OC 3: The necessary institutional conditions are given, and legal conditions identified for equitable participation, sustainable and legal forest management and benefit sharing among all forest stakeholders.	The original outcome statement is considered mostly acceptable. However, the “governance” has been specified to mean political, legal and institutional condition. This is inline with the project outputs and actual work intended to be done by the project