



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

PREFOREST CONGO

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

GCP /PRC/021/GCF

Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP)



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February 2025

Acknowledgements

This document is a result of collaboration by the PREFOREST team members including (in alphabetical order): Amélie Arquero, Amanda Bradley, Ananie Ekoumou Abanda, Tessa Mayouya, Rodann Mengue Zola, Seth Oumba Bazola, and Minoarivelo Randrianarison. The team, in turn, is very grateful for the thoughtful contributions from all the people consulted during the assessments.

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Abbreviations

ACEIE	<i>Association Congolaise pour les Études d'Impact Environnementaux</i>
ACFAP	Congolese Agency for Wildlife and Protected Areas (<i>Agence congolaise de la faune et des aires protégées</i>)
AE	Accredited Entity
AFD	French Development Agency (<i>Agence Française de Développement</i>)
ANR	Assisted natural regeneration
AWPB	Annual Work Plan and Budget
BMP	Biodiversity Management Plan
CAFI	Central African Forest Initiative
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CLFT	Forest legality and traceability Unit (<i>Cellule de la Légalité Forestière et de la Traçabilité</i>)
CNIAF	National Centre for Forest and Fauna Inventory (<i>Centre National d'Inventaire et d'Aménagement des Ressources Forestières et Fauniques</i>)
CODEPA-REDD	Departmental Committees for the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (<i>Comités Départementaux de la Réduction des Émissions liées à la Déforestation et à la Dégradation des Forêts</i>)
CONA-REDD	National REDD+ Committee (<i>Comité National REDD+</i>)
COFIL	Steering Committee (<i>Comité de Pilotage</i>)
COTECH	Technical committee (<i>Comité technique</i>)
CRAL	Loudima Centre for Agronomic Research (<i>Centre de Recherche Agronomique de Loudima</i>)
CTFT	<i>Centre Technique Forestier Tropical</i>
DDE	Departmental Directorate of the Environment (<i>Direction Départementale de l'Environnement</i>)
DDEF	Departmental Directorate of the Forest Economy (<i>Direction Départementale de l'Économie Forestière</i>)
DEP	Studies and Planning Department (<i>Département des Études et Planification</i>)
DGE	Directorate General for the Environment
DGFE	Directorate General for Forest Economy
DNA	Designated National Authority
DSCERP	Strategy Paper for Growth, Employment and Poverty Reduction (<i>Document de Stratégie pour la Croissance, l'Emploi et la Réduction de la Pauvreté</i>)
EE	Executing Entity (<i>Entité d'exécution</i>)
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESS	Environmental and Social Standard
EU	European Union
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FESM	Framework for Environmental and Social Management
FGRM	Feedback and Grievances Redress Mechanism
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GBV	Gender based Violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund

GRET	Research and Technology Exchange Group (<i>Groupe de Recherche et d'Échange Technologique</i>)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPP	Indigenous Peoples Plan
IRM	Independent Redress Mechanism
ISGSEF	Inspectorate General of Forest Economy Services
LHSMP	Labour Health Safety Management Plan
LOA	Letter of Agreement
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
MEDDBC	Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and the Congo Basin (<i>Ministère de l'Environnement, du Développement Durable et du Bassin du Congo</i>)
MEF	Ministry of Forest Economy (<i>Ministère de l'Économie Forestière</i>)
MFI	Microfinance institution
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDP	National Development Plan
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPT	National Project Coordinator
NTFP	Non-timber forest products
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OHS	Operational Health and Safety
PAGEF	Support for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Project
PMU	Project Management Unit
PMP	Pesticides Management Plan
PREFOREST	Project to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Forests in Five Departments of the Republic of the Congo
PRONAR	National Program of Afforestation and Reforestation (<i>Programme National d'Afforestation et de Reboisement</i>)
PS	Performance Standards
POP	Persistent organic pollutant
PMU	Project Management Unit
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
RENAPAC	National Network of Indigenous Peoples of Congo (<i>Réseau national des Populations Autochtones du Congo</i>)
RN	National Road (<i>Route Nationale</i>)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEA	Sexual exploitation and abuse
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SNR	National Reforestation Service (<i>Service National pour le Reboisement</i>)
TC	Technical Committee
TSC	Technical Sub-Committee
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreements

WB

World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brief description of the project

The Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments in the Republic of the Congo – PREFOREST, aims to promote the introduction of agroforestry and forest restoration to enable local communities to reduce the pressure they exert on natural forests and improve their living conditions. It is being implemented jointly by the FAO and the Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF). The project is financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and is co-financed by the Government of the Republic of the Congo through the Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF), by the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) through the FAO and by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) through the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. The project is being implemented in five departments (i.e. administrative division) in southern Congo (Niari, Bouenza, Pool, Kouilou, Plateau), covering 13 districts. The Ministry of the Environment, Sustainable Development and the Congo Basin (MEDDBC) is the Designated National Authority (DNA) for the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the project's main donor.

Activities include participatory mapping and strengthening of land tenure security; training and technical support for the establishment of agroforestry plantations and assisted natural regeneration; and work with financial institutions to provide products and services that meet the needs of rural communities. On the ground activities, which include establishment of agroforestry plantations and assisted natural regeneration are estimated to affect 11,800 ha and 5000 ha respectively, a total of approximately 16,800 hectares. The project comprises three components:

- Component 1: Land and resource use planning and strengthening access rights and land tenure security
- Component 2: Setting up agroforestry and forestry systems to mitigate climate change
- Component 3: Strengthening national agricultural financing structures, trade capacities and value chains.

While FAO works closely with government counterparts and implementing partners, the local communities in the 13 target districts are the primary intended beneficiary of the project with an emphasis on equitable benefits for women and Indigenous Peoples.

The project focuses on three major supply basins for agricultural products and firewood in the country, namely the rural basins of Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and Dolisie (Niari valley basin). Thirteen (13) intervention districts have been identified in five departments, including Madingo-Kayes and Hinda, Mvouti (Kouilou), Louvakou (Niari), Loudima, Kayes and Madingou (Bouenza), Kinkala, Ngoma Tsé-Tsé, Igné and Ngabé (Pool), and Ngo and Mpouya (Plateaux).

Table 1. Target Departments and Districts for PREFOREST

Department	Districts
Bouenza	Madingou, Loudima, Kayes
Kouilou	Hinda, Madingou-kayes, Mvouti
Niari	Louvakou
Plateaux	Ngo, Mpouya
Pool	Kinkala, Goma Tsé Tsé, Ngabé, Ignié

Purpose of the ESMP

This Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) responds to the need to comply with the environmental and social safeguard requirements of FAO, as defined in its [Framework for Environmental and Social Management \(FESM\)](#). The FESM requirements are largely consistent with the GCF [Revised Environment and Social Policy](#) which in turn refers to the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability for operational guidance. The Republic of the Congo's regulations (i.e. Decree No. 2009-415 of November 20, 2009) also requires an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) to be drawn up.

The ESMP is a mechanism for identifying, screening and managing the environmental and social risks related to project activities that are not necessarily known at the project formulation stage. In addition, the ESMP defines the monitoring framework, as well as the institutional arrangements to avoid, reduce and/or mitigate to acceptable levels adverse environmental and social impacts during project implementation.

Project impacts and risks

According to FAO's FESM, PREFOREST is classified as Category B or 'moderate risk' (potential, reversible and manageable negative impacts). This rating is based on a safeguards screening Checklist which identifies the potential environmental and social risks and impacts and related safeguards that are triggered by certain project activities (See Annex 01). A review of PREFOREST activities using this Checklist triggers seven of the FAO Environmental and Social Safeguards. Some additional lower risks have also been identified in other categories (i.e. ESS 5). Social risks have been identified in relation to almost all the project activities because the project activities involve local communities and Indigenous Peoples as the main beneficiaries; while environmental risks are primarily related to on-the-ground activities such as agroforestry, nursery rehabilitation, and assisted natural regeneration (ANR). The key risks related to each FAO ESS are summarized here:

ESS 1: Biodiversity conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources (triggers moderate rating).

- Agroforestry activities (including clearing and planting and maintaining the plantations), nursery rehabilitation, and ANR pose higher risks to the environment and biodiversity caused by potential disturbance of natural ecosystems, introduction of invasive species, use of pesticides, and increased trade of bushmeat. High probability, high impact.

ESS 2: Resource efficiency and pollution prevention and management (triggers moderate rating).

- The possible use of pesticides and other chemical agricultural inputs, as well as the disruption of natural ecosystems, could have adverse effects on the health of the local population and the environment. Low probability, low impact.

ESS 4: Decent work (triggers moderate rating).

- Since the project involves employment both within the Project Management Unit (FAO), among implementing partners, and among local communities and Indigenous Peoples (primarily day labor), there are labor risks such as child labour, and abusive working conditions. Low probability, high impact.
- There are additional work-related risks such as discrimination in selection processes and payment problems (e.g. delays). High probability, medium impact.

ESS 5: Community health, safety, and security.

- The use of pesticides and other chemical agricultural inputs, as well as the disruption of natural ecosystems, could have adverse effects on the health of the local population and the environment. Low probability, low impact.
- Accidents during travel and field work are also possible. Low probability, medium impact.

ESS 6. Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence

- Ensuring the active participation and equitable benefits for women is likely to be challenging in the local context. Literacy levels and high household burdens of women are constraints. High likelihood, medium impact.
- Gender based violence during travel to or work at the field sites is another risk. Low likelihood, medium impact.

ESS 7: Land tenure, displacement and resettlement (triggers moderate rating).

- Difficulties related to access to land and security of tenure may compromise the large-scale adoption of sustainable agroforestry and forestry practices. Likelihood and impact: medium.
- Unequal land rights systems could hinder the equitable sharing of project benefits. High probability, low impact.
- Field interventions (agroforestry/ANR) could result in the displacement of informal settlers/land occupants, or undocumented applicants on public and private land, as well as potential restriction of access to forest resources, affecting traditional forest users. Low probability, medium impact.

ESS 8: Indigenous Peoples (triggers moderate rating).

- Indigenous Peoples may not benefit equitably from the project due to their marginalisation. Without deliberate action, discriminatory norms could be reinforced. Medium probability, medium impact.

ESS 9: Cultural heritage (triggers moderate rating).

- Risks in this category relate to landscape transformation through the project's plantations that visibly and physically change the landscape. There could be negative cultural heritage impacts, which is why the moderate rating is triggered.
- Mitigation measures for each risk and impact have been identified, specific indicators have been developed and responsibilities for applying the measures have been defined.

Consultations with stakeholders

During the project formulation and implementation stages, consultations were held across five departments and 13 districts to facilitate dialogue on restoring and protecting forest ecosystems and biodiversity, gather information on ecosystem pressures and climate change, assess the application of laws and local land governance, and understand the development needs and expectations of local communities.

In addition, project activities, risks, and safeguards were discussed during the Free, Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) processes and participatory mapping exercises both held at village level, as well as in in-person and online or telephone meetings with selected experts in various fields. The consultation meetings emphasized involving departmental directorates, consultation councils, and civil society in project implementation and monitoring and ensuring the protection of ecosystem services, fauna, and flora, and respecting customs when accessing sacred sites. Key actions recommended by stakeholders included raising awareness about pesticide use, promoting biological methods for pest management, respecting the agricultural calendar to optimize funding benefits, providing improved seeds and equipment, building environmental capacity of local institutions, and offering technical support for beneficiaries to monitor activities effectively. The importance of a functional grievance redress mechanism has also been emphasized.

Environmental and Social Management Plan

The ESMP includes all the key elements of environmental and social risk management. Important elements include clear identification of risks and their relation to project activities, measures to

mitigate these risks, institutional responsibilities, staff and partner roles and responsibilities, monitoring arrangements, and the budget. The mitigation measures aim to safeguard local communities, workers, cultural heritage, and the environment. Several plans on specific themes have been developed and are annexed to the ESMP (See Annexes 2 to 8), while key risks and mitigation measures in these plans have been integrated in the ESMP. These plans include:

- Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP)
- Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP)
- Pesticides Management Plan (PMP)
- Chance Finds Procedures
- Labour, Health and Safety Management Plan (LHSMP)
- Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)
- Gender Assessment and Gender Action Plan (GAP)

The FAO serves as both Accredited Entity (AE) and Executing Entity (EE) for the PREFOREST project, with an operational structure that encourages a high level of government ownership. The Project Management Unit (PMU) is responsible for project implementation with support from technical partners, while safeguard aspects are managed by the national Environment and Social Safeguards (ESS) Specialist, supported by an International Expert in Gender, Safeguards and Indigenous Peoples based at FAO headquarters. The monitoring plan covers ongoing monitoring, supervision and annual evaluation. External monitoring will be carried out by the Directorate-General for the Environment (DGE) and the Departmental Directorates, whose capacities have been strengthened for this purpose. The PREFOREST Steering Committee (SC – *Comité de pilotage COPIL*) is responsible for oversight. Independent consultants will conduct a mid-term evaluation in 2026 and the final evaluation at the end of the project (2029).

Summary of ESMP costs

The total cost of implementing the PREFOREST ESMP is USD 673,949 (See 7.2. Indicative budget). These costs are essentially focused on implementing risk mitigation measures, monitoring, training and support from consultants as necessary.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project overview

The *Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments in the Republic of the Congo – PREFOREST*, aims to promote the introduction of agroforestry and forest restoration to enable local communities to reduce the pressure they exert on natural forests and improve their living conditions.

The project is being implemented jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF) with a timeframe from 2021 - 2029. The project is financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and is co-financed by the Government of the Republic of the Congo through the Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF), by the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) through FAO and by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) through the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. The Ministry of the Environment, Sustainable Development and the Congo Basin (MEDDBC) is the Designated National Authority (DNA) for the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the project's main donor.

The project is being implemented in five departments in southern Congo covering 13 districts. (The Republic of the Congo is divided into 12 departments (départements), which serve as the country's top administrative divisions.) These five departments and districts have been chosen due to the vulnerability of their remaining forests, primarily as a source for growing energy demand from cities and towns in the region. Additional information on the project location is found in Section 3.

Table 2. Target Departments and Districts for PREFOREST

Department	Districts
Bouenza	Madingou, Loudima, Kayes
Kouilou	Hinda, Madingou-kayes, Mvouti
Niari	Louvakou
Plateaux	Ngo, Mpouya
Pool	Kinkala, Goma Tsé Tsé, Ngabé, Ignié

On the ground activities, which include establishment of agroforestry plantations and assisted natural regeneration are estimated to affect 14,500 ha and 5,000 ha respectively, a total of approximately 19,500 hectares.

The project is structured under three components:

- **Component 1:** *Land and Resource Use Planning and Strengthening Access Rights and Tenure Security* puts in place the elements necessary for the successful establishment of the forest and agroforestry fuelwood systems envisaged in components 2 and 3. The three activities under this component are as follows:

Development of participatory mapping
Identification and selection of potential beneficiaries and landowner partners
Establishment of formal agreements with beneficiaries and landowners and provision of support to strengthen land security rights

- **Component 2:** *Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems for climate change mitigation* consists of supporting initiatives implemented by individual smallholders and their

communities in the three catchment areas targeted by the project. These systems aim to stabilize slash-and-burn agriculture and provide a sustainable source of fuelwood, thereby significantly reducing pressure on natural forests, increasing the adaptive capacity and resilience of small-scale farmers. The activities under this component are as follows:

Creation of quick-start tree plantations for energy purposes (FAO/CAFI co-financing)
Raising awareness of agroforestry and climate-resilient forest systems
Transfer of access and use rights to public land to smallholders/producers (Government co-financing)
Practical trainings on agroforestry and climate-resilient forest systems
Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems
Monitoring and evaluation of the overall project interventions
Rehabilitation of nurseries (Government co-financing)
Deployment of Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR)

- **Component 3:** This Component *Strengthening national agricultural financing structures, trade capacities and value chains* supports the growth of resilient, low-carbon community agroforestry and forest entrepreneurship in Congo by increasing beneficiaries' access to rural credit and developing commercial capacity. PREFOREST will address the main barriers faced by farmers in accessing microfinance, on both the demand and supply sides. On the demand side, the project will support the development and implementation of business plans for marketing of agroforestry products. On the supply side, the project will support capacity building for microfinance institution (MFI) loan officers in climate finance and the development of new credit products and services tailored to farmers' needs. The project will also support intermediation between farmers and MFIs to ensure effective use of the new credit products and services. The activities under this component are as follows:

Development and implementation of business plans in forested areas
Development and implementation of business plans for beneficiaries in savannah areas (Government / IFAD co-financing)
Strengthening the capacity of national financial institutions in rural finance for agriculture (Government / IFAD co-financing)
Strengthening the capacity of national financial institutions for green investments in the agroforestry and forestry sectors.
Development of a national financial inclusion strategy and formalization of MFIs (Government /IFAD co-financing)
Identification and development of appropriate lines of credit for the forestry and agricultural sectors
Development of inclusive financial products and services for the agri-food value chain
Facilitate interactions between beneficiaries and domestic financial institutions for the effective use of new financial products and services.
Facilitate the establishment of purchase contracts
Support the local market platform and operationalization of purchase contracts with buyers

1.2 Implementing partners

Implementation of project activities is carried out primarily via Letters of Agreement (LOA) in compliance with FAO procurement policies (Manual 507). FAO selects these partners to perform services against a set of general and technical criteria that would include, inter alia, expertise in the technical field and past successful engagement with FAO. Since the beginning of the project, the following technical implementation partners have been involved: the National Reforestation Program ([ProNAR](#)), the National Reforestation Service ([SNR](#)), and the Research and Technology Exchange Group ([GRET](#)). These partners support the project in the establishment of forest and agroforestry systems, and they have been oriented to the FAO safeguards requirements. Other partners may be engaged as the project develops further.

1.3 Purpose and scope of the Environmental and Social Management Plan

This Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) responds to the need to comply with the environmental and social safeguard requirements of the FAO, as defined in its [Framework for Environmental and Social Management \(FESM\)](#). The FESM requirements are largely consistent with the GCF [Revised Environment and Social Policy](#) which in turn refers to the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability for operational guidance (See Comparative Table in Section 4). The Republic of the Congo's regulations (Decree No. 2009-415 of November 20, 2009) also require an ESMP to be drawn up.

More broadly, this ESMP serves as a tool for identifying, screening, and managing the environmental and social risks associated with project activities that may not be fully defined during the project formulation stage. After introducing the project and its activities, the ESMP provides an overview of the policy, legal, and institutional frameworks governing the project's environmental and social dimensions, highlighting relevant international and national laws and policies.

The ESMP presents a detailed analysis of the environmental and social baseline in the project's implementation area, covering physical, biological, socio-economic, and cultural aspects relevant to project impacts. Risk classification and management strategies are highlighted, alongside a description of potential risks, adverse impacts, and opportunities for enhancing positive outcomes.

Mitigation measures and management strategies are provided, supported by institutional arrangements, implementation responsibilities, and estimated costs. Monitoring arrangements ensure effective oversight of risk management measures, and stakeholder engagement activities ensure transparency and inclusion throughout the project's lifecycle. Additionally, the ESMP features a Grievance Redress Mechanism to address concerns and outlines the plan for public information disclosure to foster stakeholder trust and participation.

The primary purpose of the ESMP is to serve as a comprehensive tool for identifying, avoiding, reducing, or mitigating risks and adverse impacts while simultaneously enhancing the positive outcomes of the project.

1.4 Brief description of potential social and environmental impacts

All the project activities have been analysed to identify potential environment and social risks, while the ESMP describes mitigation actions, monitoring arrangements, and timelines for addressing these

(See Section 5.4). Additional details on risk classification are found in Section 4. The main risks identified under the ESMP are summarized here with relation to FAO's safeguards framework. A note is made to identify the risks which trigger the moderate risk rating under the FESM:

ESS 1: Biodiversity conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources (*Triggers moderate risk rating*)

- Agroforestry activities (including clearing and planting and maintaining the plantations), nursery rehabilitation, and ANR pose risks to the environment and biodiversity. An increased human presence, changes in land use, and introduction of chemical pesticides (in plantations) can all disturb natural ecosystems, flora and fauna. There are also low risks of introducing invasive species which can outcompete local species. Increased traffic to remote areas poses a risk of increasing the trade of bushmeat and adversely impacting native wildlife.

ESS 2: Resource efficiency and pollution prevention and management (*triggers moderate rating*)

- The possible use of pesticides and other chemical agricultural inputs, as well as the disruption of natural ecosystems, could have adverse effects on the health of the local population and the environment. Low probability, low impact.

ESS 4: Decent work (*Triggers moderate risk rating*)

- Since the project involves employment both within the Project Management Unit (FAO), among implementing partners, and among local communities and Indigenous Peoples (primarily day labor), there are labor risks such as child labour, and abusive working conditions. Other work-related risks include discrimination in selection processes and payment problems (e.g. delays). The impacts of these risks range from decreased local support for the project and conflict to injury and the perpetuation of the cycle of poverty and lack of education (child labor, a low risk).

ESS 5: Community health, safety, and security

- The use of pesticides and other chemical agricultural inputs, as well as land use changes and associated ecosystem impacts could have adverse impacts on the health of the local population and the environment.
- Accidents during travel and field work are also possible resulting in injury and claims against the project proponents.

ESS 6. Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence

- Ensuring the active participation and equitable benefits for women is likely to be challenging in the local context. Literacy levels and high household burdens of women are constraints. There is therefore a risk of limited participation by women leading to reduced equity in benefits as well as potential reinforcement of discriminatory gender norms.
- There is a low risk of gender-based violence involving field staff and/or the local population particularly during travel to or work at the field sites, with an impact of perpetuating gender inequality.

ESS 7: Land tenure, displacement and resettlement (*Triggers moderate risk rating*)

- Difficulties related to access to land and security of tenure may compromise the large-scale adoption of sustainable agroforestry and forestry practices.
- Unequal land rights systems could hinder the equitable sharing of project benefits.
- There is a risk that field interventions (agroforestry/ANR) could result in the displacement of informal settlers/land occupants, or undocumented applicants on public and private land, as well as potential restriction of access to forest resources, affecting traditional forest users.

ESS 8: Indigenous Peoples (*Triggers moderate risk rating*)

- Indigenous Peoples may not benefit equitably from the project due to their marginalisation, which could be reinforced without deliberate strategies and actions.

ESS 9: Cultural heritage (*Triggers moderate risk rating*)

- Risks in this category relate to landscape transformation due to the project's plantations that visibly and physically change the landscape. There could be negative cultural heritage impacts, which is why the moderate rating is triggered.

2. Policy, legal and institutional framework

The PREFOREST project must meet the safeguard requirements not only of FAO and its donors but also the requirements of the host country, the Republic of the Congo. Congo's policy and legal framework underpins and informs the identification and management of social and environmental risks that could affect the Project. This framework includes relevant sectoral laws and policies (i.e. forestry, land, environment, labour) as well as other regulations affecting implementation (i.e. related to Indigenous Peoples, impact assessment). This section provides brief descriptions of the relevant laws and policies that help define the project and its ESMP.

2.1 Policy framework

National Development Plan

Following the National Development Plan (NDP) which covered the period 2012-2016, on 13 August 2018 the Congolese Government adopted a new National Development Plan for the period 2018-2022 as a programmatic framework for government action. Specifically, the NDP 2018-2022 puts into practice the vision of the President of the Republic: 'The march towards development, let's go further together'. It comprises three strategic priorities, namely strengthening governance, in-depth reform of the education and training system, and diversification of the national economy, with particular emphasis on agriculture and tourism.

National Environmental Action Plan

The National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP), adopted in 1996 (updated in January 2016 and reviewed in 2021), aims to ensure a healthy environment and sustainable development by taking the environmental dimension into account in all decisions affecting the design, planning and implementation of development policies, programmes and projects, and by making all stakeholders accountable. Its implementation should contribute to the food security, pollution prevention and control, and poverty reduction. The NEAP set out several initiatives aimed at reducing the degradation of natural ecosystems, improving health and quality of life, ensuring the sustainable and rational use of natural resources, enhancing the value of the country's 'green heritage' and reducing urban and marine pollution.

Strategy for Growth, Employment and Poverty Reduction

The Growth, Employment and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (DSCERP-2012-2016, Book 1) provides an integrated framework of macroeconomic and sectoral strategies that the Congo intends to combine to diversify and accelerate growth, generate jobs and develop social sectors in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Congo's ambitions for emergence and the aspirations of the Congolese people.

National Forest Policy

The National Forestry Policy (2015-2025) aims to manage forest ecosystems sustainably to promote the green economy, reduce poverty and maintain other ecosystem functions. This policy is based on the following pillars: land use planning and creation of a permanent forest estate; promotion of sustainable forest management and forest certification; conservation of biodiversity, development and certification of wildlife and protected areas; promotion of community forestry; promotion of private and local authority forests and protected areas; afforestation and reforestation; development of non-timber forest products (NTFPs); diversified and more advanced wood development and processing; promotion of forest, wood and wildlife professions; Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) - Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT); governance of forest and wildlife resource management; promotion of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation

(REDD+) and implementation of payment mechanisms for environmental services; sustainable financing of forests, wildlife and protected areas; development of forestry and wildlife research; promotion of cooperation in forestry and wildlife; promotion of wood energy and the local timber market.

National Health and Environmental Policy

The main areas of intervention identified by the National Health and Environment Policy include environmental health (i.e. drinking water supply, hygiene activities, sanitation and waste management); food safety and wholesomeness; disaster and emergency management; environmental risk management and assessment; and community participation.

National Sustainable Development Strategy

The National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) 2016-2025 aims to align national and sectoral policies for economic development, poverty reduction, environmental protection, and greenhouse gas reduction. Centered on achieving an "emerging Congo by 2025" and aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), its vision is to lay the foundations for sustainable development by 2030 through natural resource management, improved governance, modernized infrastructure, and economic diversification. The NSDS focuses on four key areas: (1) rational management of natural resources, (2) improved governance, (3) infrastructure and basic social services modernization, and (4) economic diversification.

National REDD+ Strategy

The Republic of the Congo has been selected by the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the UN-REDD Programme to implement the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) Programme. The country has been committed to the REDD+ process since 2008. REDD is an international mechanism aimed at combating climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions caused by deforestation and forest degradation, particularly in tropical areas. At national level, the National REDD+ Committee (CONA-REDD) and the National REDD+ Coordination (CN-REDD) have been set up; and at decentralized level, the Departmental REDD+ Committees (CODEPA-REDD Departmental Committees for the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation / *Comités Départementaux de la Réduction des Émissions liées à la Déforestation et à la Dégradation des Forêts*). The Republic of the Congo considers REDD+ to be 'a tool for sustainable development and a pillar of the green economy, which should enable it to play a full part in the fight against climate change, while at the same time contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. To achieve this objective, this 2018 Consensus Strategy, the result of a broad consultation process with all stakeholders, is based on five strategic options, broken down into 26 sub-options, which in turn comprise more than sixty activities and more than one hundred and fifty sub-activities, as follows:

Strategic option 1: Strengthening governance and sustainable financing.

Strategic Option 2: Sustainable management and development of forest resources.

Strategic Option 3: Improving agricultural systems.

Strategic Option 4: Rationalizing the production and use of wood energy.

Strategic Option 5: Development of a green mining sector that complies with the principles of sustainable development.

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

The Congo's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) covers the period 2016-2020. The vision of this strategy is as follows: 'By 2035, biodiversity is managed sustainably through its integration into all relevant national sectors, contributes to the country's development and all Congolese are aware of its value and its contribution to their well-being'. To achieve this vision, the

strategy is based on the following ten priorities: Integrating biodiversity into all relevant national sectors; Reducing pressure on natural habitats; Sustainable fisheries; Improving the management of existing protected areas and extending their network; Safeguarding endangered species of fauna and flora; Promoting payments for environmental services and access to genetic resources and benefit sharing; Restoration; Biosafety; Promoting taxonomic research and knowledge acquisition; and Increasing funding for biodiversity. These strategic priorities, broken down into national objectives, are designed to meet the new Aichi targets.

2.2 Legal framework

2.2.1 Legal framework for environmental and social management

International agreements and protocols

The Republic of the Congo has signed the following international environmental conventions and agreements:

- The London Convention on the Protection of Fauna and Flora in Africa of November 1933, ratified by law no. 8 of November 1937.
- The African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources of September 1968, ratified by law n°27/80 of 21 April 1980.
- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), known as the Washington Convention (Law no. 034/82 of 27 July 1982).
- The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Law n°19/85 of 19 July 1985).
- The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat of February 1971, ratified by Law n°28/96 of 25 June 1996.
- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, (Law no. 26/96 of 25 June 1996).
- The Convention on Biological Diversity of June 1992, ratified by law n°29/96 of 25 June 1996.
- The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa of 1994, ratified by Law n°8-99 of 8 January 1999.
- The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals or Bonn Convention of 1985, ratified by law n°14/99 of 3 March 1999.
- The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (Law no. 25 October 2005).
- The 1968 African Convention on the Conservation of Wildlife and Natural Resources, known as the Algiers Convention.
- The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Law no. 23-2006 of 12 September 2006).
- The Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Law no. 24-2006 of 12 September 2006).
- The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs; Law n° 30-2006 of 05 October 2006).

In the field of human rights, the Republic of the Congo has signed and ratified several international instruments for the promotion and protection of human rights. These include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial

Discrimination (1969), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990). In addition to these binding texts, we should also mention the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). In 2007, the Republic of the Congo adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and undertook to honor the commitments set out in the Final Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (2014). However, the Republic of the Congo has not yet ratified ILO Convention No. 169 which would legally bind the country to adhere to international standards concerning Indigenous Peoples' rights, including land rights, cultural preservation, and participation in decision-making.¹

National environmental legislative and regulatory framework

The legal and regulatory framework for environmental management in the Congo is underpinned by the Constitution, which stipulates the right of every citizen to enjoy a healthy, satisfactory and sustainable environment. Citizens also have a duty to protect it. The State must ensure the protection and conservation of the environment. Any pollution or destruction resulting from an economic activity must be compensated for. The law determines the nature of compensatory measures and how they are to be implemented. The Congo has several laws and regulations governing the management of this sector and is a signatory to several international conventions in this area.

Law no.003/91 of April 1991 on Environmental Protection and Decree 2009/415 (2009)

Environmental Protection Law is an important overarching law which aims to manage, maintain, restore, and protect the country's natural resources and cultural heritage. Among its many provisions, it includes in its Article 2, a requirement for economic development projects to conduct an environmental impact study. This law also includes requirements for the production, sale and use of agricultural pesticides (Art. 34). Furthermore, the law sets out provisions to control pollution, including pollution of soils and arable land, with damages to be paid by offenders (Art.37-38).

The Decree 2009/415 under the Environmental Protection Law lays out the important requirements and procedures for environmental and social impact assessments. This Decree requires the project proponent to analyze potential risks and impacts and to design an environmental and social management plan, including a set of measures to eliminate, reduce or compensate for direct environmental and social impacts. These impacts could include direct or indirect impacts on the site and its environment, with reference to natural resources, the atmosphere, agricultural, pastoral or legal areas, health, cultural and archaeological sites, forest resources, water resources and animal, land and fish resources. The Decree requires the development of a management plan that includes a precise schedule for implementation and a budget. This plan should also aim to maximize benefits for the populations concerned. Public consultations are an important element in the process, though consent by those affected is not required – they are instead given a 'power to influence'. The Decree also outlines some of the administrative procedures for technical review and approval. In contrast to guidance on safeguards promoted by the UNFCCC, GCF, FAO, and other international agencies, Congo's legislation in this area lacks specificity regarding some issues for example related to land tenure conflict or displacement. Gender and equitable participation of vulnerable or marginalized groups are also not covered.

¹ Few countries have ratified the ILO Convention No. 169. The Central African Republic is the only African country to have ratified it to date.

Law no. 33-2020 of 8 July 2020 on the Forestry Code

The purpose of this new Code, adopted in December 2019 by the National Assembly and promulgated by the President of the Republic of the Congo, is to set out the fundamental principles for the organization and management of the national forest estate, as well as the harvesting and marketing rules applicable to forest products. To this end, all forests on national territory fall within the scope of this law. Its primary aim is to establish an appropriate legal framework to ensure the conservation and sustainable management of forests, based on rational development and participatory management of resources. The organization and management of the national forest estate are based on the principles of State sovereignty over its natural resources, transparency of procedures, traceability and legality of timber and products from forest exploitation, and the principle of consultation and participation of the stakeholders concerned in sustainable forest management. This fundamental law has been reinforced by a series of subsequent texts, in particular decree 2002-437 of 31 December 2002, which sets out the conditions for forest management and use, and ministerial decrees on national directives for the sustainable management of forest concessions, the creation of forest management or exploitation units, the procedures for classifying and downgrading forests, forest taxation, and so on. The implementation of PREFOREST will have to take account of this new forestry code to comply with the regulations in force.

Law no. 37-2008 of 28 November 2008 on wildlife and protected areas

This law reinforces sectoral legislation relating to the preservation of wild fauna and flora; it lays down the fundamental principles and general conditions for the conservation and sustainable management of fauna, habitats and the ecosystems on which they depend.

Law no. 05-2011 of February 25, 2011 on Indigenous Peoples

In 2011, Congo was the first country in Africa to adopt a law on Indigenous Peoples, a law which guarantees Indigenous Peoples the same rights as other citizens of the country.

Since July 2019 there are six new regulatory acts under Law 05, as follows:

- Decree No. 2019-202 of 12 July 2019 specifying special measures to facilitate access to health and social services for Indigenous Peoples and to protect their pharmacopoeia
- Decree No. 2019-204 of 12 July 2019 on special measures to improve access to education for indigenous children and literacy for adults
- Decree No. 2019-201 of 12 July 2019 establishing procedures for the consultation and participation of Indigenous Peoples in socio-economic development projects and programmes.
- Decree No. 2019-203 of 12 July 2019 establishing the composition and modus operandi of the Interministerial Committee for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Decree No. 2019-200 of 12 July 2019 determining the modalities for the protection of cultural property, sacred sites and spiritual sites of Indigenous Peoples
- Decree No. 2019-199 of 12 July 2019 on special measures for the granting of civil status documents to Indigenous Peoples

Law no. 8-2010 of 26 July 2010 on the protection of the national cultural and natural heritage

The purpose of this law is to protect, safeguard and enhance the national cultural heritage. It defines the characteristics of property forming part of the national cultural and natural heritage and ensures its protection. It establishes a national inventory and a procedure for classifying heritage assets. However, no implementing legislation has been adopted to identify the cultural sites to be protected. In practice, therefore, the Act does not protect any sites.

Law no. 21-2018 of June 13, 2018 - The Land Law

The Land Law of 2018 (Law no. 21-2018 of June 13, 2018) is very important for the Project, because it creates procedures for traditional landowners, allowing them to secure the land with land titles.

Before landowners agree to establish long-term use contracts with non-landowners (for the implementation of agroforestry and forestry initiatives, as planned by the Project), the land rights of traditional land owners must be well secured.

Labor and Child Protection Laws

Congo's Labor Law or 'Code de Travail Loi no. 45-75' was passed in March 1975. This law contains many standard labor provisions related, for example, to contracting, worker health and safety, working conditions, maternity, and unions. The law also stipulates that children under the age of 16 are forbidden to work unless there is a special approval by the Minister of National Education. Protection of children is further supported by the Law on Elimination of child labour, protection of children and young persons (Law No. 4-2010 of 14 June 2010).

Other environmental and social legislation

- Law n°48/83 of 21 April 1983 defining the conditions for the exploitation and conservation of wild fauna.
- Law no. 13/2003 of 10 April 2003 on the Water Code.
- Law n°11-2004 of 26 March 2004 on procedures for expropriation in the public interest.
- Law n°4-2005 of 11 March 2005 on the Mining Code.
- Law n°25-2008 of 22 September 2008 on land tenure.
- Decree no. 2002-437 of 31 December 2002 laying down conditions for the management and use of forests.
- Order no. 3772/MAEF/DERFN of 12 August 1972 setting hunting opening and closing times.
- Order n°3863/MAEF/SGEF/DCPP of 18 May 1983 determining the fully protected and partially protected animals provided for by law n°48/83 of 21 April 1983 defining the conditions for the conservation and exploitation of wild fauna.
- Order No. 0103 of 30 January 1984 laying down the provisions relating to the exploitation of wild fauna and flora products.

Texts relating to decentralization

- Law no. 8-2003 of 6 February 2003 on the organic law relating to the exercise of supervision of local authorities.
- Law no. 9-2003 of 6 February 2003 laying down the basic guidelines for decentralization.
- Law no. 10-2003 of 6 February 2003 on the transfer of powers to local authorities.
- The two recent texts on (i) the community development management committee (CGDC), December 2013 and (ii) the text on planning (December 2014).

2.2.2 Strengths and weaknesses of the national legal framework

The Republic of the Congo's legal framework for environmental and social management is made up of several national and international provisions relevant to the environment. However, this framework is marked by a lack of implementing legislation and complementary legislative provisions (decrees and orders), which limits its effectiveness.

In addition, the following legislative provisions on environmental and social management are slow to be legislated and adopted:

- on the forest and on the phenomenon of overlapping use
- on the principle of full reconstitution and systematic reforestation after any action that devastates the forest and/or the environment
- on the formalization of the legal process of public consultation.

The legal framework should also aim to harmonize the national environmental legal corpus with the forestry, mining, land tenure and agriculture sectors on the one hand, and with the international conventions, protocols and agreements signed. The Forestry Code provides for the involvement of

local communities and Indigenous Peoples in sustainable forest management, and the revisions to the Forestry Code are likely to strengthen this participation. Community management is also provided for in the National REDD+ strategy. Unfortunately, the decree implementing the current law is ineffective, creating a legal vacuum that hinders the development of pilot initiatives in participatory forest management. Participatory forest management has particularly great potential in the project area for the hundreds of unclassified forest plots on village land in the predominant savannah-forest mosaics.

2.3 Institutional framework

2.3.1 Institutional actors

Ministry of the Environment, Sustainable Development and the Congo Basin

At national level, environmental management is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment, Sustainable Development and the Congo Basin (known as *MEDDBC*), which is responsible, among other things, for drawing up and applying environmental policy. Within the framework of the project, the MEDDBC's Directorate-General for the Environment (DGE) is mainly involved. At a decentralized level, the *Directions Départementales de l'Environnement (DDE)* are responsible for applying environmental policy.

Directorate-General for the Environment

The Directorate-General for the Environment (DGE) is responsible, among other things, for pollution prevention, the quality of life and the conservation of natural ecosystems. The DGE is responsible for the impact assessment procedure. The DGE does not have any discharge standards (solid, liquid and gaseous effluents), which makes their control and monitoring activities in this area difficult, if not impossible.

At departmental level, the DGE has several Departmental Directorates of the Environment (DDE), which are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the government's environmental policy, enforcing environmental laws and regulations, monitoring classified establishments and human settlements, and ensuring the implementation of emergency plans. The DDEs will be able to support the environmental selection process for micro-projects to be carried out under PREFOREST and participate in monitoring.

The DGE has relatively limited technical, logistical, material and financial capacity to enable it to properly prepare and monitor the implementation of environmental impact studies and notices for the PREFOREST activities that require it: there is no specific budget (fuel, travel, etc.) allocated to supervision and monitoring, no material resources for supervision, no rolling stock (vehicles), etc. The project will provide multi-faceted support to the DGE to enable it to ensure environmental and social supervision and monitoring, through the Departmental Environment Directorates.

Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF)

The MEF chairs the project Steering Committee. Overall supervision of the project's implementation is provided by the Steering Committee. However, supervision of the environmental aspects of the project is the responsibility of the DGE through the DDEs of the five departments concerned by PREFOREST, in liaison with the *Directions Départementales de l'Économie Forestière* DDEFs of the MEF.

Forest resource management structures

Forest resources in the Congo are managed at institutional level by the MEF. To manage forestry activities throughout the country, it relies on the Directorate-General for Forest Economy (DGFE), which has five (5) central departments (including the *Direction des Etudes et Planification* / DEP, to

which PREFOREST reports) and twelve (12) *Directions Départementales de l'Economie Forestière (DDEF)*. These various departments have enjoyed a degree of institutional stability in recent years, due to their relative ability to meet the expectations of forest management stakeholders at both central and departmental level. In carrying out their activities, these various structures are supervised by the Inspectorate General of Forest Economy Services (ISGSEF). Due to changes in the national and international context, a Forest Legality and Traceability Unit (CLFT) was created in 2010.

On the environmental and social front, the presence of technicians in natural forest resource management, specialists in biodiversity, protected areas, etc. is noteworthy. However, these technical staff do not always have the required skills in environmental and social assessment of programmes and projects, despite their advanced training in natural resource management. In addition, the most worrying weaknesses of these structures in terms of equipment are of two kinds: (i) the lack of logistical resources, in particular vehicles at departmental level, equipment (computers and accessories, GPS, digital cameras, etc.) and office furniture and supplies; (ii) the lack of a specific budget (fuel, travel, etc.) allocated to supervision and monitoring. In terms of human resources, there is a quantitative and qualitative shortfall in the number of staff employed by the Ministry, despite the availability of many trained engineers and technicians who, because they are still only recruited to the civil service, have limited skills in environmental and social management.

Congolese Wildlife and Protected Areas Agency

Created by Law no. 34 - 2012 of 31 October 2012, the Congolese Agency for Wildlife and Protected Areas (ACFAP) is responsible for implementing national policy on wildlife management, protected areas and anti-poaching surveillance and control units. As such, it is responsible for:

- Ensuring the preservation of habitats and the conservation of biodiversity throughout the national territory.
- Providing technical, scientific and administrative support to protected areas, surveillance and anti-poaching units and local councils, and ensuring coordination at national level.
- Contributing to scientific and technical research into the conservation and development of biodiversity.
- Contributing to the economic development of protected areas through ecotourism and hunting tourism.
- Promoting the creation and management of ecological corridors, in conjunction with the relevant authorities and all stakeholders.
- Developing sustainable financing mechanisms for protected areas and anti-poaching surveillance units.
- Contributing to the validation of impact studies for infrastructure projects in and around protected areas; participate in the promotion of environmental education.
- Contributing to the sustainable development and well-being of people living in and around protected areas and anti-poaching surveillance units.
- Ensuring the recruitment, training and management of staff.
- Setting up an information management system for wildlife, protected areas and anti-poaching surveillance units.
- Proposing and implementing procedures for classifying and declassifying protected areas.
- Coordinating cooperation and partnerships with other similar institutions.

Other ministries involved in environmental and social management

The Ministry of Forest Economy collaborates with other ministries, in particular the Ministry of Labour and Social Security; the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries; the Ministry of Energy and Hydraulics; the Ministry of Health and Population; the Ministry of Land Affairs and Public Domain; and the Ministry of Land Use Planning, which oversees the development of the land use plan.

In terms of analysis of environmental and social capacities, the consideration given to the environment at the level of these technical ministries can be summed up as follows: no expert in environmental and social assessment; no specific environmental and social procedure in the management of their activities. In short, the 'environmental and social' function needs to be strengthened within these institutions, the project's implementing partners.

The National Centre for the Inventory and Management of Forest and Wildlife Resources (CNIAF)

The CNIAF (*Centre National d'Inventaire et d'Aménagement des Ressources Forestières et Fauniques*) is responsible for monitoring and evaluating management plans and updating the national forest map. The CNIAF oversaw implementation of the 'Support for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo' project (PAGEF), which was financed by the *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD) to address the major challenges facing the rational management of the country's forest resources (2009-2014). PAGEF has been closed, but the CNIAF could play a role in capitalizing on the project's achievements.

National Afforestation and Reforestation Programme (PRONAR)

PRONAR aims to establish one million hectares of multi-purpose forest and agroforestry plantations by 2020 (n.b. not yet updated on the official site) through public and private partnerships. PRONAR is coordinating the various afforestation actions through targeted support: welcoming partners and assisting them in preparing their application files; providing partners with strategic data (available State land reserves, incentives for business start-ups, mechanisms to facilitate the business climate in Congo, investment support funds, availability of energy, water, etc.); training partners in seedling production techniques (setting up nurseries) and plantations; and visiting reforestation sites.

Other non-institutional stakeholders

- ***Local communities and Indigenous Peoples***

At local level, communities and Indigenous Peoples will identify their needs and develop their activities in relation to the coordination of the project. Local communities and Indigenous Peoples will be heavily involved in the implementation of the project. From the point of view of the analysis of environmental and social capacities, despite the important role that local communities and Indigenous Peoples play in local development, in particular in the sustainable exploitation of NTFPs on which they depend for the most part, their capacities in terms of planning and monitoring the implementation of activities relating to the management of forest resources still need to be strengthened. The same applies to agroforestry techniques, adding value to products and drawing up business plans.

- ***Civil society organisations and environmental and social NGOs***

In implementing its activities, MEF benefits from the support of other national public and private institutions and establishments, national NGOs and international institutions and NGOs involved in the development of forest resources. Indeed, the limitations noted in the programmes have encouraged the emergence of an associative sector accompanied by a dynamic civil society on issues of good governance and environmental management. There are several forms of non-governmental organisations and actors (NGOs and socio-professional organisations) under various names that contribute to improving the management of natural resources and the environment.

An examination of environmental and social capacities reveals a need for their strengthening. The *Association Congolaise pour les Études d'Impact Environnementaux* (ACEIE) is active in environmental and social assessment, while the *Réseau national des Populations Autochtones* (PA) du Congo (RENAPAC) is a structure for consulting Indigenous Peoples and fighting for their rights and protection. These associations play a key role in local socio-economic development and are key partners for the project. However, overall, NGOs and other associations have many more skills and activities relating to the management of natural resources, the preservation of sensitive ecosystems (protected areas, etc.) and environmental protection. Thanks to a capacity-building programme on environmental and

social management, some of these organizations could be important partners for implementation of the environmental and social management of the Project.

2.3.2 Project coordination and implementation structures

The governance of the project is ensured by the Steering Committee (*COPIL*) as an entity mandated for the supervision and technical control of the project. It is supported by the technical committee (*COTECH*) on the technical orientations of the project. The Project Management Unit (PMU) is responsible for the coordination and implementation of all project activities.

Project Steering Committee

The Project Steering Committee (*COPIL*) is the highest decision-making body throughout the implementation of the project. It provides oversight and guidance, ensuring that appropriate linkages and coordination are maintained with all relevant programmes and projects, as well as with international conventions (UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD). It is jointly chaired by the government and the FAO, and its members are the implementing entities, the GCF focal point, the MEF national project coordinator, the FAO senior project technical advisor, and other relevant ministries. The strategic development partners (WB, AFD, EU, UNDP, etc.) and representatives of civil society and the private sector will be independent observers of the COPIL. The COPIL meets at least once a year to supervise the project's activities and take the necessary decisions for their implementation.

Project Technical Committee

The Technical Committee (*COTECH*) ensures the technical soundness of the project by providing technical advice to the PMU. If necessary, representatives of development partners, NGOs, research institutions and civil society are invited to attend meetings to consolidate the technical soundness of the project. COTECH decisions will be based on the agreement of most members. As with the COPIL, the consent of FAO is required for all committee decisions.

Project Management Unit

According to the FAA (Commitments of the Activity Financing Agreement in its Annex Schedule 3), for the implementation of the financed activity, a Project Management Unit (PMU) is formed. The PMU is responsible for the day-to-day management of the project, the management of human resources, financial and procurement services, the coordination of project activities, the development of work plans and the preparation of reports. It is responsible for implementing project activities in accordance with the Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB) submitted to and approved by the COPIL. All project activities are coordinated and implemented by the Project Management Unit (PMU). The PMU is responsible for managing the PREFOREST project to ensure that activities and budgets are fully consistent. The PMU is made up of:

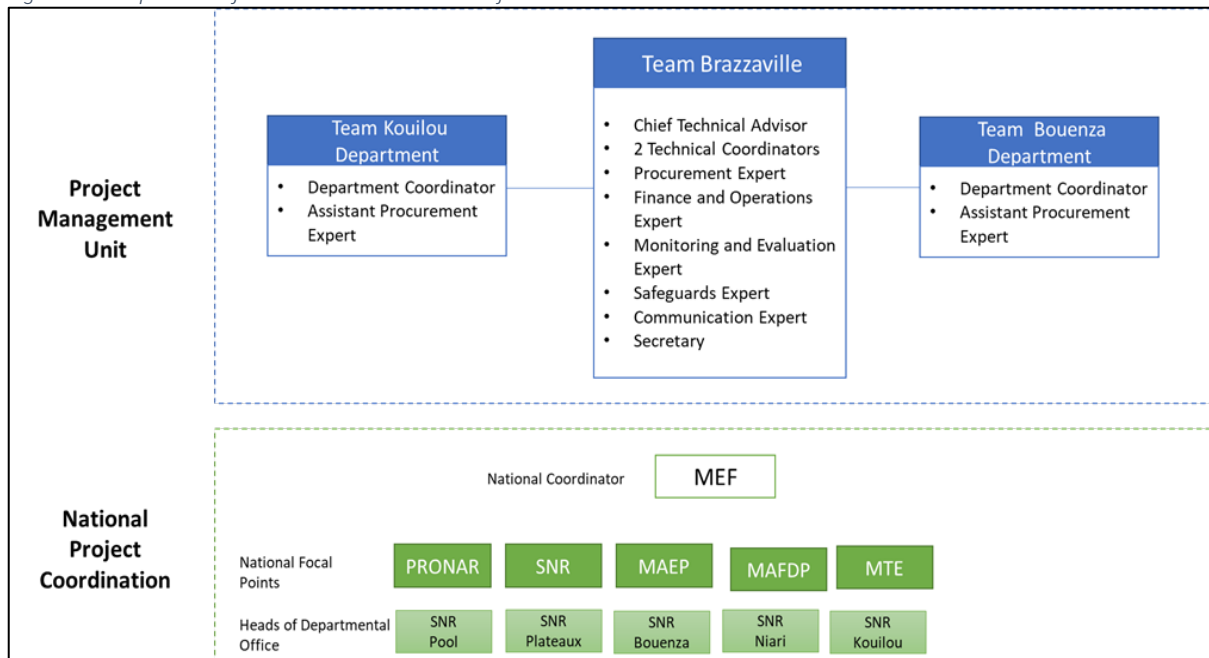
- The FAO-TA team (Technical Assistance) headed by the Principal Technical Adviser
- The National Project Coordinator (NPC) accompanied by the Focal Points of the main Ministries concerned (*PF-GOUV*)
- Government technical staff supporting project implementation, reporting both to the government as part of their regular duties and to PMU as part of project activities.

The goal, in terms of environmental and social capacity, is to equip those responsible for PREFOREST's environmental and social safeguard missions, along with their counterparts, with the technical knowledge and skills necessary for effective planning and implementation of safeguard measures. This includes:

- Informing project coordination on the methodology for applying FAO and GCF safeguard guidelines, based on FAO criteria and national legislation.
- Enabling PREFOREST to design and conduct monitoring and evaluation of both the positive and negative impacts of the project on social and environmental sectors.
- Acquiring tools for environmental and social screening to assess all activities, allowing for the elimination or revision of actions that may have negative impacts.
- Developing the ability to draft environmental and social monitoring reports, which must be submitted annually to the GCF.
- Mastering the integration of environmental and social clauses into tender documents (Invitation to bid) and contracts, ensuring these contractual clauses are upheld during project execution.
- Gaining knowledge of complaint management mechanisms.

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

Figure 1. Composition of the PMU and National Project Coordination



Source: Author's own elaboration

2.3.3 Strengths and weaknesses of the institutional framework

The Republic of the Congo's institutional framework for environmental and social management is made up of several well-adapted executive structures at different levels. However, this framework is marked by a deficit in technical, material and financial capacities to enable it to properly monitor the implementation of environmental and social safeguards in the context of a project such as PREFOREST. The table below summarizes the analysis of the institutional framework.

Table 3. Analysis of the relevant institutional framework

Strengths	Weaknesses	Recommendations
Overall, there is consistency between the FAO and GCF requirements and national policy on environmental and social assessment	The Departmental Environment Directorates (DDE), representing the DGE, have technical capacity,	Capacity-building measures (human, technical, management, material and financial, etc.) for the more operational

	but relatively limited material and financial resources	Departmental Environment Directorates (DDE) in the field.
The relative institutional stability and capacity of the MEF, and with it its various attached services (directorates and organizations), to respond to the expectations of stakeholders in the sustainable management of forest resources at central and departmental level	Sustainable development aspects not yet institutionalized at departmental level	Strengthen the MEF's capacity in environmental and social management and on the environmental and social safeguards of the GCF at central and departmental level and proceed with the establishment of services in charge of Sustainable Development.
The presence of technicians in natural resource management (forestry, biodiversity, protected areas, etc.).	Imbalance in the distribution of agents, between central and departmental levels, and deficit especially at departmental level Non-typical environmental training and lack of capacity-building for agents in environmental management Insufficient technical, logistical, material and financial resources at departmental level;	Integrate environmental and social management modules into training centers Strengthen logistical, material and financial resources at departmental level.
Good collaboration between the Ministry of the Environment and the other Ministries, and implementing partners	Absence of Environmental and Social Assessment Experts in the various technical services; Lack of environmental and social management procedures specific to the activities of the technical services	Systematically strengthen the "environmental and social" function within institutions
Important role played by local communities and Indigenous Peoples in the Community Development Series and conservation	Lack of capacity of local communities and Indigenous Peoples in terms of adding value to local products, as well as in planning and monitoring	Strengthen the capacity of local communities and Indigenous Peoples in product packaging and processing, planning and monitoring
<i>Association Congolaise pour les Études d'Impacts Environnementaux (ACEIE) in the field of local environmental and social assessment</i>	Limited capacity on the new environmental and social framework of the GCF.	Foster fruitful collaboration with ACEIE on environmental assessments and build capacity on the World Bank's environmental and social safeguards
Congo's Indigenous Peoples consultation structure (RENAPAC) in social domain	Limited capacity on environmental and social management and the World Bank's new environmental and social framework	Strengthen RENAPAC's capacity (institutional support) in its activities to fight for their rights and the protection of Indigenous Peoples and build capacity in environmental and social management and the GCF's environmental and social safeguards

Source: Author's own elaboration

3. Environmental and social baseline

Note: At the time of writing, there was limited environmental and social data available from the district and village levels. This section will be updated as more data becomes available.

3.1 Physical and biological environment

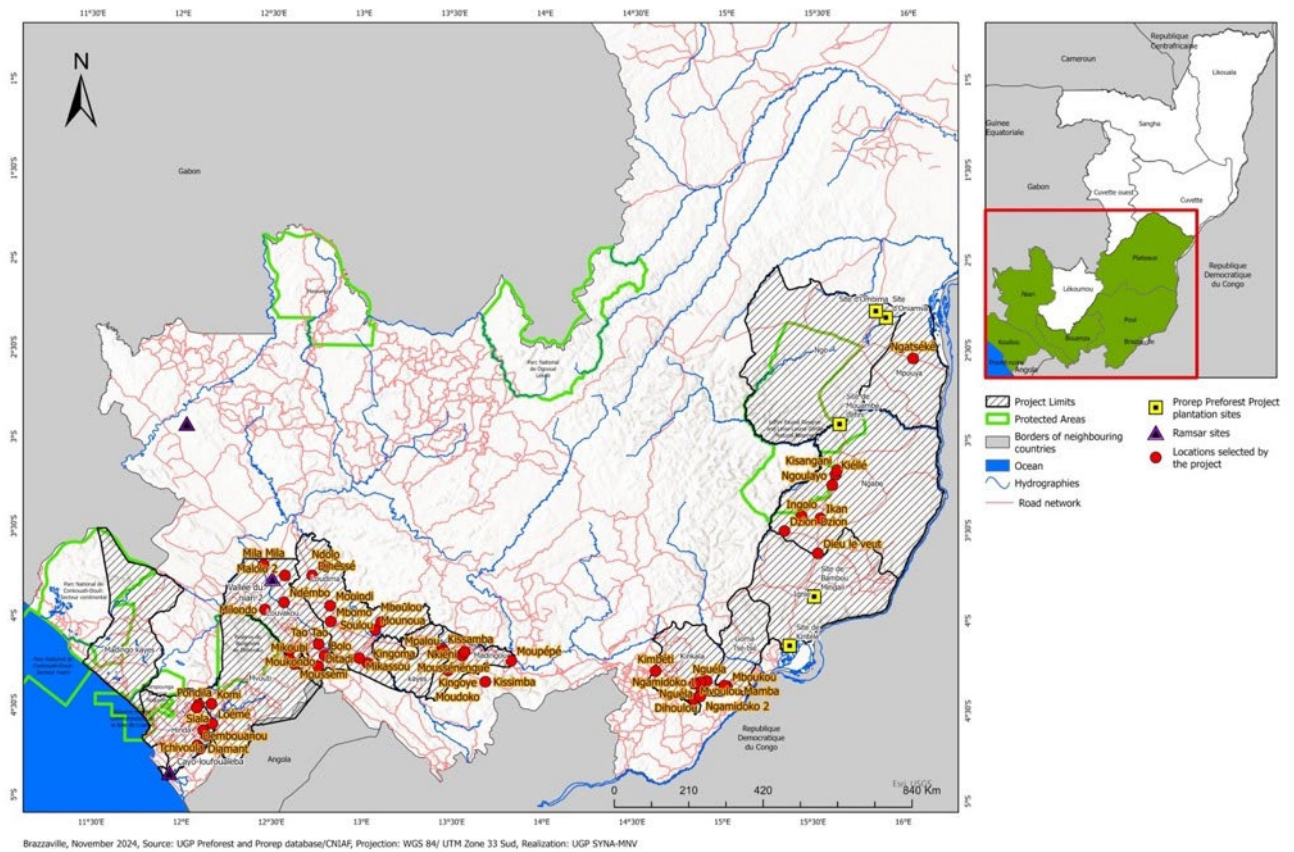
The PREFOREST project activities takes place in 13 districts across 5 departments (See Table 4). The map below shows the areas designated for project activities following participatory mapping activities with a range of local stakeholders. Some of the project areas border on protected areas, as indicated in both the map and the Table 4.

For further details on the project districts, please consult the PREFOREST project and annexes documents.

Table 4. Target Departments and Districts for PREFOREST

Department	Districts	Protected Areas
Bouenza	Madingou, Loudima, Kayes	
Kouilou	Hinda, Madingou-kayes, Mvouti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cayo-Loufoualeba, a coastal wetland complex (Ramsar site) - Conkouati-Douli National Park - Oimonika Biosphere Reserve
Niari	Louvakou	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loubetsi-Nyanga, swamp forests and river ecosystems (Ramsar site)
Plateaux	Ngo, Mpouya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lefini and Leslo-Louna Gorilla Natural Reserve
Pool	Kinkala, Goma Tsé Tsé, Ngabé, Ignié	

Figure 2. Map of the PREFOREST target districts and planting sites



Source: Project Management Unit PREFOREST and PROREP database/CNIAF

Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

3.1.1 Departments of Pool and Plateaux

The departments of Pool and Plateaux, located in the south-east part of the country, respectively cover 33,955 km² and 38,400 km². The department of Pool has a population of 236,595 with a density of 7 inhabitants/km² and a growth rate of 2.1%. The department of Plateaux has a population of 181,235 with a density of 4.7 inhabitants/km² and a growth rate of 2.1% (GPHC 2007). Pool is mainly covered by savanna (45.9%), rural complex and field mosaics (35%) and the rest is forest (19%). The same applies to Plateaux, with 47.8% savanna, 29% rural and mosaic complex and 16.6% forest cover. The main causes of deforestation and forest degradation are illegal logging of the forest, particularly for fuelwood, slash-and-burn farming and infrastructure development and, to a lesser extent, mining activities. The total deforestation rate between 2000 and 2010 was 3.82% (30,000 ha) for Pool and 2.02% (20,400 ha) for Plateaux. Land-use changes in Pool and Plateaux were respectively 96.8% and 94.2% for agriculture and 2.9 and 2.2 % for infrastructure. The production of charcoal to supply the city of Brazzaville is significant in the two departments with an estimated volume of 300,000 tons per year, corresponding to the destruction of a gallery forest area of 5,000 ha in Pool. This trend has worsened with demographic growth, poverty and a lack of alternative energy sources.

Table 5. Environmental conditions in the Department of Pool

Department of Pool	Condition
Relief	Moderate relief plateau interspersed with dry valleys of altitudes inclusively between 450 and 650 m. Zone 2 is hilly with an altitude of between 350 and 550 m.
Climate	Subequatorial climate zone typical of the lower Congo.

	Marked dry season between June and September. Total rainfall between 1,350-1,650 mm/year in zone 1 and between 1,300 and 1,400 mm in zone 2. Mean average temperature: 25°C.
Natural vegetation	In zone 1, <i>Trachypogon thollonii</i> and <i>Hyparrhenia diplandra</i> savanna and <i>Loudetia savanna</i> with a sparse to absent shrub layer composed of <i>Hymenocardia acida</i> , <i>Annona arenaria</i> and <i>Vitex madiensis</i> . Presence of mesophilic forest patches located on the plateau and lowland borders. In zone 2, dense to moderately dense shrub savanna composed of <i>Hymenocardia acida</i> , <i>Annona arenaria</i> and degraded gallery forests.
Soil	Impoverished yellow ferralitic, sandy to sand-clay soils developed on sandstone and sandy silts (Batéké plateaus) in zone 1. Very limited agricultural potential on the sandy zones (zone 1) due to the chemical poverty of the soil that is, however, suitable for forest plantations. In zone 2, the soils are also formed from a schisto-sandstone series and polymorphic sandstone. The soils are generally sandy, acid and poor in exchangeable bases.
Drivers of degradation	Slash-and-burn farming (cassava, maize, plantains, peanuts) essentially for local consumption and to supply the city of Brazzaville. Production of charcoal prior to cultivation of forest zones to supply the city of Brazzaville.
Drivers of deforestation	Subsistence farming Demographic growth. Increased pressure on forest areas from slash-and-burn farming and charcoal-making with the risk of reduced fallow periods and soil impoverishment. Lack of alternatives to slash-and-burn farming, retreat of forest fronts in the massive tracts in south Pool and degradation of lowland forests in savanna areas. <u>Logging:</u> 1) Regular increase in the demand for wood on the domestic market (artisanal sawing) and poles for construction. 2) Persistent weak administrative control mechanisms. 3) Zone 2: post-conflict situation, and possibly insecure area.

Table 6. Environmental conditions in the Department of Plateaux

Department of Plateaux	Condition
Relief	Plateau area in the Ngo region (550-500 m in altitude, PRONAR (<i>Programme National d'afforestation et de Reboisement</i> [National Afforestation and Reforestation Programme]) block G) dissected by dry or active valleys. The slope is slightly oriented towards the north and east with an average altitude of 300 m at the bottom of the valley and bordering the Congo River.
Climate	Subequatorial transition zone between the lower Congo and subequatorial climates. Marked dry season between June and September. Total rainfall: between 1,500 and 1,800 mm/year and between 1,200 and 1,400 mm bordering the Congo River. The mean average temperature is 25°C.
Natural vegetation	All blocks are in savanna areas with mesophilic forest patches and gallery forests bordering streams. There are two types of savanna: <i>Trachypogon thollonii</i> and <i>Hyparrhenia diplandra</i> savanna, <i>Ctenium newtonii</i> with a sparse shrub layer (<i>Hymenocardia acida</i> and <i>Annona arenaria</i>); <i>Hyparrhenia acida</i> and <i>Loudetia demeusi</i> savanna with a light ground layer and a thin shrub layer dominated by <i>Hymenocardia acida</i> .
Soil	The soils are developed from two tertiary geological formations: the Batéké plateau series composed of sandstone and sandy silts and the Stanley Pool series made up of sandstone and claystone (valley floors and along the Congo River). The soils of the upper plateau are impoverished, yellow and ferralitic on sand-clay and sandy material on the low areas and slopes of the plateaus. Along the Congo River, podzolic soils are found on sand and/or hydromorphic soils locally along watercourses.
Drivers of degradation	Slash-and-burn farming (cassava, maize, bananas, peanuts) is the main driver of degradation of forest areas. Production essentially for local consumption, with limited exports to Brazzaville. Bush fires (burning of savannas and cleared areas) are also a significant threat to the reestablishment of degraded forest cover and the replenishment of the soil fertility potential in fallow areas. Lack of governance, ineffective control mechanisms by the authorities despite the proximity of the Léfini fauna reserve.

Drivers of deforestation

- 1) Continued demographic growth although population densities are still low in the department at this time. Expansion of the capital's sphere of influence to cover its supply requirements. Increased pressure on forest areas from slash-and-burn farming and charcoal-making with the risk of reduced fallow periods and soil impoverishment.
- 2) No alternative to slash-and-burn farming involving the retreat of forest fronts in the various large forest tracts and exacerbation of impact in the Léfini reserve.
- 3) Persistent weak administrative control mechanisms.

3.1.2 Department of Bouenza

The Department of Bouenza (capital Nkayi, fourth largest town in the country with 70,000 inhabitants) is the most populated department in the Congo (20% of the national population) with a population density that is substantially higher than in the rest of the country at 26 inhabitants/km². In this department, slash-and-burn farming is practiced producing cassava, plantains, peanuts and maize, essentially for local production (Nkayi, Madingou, Dolisie) and to supply the town of Pointe-Noire and even Brazzaville. This area is characterized by substantial degradation of lowland forest areas and patches of forest in savanna with enriched soils. It is estimated that over 90% of forest degradation is due to agricultural clearing in this department. Furthermore, there is high demand for firewood to bake clay bricks in Bouenza, the main construction material for dwellings (e.g. district of Nkayi).

The district of Madingou, situated between the agro-ecological area of the Niari valley and that of the Plateaux des Cataractes, has an average density of 27 inhabitants/km². This indicator is currently translated by a total loss of forest groves in the district because of slash-and-burn farming. Related to its long tradition of large colonial agricultural concessions, the farmers in the district have embraced the use of tractors for several decades to increase the agricultural area from 0.1 to 5 ha per household, or even 10 ha in some cases. It is, without a doubt, one of the districts in the country where commercial farming is the most entrenched.

In the district, the takeover by agricultural land, exacerbated by short recurrent fallow periods, has generated a shortage of fuelwood and has compromised the natural regeneration of shrubs and trees. However, to address this issue, people are planting *Senna siamea* in home gardens and in agricultural plantations for commercial purposes and to cover household energy needs. A field mission highlighted the fact that the initiative is expanding throughout the villages in the district, because of highly positive market reports of firewood used to bake bricks and supply households in Nkayi. The initiative also came up with highly promising agroforestry variants, in which cassava, maize, *Cajanus cajan* and peanuts are planted between the rows when the trees are still very young. When the canopy is contiguous, farmers grow shade-loving plants, such as ginger, Guinea pepper, taro or macabo undergrowth.

The district of Loudima in Bouenza is a highly cosmopolitan geographic entity due to its position along the Congo-Ocean Railway and the national road between Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville and, particularly, further to its long agricultural tradition, which has attracted numerous people from neighboring districts and even bordering countries. Formerly, it hosted the Loudima Fruit Station, the first savanna forestry research station of the Tropical Forest Technical Center (*Centre Technique Forestier Tropical* - CTFT), the Pilot Station of the Congolese Forest Office (*Office Congolais des Forêts*), currently known as the National Reforestation Service (*Service National de Reboisement* - SNR), the Maléla Agronomic Research Station (*Station de Recherche Agronomique de Maléla*), later renamed the Loudima Agronomic Research Center (*Centre de Recherche Agronomique de Loudima* - CRAL). This situation promoted the development of smallholder farming, characterized by mechanized ploughing, alongside other forms of labor organization, such as the cooperative movement, family labor, rotating service provision and hiring of occasional labor.

In Loudima, land-use rationales refer to the economic role of this agricultural system. Traditional agriculture, with a preponderance of fields based on slash-and-burn farming, represented 95% of farms in Congo in 2011, versus 85% in 1980 (Sofreco, 2011), before the National Conference of 1991. This agriculture has a relatively marginal place in the composition of the Congolese Gross Domestic Product but, beyond official figures, this component of agricultural activity plays an essential role through the additional revenue it generates in the form of family farming. This importance cannot be adequately grasped by official statistics, as a large majority of agricultural stakeholders are not registered by the administrative departments.

The substantial diversity of products derived from cassava in the district highlights the extent to which the economic and food production contribution of this sector is associated with the social and cultural importance of the district. The farmers' cultural roots are reflected in the farming rationale, plant combinations and cultivated varieties.

3.1.3 Departments of Kouilou and Niari

The Departments of Niari and Kouilou are found in the extreme south-west of Congo and cover areas of 25,925 km² and 13,500 km² respectively. Niari has a population of 240,074 with a density of 9.3 inhabitants/km² and an annual growth rate of 1.3%. Kouilou has a population of 91,955 with a density of 6.8 inhabitants/km² and an annual growth rate of 0.9% (GPHC 2007). These departments are more densely populated than Pool and Plateaux. Niari and Kouilou are respectively covered with 58% and 69% forest, 27.2% and 15% savanna and 9.4% and 3.8% rural complexes. The main causes of deforestation and degradation are legal and illegal logging to produce wood and fuelwood, slash-and-burn farming, mining activities and oil production (Kouilou) and infrastructure development (accelerated municipal development). Deforestation between 2000 and 2010 was 2.13% (37,100 ha) in Niari and 2.72% (29,800 ha) in Kouilou. The respective land-use changes were 87% and 94.5% for agriculture and 14.6% and 3.9% for infrastructure. The production of charcoal in these departments to supply Pointe-Noire is significant, and it is estimated that 25,000 ha of forest could be lost in 10 years in Kouilou because of this activity. Migratory flows have a considerable impact on forest degradation through agricultural activities and logging for charcoal. Furthermore, substantial degradation of the Mayombe forest near Dolisie on National Road 1 (RN1) can be noted. In addition, mining projects are under preparation in Niari, as well as two large-scale farming projects, which will result in deforestation of large swathes of forest.

Table 7. Environmental conditions in the Department of Kouilou

Department of Kouilou	Condition
Relief	Flat to gently undulating in the west (zone 1) varying between 50 and 120 m in altitude. Hilly to very hilly towards the east (zone 2, pre-Mayombe and Mayombe forest) varying from 120 m to 500 m in altitude.
Climate	Subequatorial climate zone. Marked dry season between June and September. Total rainfall: between 1,200-1,300 mm/year in zone 1 and 1,200-1,500 mm/year in zone 2. Mean average temperature: 25°C.
Natural vegetation	Pseudo-steppe savanna with a light to absent shrub layer (<i>Annona arenaria</i>) in zone 1 and semi-deciduous to evergreen dense rainforests in zone 2.
Soil	Impoverished yellow ferrallitic soils on sandy deposits in savanna areas (zone 1) to reworked red soils on metamorphic and schisto-calcareous rocks (zone 2). Very limited agricultural potential in coastal sandy areas (zone 1) due to the chemical poverty of the soil. Higher potential in forest areas (Mayombe) with more clayey, locally fertile soils.
Drivers of degradation	<u>Zone 1</u> : Massive eucalyptus tract with uncontrolled logging by the local people to produce charcoal and timber (poles, etc.) with a very large demand from the city of Pointe-Noire (± 1 million inhabitants). Management of the large forest tract was retroceded by the state to the SNR after liquidation of the EFC company. The current reduced area is 35,000 ha out of the initial 45,000, with 10,000 ha located north of the Kouilou River. The large forest tract

	<p>lost nearly 7,000 ha over the last decade due to expansion of the city of Pointe-Noire, fires and illegal logging.</p> <p><u>Zone 2:</u> Slash-and-burn farming (cassava, maize, plantains, pineapples), essentially, to supply the city of Pointe-Noire.</p> <p>Production of charcoal prior to cultivation to supply the city of Pointe-Noire and, secondarily, artisanal sawing.</p> <p>Regarding the two target areas: lack of governance, mostly ineffective local authority control mechanism.</p>
Drivers of deforestation	<p><u>Subsistence farming</u></p> <p>1) Continued demographic growth and immigration to Kouilou. Development of Pointe-Noire. Increased pressure on forest areas from slash-and-burn farming and charcoal-making with the risk of reduced fallow periods and soil impoverishment.</p> <p>2) Lack of alternatives to slash-and-burn farming, retreat of forest fronts in the Mayombe forest (zone 2) and degradation of low-lying forests in savanna areas (zone 1).</p> <p><u>Logging</u></p> <p>3) Regular increase in the demand for wood on domestic and export markets.</p> <p>4) Persistent weak administrative control mechanisms.</p>

Table 8. Environmental conditions in the Departments of Niari and Bouenza

Departments of Niari and Bouenza	Condition
Relief	<p>Flat to hilly to the east of Dolisie, varying between 150 and 400 m. Presence of hillocks, lowlands and flat areas suitable for different types of agricultural and agroforestry plantations (zone 1).</p> <p>In zone 2, the relief is unremarkable, the area is situated on the plateau overhanging the Niari River.</p>
Climate	<p>For both zones, subequatorial climate typical of the lower Congo.</p> <p>Marked dry season between June and September. Total rainfall between 1,200-1,300 mm/year Mean annual temperature: 25°C.</p>
Natural vegetation	<p>In both zones, shrub savanna with grasses (<i>Hypparrhenia diplandra</i>, <i>panicum maximum</i>, <i>Imperata cylindrica</i>), light to dense shrub layer (<i>Hymenocardia acida</i>, <i>Annona arenaria</i>, <i>Bridelia ferruginea</i>, <i>Nauclea latifolia</i>) and presence of degraded forest patches.</p>
Soil	<p>In both zones, the soils are desaturated, yellow and ferralitic of varying depths and developed on clay-silt materials from the middle schisto-calcareous substrate. Rejuvenated and possibly hydromorphic soils depending on the relief.</p> <p>Important agricultural potential for food crops and forest plantations. Heavy soils (clayey) that are relatively well-structured but sensitive to compression.</p>
Drivers of degradation	<p>Slash-and-burn farming (cassava, plantains, peanuts) essentially for local consumption (Dolisie) and to supply the city of Pointe-Noire and even Brazzaville.</p> <p>Substantial degradation of lowland forest areas and forest patches in savanna with enriched soils. Substantial degradation of the Mayombe forest near Dolisie on the RN1 axis. More than 95% of forest degradation is due to agricultural clearing in these two departments.</p> <p>High demand for firewood to bake clay bricks in Bouenza, the main construction material for dwellings (e.g. town of Nkayi).</p> <p>A lack of governance and ineffective control mechanisms are aggravating factors.</p>
Drivers of deforestation	<p><u>Subsistence farming</u></p> <p>1) Demographic growth in these two most populated departments of the country which will, over time, lead to increasingly intensive logging of forest areas for slash-and-burn agriculture, charcoal and firewood production. Risk of reduced fallow periods and soil impoverishment. Risk of increased firewood demand to bake bricks for construction in these departments.</p> <p>2) Lack of alternatives to slash-and-burn agriculture, retreat of forest fronts in the Mayombe forest (zone 2) near Dolisie and degradation of lowland forests and forest patches in savanna areas.</p> <p><u>Logging:</u></p> <p>3) Regular increase in the demand for wood on domestic and export markets.</p> <p>4) Persistent weak administrative control mechanisms.</p>

3.2 Socio-economic and cultural environment

The project area is characterized by significant challenges across multiple development domains. In education, many villages lack schools entirely, and existing facilities suffer from insufficient equipment and staff shortages, leading to high drop-out rates, particularly among Indigenous Peoples. The health sector faces similar deficiencies, with inadequate and poorly equipped health facilities, limited access to medicines, and a shortage of qualified medical personnel. Common diseases such as malaria, parasitosis, and diarrheal illnesses, exacerbated by the consumption of untreated river water, highlight the area's fragile healthcare system and poor sanitation and hygiene conditions. Access to clean water is limited, with most communities relying on untreated river water and lacking improved latrines, leading to persistent sanitation issues. Additionally, access to electricity is minimal, with most villages having little to no connectivity, further compounding the area's infrastructural challenges.²

Indigenous Peoples in the project area face substantial socio-economic challenges across various sectors. In agriculture, they rely on empirical and traditional practices, such as slash-and-burn farming, which contributes to deforestation and low crop yields. These challenges are compounded by a lack of modern equipment, training, and access to support programs for agricultural inputs like seeds and tools. Isolation from markets and poor infrastructure further hinder their ability to sell their products, while their labor is often exploited by the Bantu population as a source of cheap workforce. Additionally, there are significant difficulties in preserving and packaging agricultural and forestry products, limiting their economic potential.

Livestock raising, hunting, and fishing, which are important livelihoods for indigenous communities, also face numerous constraints. Livestock production is characterized by traditional methods, wandering herds, and a lack of veterinary support, leading to low yields. Hunting, while a source of income, often includes illegal poaching and the killing of protected species, highlighting the need for sustainable practices. Fishing remains low-yield and is often controlled by non-natives, limiting the income opportunities for Indigenous Peoples. Gathering activities, such as tree felling for wild fruits and honey collection using fire, provide income but also contribute to environmental degradation.

In trade, Indigenous Peoples struggle with limited access to markets, micro-credit, and financial support systems. They lack the necessary training in management, accounting, and commercialization, which further marginalizes their participation in the local economy. The absence of storage and conservation facilities, combined with insufficient awareness of agricultural insurance systems, exacerbates their economic vulnerability. These systemic barriers highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions to empower indigenous communities and enhance their livelihoods sustainably.³

Information on the socio-economic and cultural conditions in each of the five departments is presented below.

² Source: Report of stakeholder consultations in 12 districts with a view to validating the key elements of the Project developed between FAO, the French Development Agency and the Ministry of Forest Economy of Congo - June 2019

³ Source: Report of stakeholder consultations in 12 districts with a view to validating the key elements of the Project developed jointly between FAO, the French Development Agency and the Ministry of Forest Economy of Congo - June 2019

3.2.1 Department of Bouenza (Districts of Madingou, Loudima, Kayes)

Bouenza (capital Madingou, with the secondary urban area of Nkayi, the fourth largest town in the country with 70,000 inhabitants) is the most populated department in Congo (20% of the national population) with a population density that is substantially higher than the rest of the country with 26 inhabitants/km². In 2022, Bouenza had an HDI of 0.511, ranking 6th among the 12 departments in the Republic of the Congo. The department hosts a cement factory in Loutété and sugar cane plantations in Nkayi. Additionally, there are reserves of minerals such as copper, lead, and zinc. The Moukoulou Dam, located in Mindouli, provides hydroelectric power to the region. Key agricultural products include bananas, palm oil, groundnuts, tobacco, and beans. This socio-economic profile highlights Bouenza's role as a significant contributor to both the industrial and agricultural outputs of the Republic of the Congo.

3.2.2 Department of Kouilou (Districts of Hinda, Madingou-kayes, Mvouti)

Kouilou Department is characterized by low population densities, averaging 6.1 inhabitants per square kilometer. The district of Madingo-Kayes (zone 1) has approximately 10,200 residents, while the district of Hinda (zone 2) has a population of 60,000. Its proximity to Pointe-Noire, a major urban center, offers significant advantages for material supply and product exportation.

Agriculture in the region is dominated by traditional practices such as slash-and-burn methods, polyculture, and the use of fallow fields. Livestock production is minimal, with poultry and fish farming as the primary activities.

Transporting agricultural products to Pointe-Noire relies on two primary routes. Zone 1 benefits from the RN5, which is paved between Madingo-Kayes and Pointe-Noire, although the Kouilou bridge remains under construction, limiting access for trucks to ferry crossings. Zone 2 is connected via the RN1 and, to a lesser extent, the Brazzaville-Pointe-Noire railway. Secondary tracks in the Loémé basin provide additional transport options but are heavily affected by weather and lack regular maintenance.

3.2.3 Department of Niari (District of Louvakou)

As of the 2023 census, the Niari Department in the Republic of the Congo has a population of 334,863 residents. Covering an area of 25,942 square kilometers, this results in a population density of approximately 12.9 inhabitants per square kilometer.⁴

The economy of Niari is diverse, with key sectors including agriculture, forestry, and mining. The fertile lands support the cultivation of crops such as cassava, maize, and groundnuts, while livestock farming also contributes to the local economy. Forestry is another important industry, with extensive timber extraction and processing activities. Additionally, Niari has mineral deposits, including iron ore and potash, which hold significant potential for economic development.

⁴ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niari_Department

In terms of human development, Niari had a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.549 in 2022, ranking 4th among the 12 departments in the Republic of the Congo.

The Niari is divided between two types of vegetation: forest and savannah. The forest covers the northern part of the department and extends into the savannahs in the form of galleries along the watercourses. Savannahs, on the other hand, are mixed herbaceous and shrubby stands. The woody stratum, of variable density, is made up of stunted trees rarely exceeding 2 to 3 m in height. The herbaceous cover is often very dense perennial grasses that can exceed 2 m in height.

3.2.4 Department of Plateaux (Districts of Ngo and Mpouya)

Plateaux Department features low population densities, averaging 4.5 inhabitants per square kilometer. The districts of Ngo and Mpouya are sparsely populated, with 16,700 and 9,200 residents, respectively, while Gamboma district is the most populated, housing 43,200 inhabitants.

Agricultural activities in the region rely on traditional practices, focusing on low-yield food production through slash-and-burn methods, polyculture, and fallow systems. Key crops include cassava, yams, peanuts, and bananas, particularly in the district of Ngo. Livestock consists of small populations of cattle, goats, and sheep, and the use of fertilizers and plant protection products is rare.

Transportation of agricultural products to Brazzaville primarily occurs via the RN2, with the port of Mpouya serving as a secondary route despite its poor condition. The network of secondary roads and tracks is largely neglected, with challenges such as silting impacting routes like the Ngo-Mpouya link.

3.2.5 Department of Pool (Districts of Kinkala, Goma Tsé Tsé, Ngabé, and Ignié)

Pool Department has a low average population density of 7.3 inhabitants per square kilometer. In zone 1, densities vary from 3 to 7 inhabitants/km², with Ignié and Ngabé districts housing 29,000 and 30,000 people, respectively. Zone 2 has slightly higher densities, ranging from 5 to 24 inhabitants/km², with 35,000 residents in Kinkala and 16,000 in Goma Tsé Tsé. The department benefits from its proximity to Brazzaville, with a population of around 2 million, facilitating material supplies and product exportation.

Agriculture in the region employs traditional methods, including slash-and-burn farming, polyculture, and fallow systems. Some areas face limitations on agriculture due to restricted access to water. Livestock farming, particularly cattle, goats, sheep, and poultry, is common across the department.

Most commercial agricultural products are transported to Brazzaville by vehicle or by the Brazzaville-Pointe-Noire Railway. Railway service is unreliable due to weather conditions and irregular maintenance of the tracks.

Please find a table providing relevant statistics for each of the five target departments below.

Table 9. Statistics for PREFOREST target Departments

Department	Bouenza	Kouilou	Niari	Plateaux	Pool
Population M/F	363 850	97 362	334 863	283 421	394 532
Indigenous	597	242	2770	3337	2558

Population					
Human Development Index (HDI)⁵	0.511	0.479	0.549	0.522	0.464
Literacy rates	Overall adult literacy rate of 80.61%, with male literacy at 85.94% and female literacy at 75.37% (2021) ⁶				
Access to electronic media	Two telephone networks are available in all of Congo's departments (MTN and Airtel). A total of 5.8 million people have access to the telephone in Congo, i.e. 90% of the national population.				
Labor force participation (M/F) + Age	<i>In the Congo, participation in the labour market is 33% for women and 67% for men.</i>				
% of population dependent on agriculture	<i>70% of the Congolese population depends on agriculture throughout the country</i>				
Health facilities	Madingou Hospital	General Hospital of Loango	Dolisie Hospital	Abala Hospital	Kindamba Hospital
	Mfouati Hospital	Integrated Health Center of Mvouti	Dolisie General Hospital	Djambala Hospital	Kinkala Hospital
	Mouyondzi Hospital	Integrated Health Center of Kakamoeka	Integrated Health Center of Dolisie	Gamboma Hospital	Linzolo Hospital
	Nkayi Hospital				Mindouli Hospital

⁵ https://futures.issafrica.org/geographic/countries/republic-of-the-congo/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

⁶ <https://countryeconomy.com/demography/literacy-rate/congo?utm>

4. Risk classification and management

To be eligible to apply for funding for GCF projects, FAO needed to go through a rigorous accreditation process to become an Accredited Entity (AE) of the GCF. This process entailed, among others, a review of FAO’s environmental and social safeguards requirements, whereby FAO had to demonstrate that it has robust policies and procedures in place to manage environmental and social risks in line with GCF’s ESS standards.

Both the FAO and GCF follow similar guidelines for identifying and addressing environmental and social risks. FAO uses its [Framework for Environmental and Social Management](#) (FESM), published in 2022. The FESM includes key elements of a human rights-based approach and applies a risk-informed approach for addressing environmental and social risks and impacts in programming. The FESM identifies nine standards to ensure the environmental and social sustainability of its projects (See Table 10).

The FESM requirements are largely consistent with the GCF [Revised Environment and Social Policy](#) which in turn refers to the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability for more operational guidance. In the case of the GCF, eight performance standards are applied to evaluate and safeguard against risks in funded projects (See Comparative table).

Table 10. Comparative Table: GCF and FAO Environmental and Social Management Frameworks

GCF ESS	FAO Framework for Environmental and Social Management (FEMS) 2022
ESS 1. Assessment and management of environmental and social risks and impacts	ESS2. Resource efficiency and pollution prevention and management ESS3. Climate change and disaster risk reduction ESS6. Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence
ESS 2. Labour and working conditions	ESS 4. Decent work
ESS 3. Resource efficiency and pollution prevention	ESS2. Resource efficiency and pollution prevention and management
ESS 4. Community health, safety and security	ESS 5. Community health, safety and security
ESS 5. Land acquisition and involuntary resettlement	ESS 7. Land tenure, displacement, and resettlement
ESS 6. Biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of living natural resources	ESS 1. Biodiversity conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources
ESS 7. Indigenous Peoples	ESS 8. Indigenous Peoples
ESS 8. Cultural heritage	ESS 9. Cultural heritage

This ESMP for the PREFOREST project uses the FAO FESM to identify and manage risks.

4.1. Explanation of the PREFOREST project's 'moderate' risk rating

Based on the risks identified and on the application of the new FESM screening Checklist for identifying environmental and social risks (See Annex 01), the same risk category that was assigned when the project was identified is maintained - Moderate Risk. This categorization is reached based on certain risks triggered through questions in the screening checklist and the combination of their likelihood and impact severity. In this section, we provide additional information on the risks that have attributed a moderate risk rating to this project.

ESS 1: Biodiversity conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources.

A moderate risk rating is attributed due to the potential for land use change since some agroforestry plantations may be large in scale (e.g. 500 hectares) and they will involve the conversion of natural savannahs to low-diversity plantations including some fast-growing non-native species (i.e. *Acacia auriculiformis*, *Acacia mangium*), *fruit trees*, and *other fast growing native species*. Unless properly situated, these plantations could pose the risk of fragmenting ecosystems or disrupting biodiversity corridors. The Acacia species were chosen for several reasons: they are fast-growing, they are adapted to local soils, they enrich poor soils, and they attract bees and other beneficial insects. Nevertheless, they are non-native species with some limited invasive potential whereby it has on occasion established outside plantation boundaries, particularly in disturbed forests with high light conditions.⁷ Given the planned interventions of regular maintenance (cleaning, pruning, weeding, etc.) and monitoring of agroforestry systems by beneficiaries, as well as the implementation of intercropping, the invasive potential of acacia will be suppressed.

ESS 2: Resource efficiency and pollution prevention and management

The project triggers ESS 2 due to the possible use of pesticides in the management of nurseries and plantations. While the use of pesticides is expected to be minimal, there could be risks related to proper storage and disposal, as well as infiltration to water systems. There is no intention for the project to purchase or distribute chemical fertilizers, but they may be acquired independently for the plantations. The project will encourage the use of natural fertilizers.

ESS 4: Decent work

Moderate risk results from the fact that the project will employ members of local communities on a cash for work basis to engage in plantation clearing and planting and in ANR activities. Issues that the project could anticipate and try to prevent include child labour, abusive working conditions, discrimination in selection processes, and payment problems (e.g. delays).

ESS 7: Land tenure, displacement and resettlement.

While participatory land use planning will be conducted to try to identify appropriate places for project activities and avoid impacting customary or statutory tenure rights, there is a very low risk that field interventions (agroforestry/ANR) could result in the displacement of informal settlers/land occupants, or undocumented applicants on public and private land, as well as potential restriction of access to forest resources, affecting traditional forest users. The project may also restrict some land uses, such as grazing in the plantation. In addition, unequal land rights systems could hinder the equitable sharing of project benefits. No involuntary resettlement is foreseen.

⁷ *Acacia magnum* is not considered as invasive in the country as per national legislation. Acacia is one of the main fast-growing species widely valorized and planted by PRONAR in Bambou-Mingali and Kinkala areas (in Pools Department), as part of the government contribution to the national reforestation objectives and for the production of fuelwood.

ESS 8: Indigenous Peoples

The project beneficiaries include several hamlets of Indigenous Peoples, including small populations of Batwa and Babongo indigenous groups typically living in separate areas within the village (See table below). Their involvement in the project automatically triggers a moderate risk. Following a full Free, Prior, Informed, Consent (FPIC) process, Indigenous Peoples will be invited to participate in all project activities. Risks are well understood by the project team and implementing partners. (See Indigenous Peoples Plan for a detailed description).

Table 11. Indigenous groups participating in the project (at the time of writing)

Village/Hamlets	District	Department	Batwa Households	Babongo Households
Ombima Batwa Hamlet	Ngo	Plateau	9	0
Onianva Batwa Hamlet	Ngo	Plateau	37	0
Oyonfoula Batwa Hamlet	Ngo	Plateau	12	0
Ngampion (Point d'Eau) Batwa Hamlet	Ngo	Plateau	26	0
Ndolo village	Loudima	Bouenza	0	62
SUBTOTAL			84	62
TOTAL				146

ESS 9: Cultural heritage

Risks in this category also related to landscape transformation, which is relevant to PREFOREST since the project's plantations will visibly and physically change the landscape. There could be negative cultural heritage impacts, which is why the moderate rating is triggered.

Note

The above-mentioned risks have triggered a 'moderate' risk rating and are identified as the main project risks, necessitating increased attention for mitigation. However, the ESMP and its annexes consider and address a broader range of risks, including also minimal risks related to the project activities.

5. Management of social and environmental risks for PREFOREST activities

In this section we discuss the environmental and social risks and impacts related to the project components and respective activities under the PREFOREST results framework, with the mitigation measures to address each risk as well as the possibilities to enhance positive outcomes. We note where risks may be cross-cutting or cumulative. The section is organized by project component, since this structure will facilitate implementation by the PMU.

5.1 Risks related to Component 1 activities

The activities supported under **Component 1: Land and resource use planning and strengthening access rights and land tenure security**, comprise participatory mapping, the identification and selection of potential beneficiaries and landowner partners, and the establishment of formal agreements and provision of support to strengthen land security rights. These activities are viewed as enabling activities that lay the foundation for Components 2 and 3. The intended beneficiaries of these activities are local communities and Indigenous Peoples, who are mostly smallholders, as well as landowners who are willing to collaborate in land-sharing agreements. Within all these groups, PREFOREST aims to equitably benefit women. These activities take place in all selected villages in the 13 districts under the project.

Following the FAO FESM, Component 1 activities trigger three ES Standards:

- **ESS 6. Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence**
- **ESS 7: Land tenure, displacement and resettlement.**
- **ESS 8: Indigenous Peoples**

5.1.1 Understanding and addressing ESS 6. Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence

Description of risks and impacts

Women in the Congo face numerous barriers that prevent them from fully participating in resource management and governance, often resulting in inequitable distribution of benefits, and occasionally in gender-based violence (GBV). These challenges include limited access to land tenure rights, heavy household responsibilities such as fuelwood collection, cooking, and childcare, as well as high rates of illiteracy and restricted access to technology and information. Indigenous women may face even greater challenges due to heightened marginalization. Additionally, discriminatory social norms often reinforce these barriers, further limiting opportunities for women.

Without targeted interventions, there is a significant risk that women may be unable to fully engage in or benefit from project activities, including those under Component 1. For instance, due to their heavy household workloads and restrictive social norms, women may find it difficult to participate in participatory mapping activities, thereby depriving the process of their valuable input and perspectives. Furthermore, because land rights are typically held by the male head of household under both customary and formal tenure systems, women are often excluded from initiatives aimed at strengthening land tenure security. These risks contribute to the continued marginalization of women and perpetuate cycles of exclusion and poverty.

Mitigation measures

The PREFOREST project aims to equitably benefit both women and men. To address gender equality challenges and achieve its goals, the project incorporates several key measures:

- i. **Participation Goals:**
PREFOREST has set a target of ensuring at least 30% women's participation across all activities. Project coordinators and field staff receive training on the importance of gender equality and the need to promote not just numerical targets but also active and meaningful participation of women. These targets are monitored during mapping exercises and tenure security support initiatives.
- ii. **Inclusive mapping methods:**
Participatory mapping activities use creative communication approaches instead of relying on literacy, ensuring that individuals with limited literacy are not excluded. Discussions take place in local language.
- iii. **Transparent tenure rights support:**
To enhance fairness in tenure-related activities, the project ensures transparency in the application review and beneficiary screening processes. This includes publicizing selection criteria and delegating selection to a committee (*Comité locale*) at the district level. Furthermore, to address the barriers women face in accessing land, the project has designated land allocated by PRONAR to prioritize women's usage rights. Therefore, women will not be excluded from selection because they do not own land.
- iv. **Complaint resolution:**
A Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) has been established to address complaints, including those related to the exclusion of women from project activities and gender-based violence. Additionally, a Safeguards Specialist conducts regular visits to target villages to gather feedback, monitor implementation, and provide opportunities for stakeholders to voice concerns.
- v. **Awareness raising on gender-based violence (GBV)**
While GBV is a low risk for Component 1 activities, awareness raising on this topic is planned through village sessions as well as radio broadcasts. Both men and women will be targeted for these activities. A partnership with the NGO AZUR Development is being established due to their specialized experience on this topic.

Enhancing positive impact

PREFORST can further enhance the positive impacts of addressing gender inequalities in Component 1 by regularly drawing attention to gender among the PMU and implementing partners and by reinforcing gender-positive messaging throughout the project activities. Disaggregated data will be compiled and used to track progress in achieving participation goals. Since women's views and perspectives add value to project actions, it will be important to take note of their contributions. Case studies may be showcased through the project's regular bulletins to increase impact.

5.1.2 Understanding and addressing ESS 7. Land tenure, displacement and resettlement

Description of risks and impacts

Participatory land use planning will be conducted to identify suitable locations for project activities and to avoid infringing on customary or statutory tenure rights. Traditional land tenure systems in the project area disproportionately favor men. Land rights are predominantly granted to Congolese men of Bantu origin, and women typically access land through their husbands or male relatives. In the event of divorce or the death of a husband, women often lose their land access rights.

Furthermore, in some remote areas such as some potential planting sites, there may be migrants that have moved to the area recently and risk being displaced by project activities. Villagers taking part in participatory mapping may not be fully aware of the presence of some new migrants, so there is a risk that they are overlooked.

Figure 3. A house of recent migrants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo near the planting area in Ngo district.



Without concrete initiatives, these risks can result in the exclusion of women, young people, or Indigenous Peoples from opportunities to strengthen their land tenure security, with the impact of further decreasing access to land for marginalized groups and reinforcing existing norms that benefit primarily Bantu men. In addition, ignoring the realities of new migrants poses a risk of conflicts and economic displacement for migrants near the planting sites.

Mitigation measures

The project will adopt inclusive and sensitive approaches to address the risks of excluding marginalized groups including women and migrants. The following mitigation measures are proposed:

i. Facilitating Land Access for Vulnerable Groups:

- Support vulnerable beneficiaries in negotiating land access with landowners. Landowners will be encouraged to register their land and allocate portions to landless individuals, including women, for agroforestry purposes. In some cases, people will be organized in mutually supportive *groupements*.
- Provide access for marginalized groups to state-owned land, such as areas allocated by PRONAR, where available.
- Monitor the proportion of agroforestry parcels allocated to women and Indigenous Peoples and adjust eligibility criteria, where necessary, to ensure their full participation.
- Set a target of at least 30% of people benefiting from Component 1 to be women.
- Ensure that the percentage of Indigenous Peoples benefiting from tenure support will at least match their proportion in the village population.

- Provide clear information on tenure support opportunities during the FPIC process and during awareness campaigns in all target villages, engaging all strata of the population (men, women, young people, and Indigenous Peoples).
- ii. **Transparent Screening and Selection Processes:**
 - Review tenure rights for proposed planting sites with administrative and traditional authorities (chiefs and clan leaders) and land owners to build consensus and avoid conflicts
 - Ensure screening criteria and procedures for funding applications are transparent and widely understood.
 - Communicate the reasons for non-acceptance of applications to ensure fairness.
 - For the group applications (*groupements*), require a benefit-sharing plan approved by all group members.
- iii. **Avoid displacement through ground-truthing:**
 - Validate participatory mapping by visiting potential planting sites to assess them on the ground and ensure no overlapping claims.
 - Mediate solutions for new migrants who may be on or near potential planting sites.

Enhancing positive impact

The project will be supplemented through co-financing from UN-REDD Programme with pilot activities using [Open Tenure](#) to record tenure rights of smallholders. This activity will result in the community having maps and a clear understanding of individual tenure rights over the agroforestry parcels.

Figure 4. Participatory mapping exercise in Moulila village, Goma Tsé-Tsé district.



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5.1.3 Understanding and addressing ESS 8. Indigenous Peoples

Description of risks and impacts

The project beneficiaries include several hamlets of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples are victims of discrimination by the Bantu populations. For example, Indigenous Peoples are very rarely landowners, nor are they integrated into decision-making structures. Like the case of women, they may not be invited to participate in participatory mapping exercises or provided with support for access to land rights, including usage rights to parcels for agroforestry. Without specific measures, there is very little chance that they could benefit from the support offered by the project. The impact of their exclusion is a perpetuation of marginalization and poverty.

Mitigation measures

Mitigation measures aimed at reducing risks for Indigenous Peoples in Component 1:

- i. **Development of an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP):**
The IPP identifies barriers to participation by Indigenous Peoples and proposes strategies to address marginalization and ensure their active involvement in all project activities.
- ii. **Transparent selection process and proportional representation:**
Field staff and committee members will be trained in selection processes and criteria.
 - An Indigenous representative will be included in the local selection committee.
 - Selection criteria will be disseminated, and results published, along with reasons for acceptance or rejection.
 - Positive discrimination will be applied to ensure the percentage of Indigenous Peoples benefiting from the project at a minimum aligns with the ethnic composition of village populations.
- iii. **Capacity building and land rights:**
Indigenous Peoples will receive training and support to secure their land tenure rights, with access provided to land secured by PRONAR or available on former state farms.
- iv. **Inclusive communication:**
Face-to-face meetings will use oral communication, photos, and graphics instead of relying on written materials to enhance accessibility.
- v. **Complaints resolution:**
Awareness campaigns will promote the Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM). A Safeguards Specialist will conduct regular monitoring visits to address complaints promptly.
- vi. **Flexible land requirements:**
Minimum land size requirements may be modified for Indigenous Peoples to enhance their participation. Landowners will be encouraged to register their land and allocate portions for agroforestry projects by Indigenous Peoples.
- vii. **Information dissemination:**
Radio broadcasts will be used to provide widespread information about the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The goal will be to change attitudes and reduce discrimination across a wide audience.

Enhancing positive impact

The project will enhance positive impact by liaising with the national Commission at the Ministry of Justice that manages issues related to Indigenous Peoples and RENAPAC (*Réseau National des Peuples Autochtones du Congo*), a network NGO promoting the rights of Indigenous Peoples to gain further insight and share experience.

5.2 Risks related to Component 2 activities

The activities supported under **Component 2: Setting up agroforestry and forestry systems to mitigate climate change** include awareness raising, training, and the transfer of access and use rights to smallholders for the establishment of agroforestry system. In addition, this component includes the rehabilitation of nurseries and the deployment of assisted natural regeneration. The intended beneficiaries of the agroforestry activities are local communities and Indigenous Peoples, as well as landowners who are willing to collaborate in land-sharing agreements. The rehabilitation of nurseries is undertaken in collaboration with PRONAR and SNR. Training and awareness raising activities take place in selected villages, while agroforestry activities take place in savannahs within 1 to 12 km from the villages. ANR activities take place in degraded forest areas in the vicinity within 4 km to 12 km from the selected village, while rehabilitation of nurseries takes place in Kintélé and Mbouabe Lefini (Pool Department) and Loudima (Loudima Department).

Following the FAO FESM, Component 2 activities trigger seven ES Standards:

- **ESS 1: Biodiversity conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources.**
- **ESS 4: Decent work**
- **ESS 5: Community health, safety, and security.**
- **ESS 6: Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence**
- **ESS 7: Land tenure, displacement and resettlement.**
- **ESS 8: Indigenous Peoples**
- **ESS 9: Cultural heritage**

5.2.1 Understanding and addressing ESS 1: Biodiversity conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources.

Description of risks and impacts

Agroforestry activities pose significant risks to biodiversity, forests, and ecosystems. Land clearing for agroforestry can disrupt sensitive habitats, leading to a loss of biological diversity. This is compounded by the introduction of invasive species, which can outcompete native flora and fauna, further threatening ecosystem stability. Increased access to previously untouched areas often results in heightened trade in bushmeat, exacerbating pressure on wildlife populations. Additionally, plantations can alter ecosystem dynamics, creating conditions that may lead to new disease outbreaks. The use of pesticides and fertilizers, if uncontrolled, risks polluting soil and water sources, adversely affecting both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

Forests and biodiversity corridors are particularly vulnerable to agroforestry expansion, especially in contexts like Congo, where the drive for profitable agricultural systems, such as cocoa production, can lead to deforestation and forest degradation. Such activities threaten water sources critical for wildlife and human populations alike. The financial incentives tied to agroforestry may also encourage land conversion beyond controlled project areas, leading to further ecosystem fragmentation and degradation. Without robust mitigation measures, these activities could replicate patterns of biodiversity loss seen in regions like West Africa, undermining the long-term sustainability of both ecosystems and agroforestry initiatives.

The impacts of all these risks are degradation of ecosystems, reduced quality and volume of water supplies, and decreases in abundance and diversity of flora and fauna, including some globally important species.

Mitigation measures

To mitigate the environmental impacts of agroforestry and ANR activities, the project implements a series of mitigation measures:

- i. **Environmentally sensitive land use planning.**
 - Participatory planning incorporates conserved grasslands, savanna, and forests, considering important and vulnerable ecosystems to avoid disturbance. Agroforestry systems interventions will only occur in designated areas aligned with the fuelwood supply master plans and land-use plans.
 - If beneficiaries decide to plant cocoa plantations, these will be restricted in forest areas to pre-cultivated sites, limited to five hectares per initiative, and must comply with strict environmental and social safeguards to prevent deforestation or degradation. (In savanna planting areas, these restrictions do not apply due to the lack of direct forest impact.)
- ii. **Training and awareness raising on the importance of biodiversity and sustainable practices**

The project will conduct awareness raising sessions in the target villages on topics related to biodiversity, including conservation, invasive species, fire prevention, and the impacts and safe use of pesticides. Radio broadcasts will be used to reinforce messaging and spread it to a wider audience.
- iii. **Prohibit certain activities for field staff**

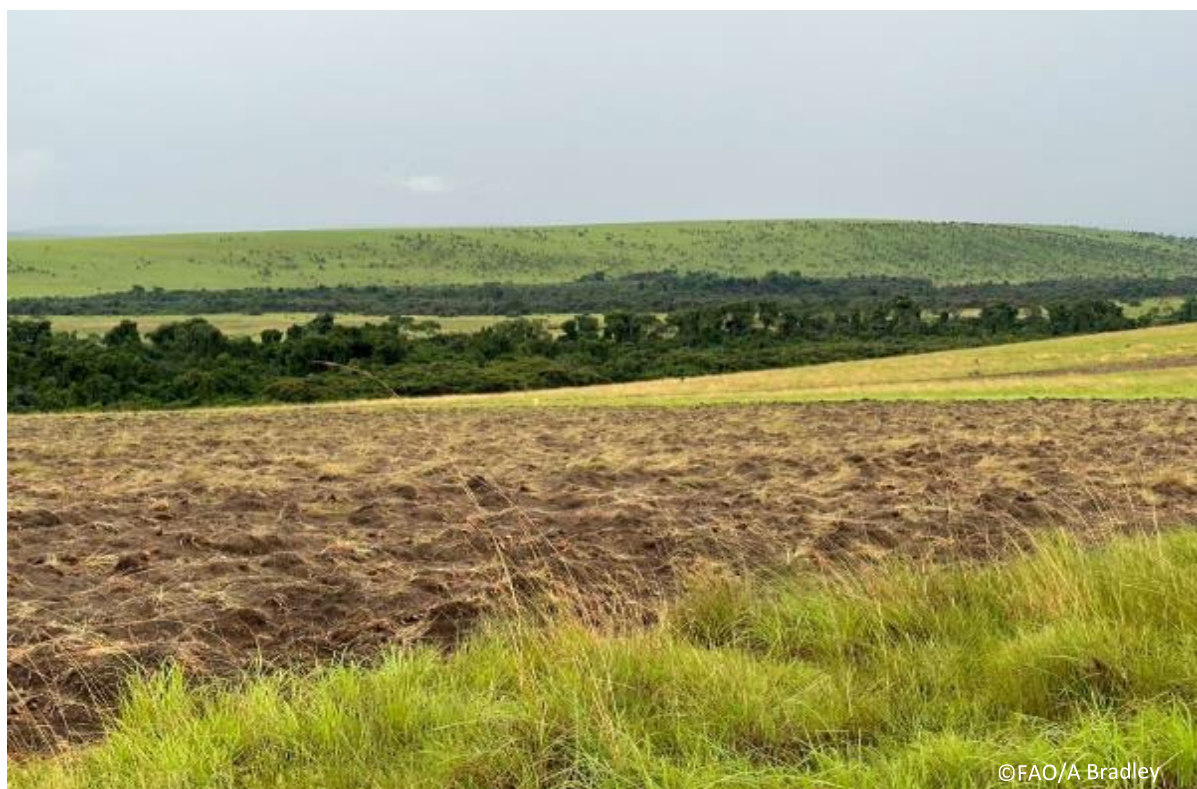
Members of the PMU and implementation partners have been sensitized to the importance of protecting biodiversity and in addition, certain activities are prohibited during field work including off-road driving, hunting, and bushmeat purchase. It will also be required to conserve existing trees in the savannahs and avoid fires to clear brush from plantation sites.
- iv. **Ecosystems and biodiversity monitoring**

To conserve biodiversity in the project area, a Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) (See Annex 06) has been established and requires regular field monitoring of biodiversity. Transect walks to monitor species will be conducted annually. In addition, water bodies will be monitored to check on ecosystem impacts.

Enhancing positive outcomes

Positive biodiversity outcomes may be further enhanced by the type of farming that is encouraged on the agroforestry plots. The project can nurture a new generation of environment-sensitive farmers using improved seeds, diversifying their crops, and becoming more resilient to climate fluctuations, while sustainably managing resources. The plantations will also provide a sustainable source of firewood.

Figure 5. Preparation of a plantation site in Ngo district



5.2.2 Understanding and addressing ESS 4 Decent work and ESS 5 Community health, safety, and security

To enhance the outcomes of mitigation measures, risks related to ESS 4 and ESS 5 have been combined to reflect the inter-relatedness of these issues in the project context.

Description of risks and impacts

Labor-related risks in the project include the employment of children, particularly in agroforestry, tree nurseries, and Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) activities, however this risk is considered as highly unlikely by the national ESS Specialist. Congolese laws prohibit child labor under the age of 16, and there are no known documented cases of child labor violations in the project areas; however, there are cases where children contribute to farm and household labor (unpaid), generally after school hours. Additionally, there are concerns regarding the ability of government agencies (SNR and PRONAR) to properly manage and maintain nurseries, which could lead to labor abuses (e.g. overwork) during construction and maintenance. Other risks involve payment issues, such as delayed wages, and the possibility of forced labor, especially among Indigenous Peoples, who may be pressured to work for very low wages by Bantu landowners.

Further risks include discrimination in hiring, particularly affecting women and Indigenous Peoples, who may face limited access to the day labor opportunities either because they are viewed as physically weaker or because they are saddled with the bulk of household responsibilities. Sexual harassment and gender-based violence (GBV) pose threats during field activities, along with unsafe working conditions, workplace accidents (linked to the use of heavy equipment as well as hoes and

machetes), and the spread of sexually transmitted communicable diseases. The influx of external labourers, if it occurs, may exacerbate these issues.

Similarly, improper use of fertilizers and chemical treatment products, lack of personal protection and inappropriate management of their packaging represent potential risks of poisoning that can affect human and animal health. Pesticide and chemical fertilizer use in Congo is relatively low due to its unavailability and high cost, but it is increasing with agricultural intensification. Agroforestry techniques increase the efficiency of fertilizers, but do not eliminate the need for their use. Agricultural producers have very little information on the effective use of agricultural chemical inputs. Integrated pest and pesticide management is scarcely developed in Congo.

In addition, as mentioned, the disturbances to ecosystems brought about by agroforestry and assisted natural regeneration activities could lead to the emergence of latent or new diseases brought about through contact between people and disease vectors in the environment (a cross-cutting risk).

The possible impacts of labor risks include perpetuation and reinforcement of discriminatory norms and abusive working conditions, along with reputational risks for FAO and its donors. Health and safety risks that result in accidents and disease can bring short- to long term challenges for entire families. Such incidents can also damage FAO's reputation and general collaboration with the project, particularly if FAO is seen not to have taken all precautionary measures and compensated for losses or injury.

Mitigation measures

To address these risks, the project has developed a Labour Health and Safety Management Plan (LHSMP) which outlines mitigation measures to ensure fair labor practices, prevent exploitation, and promote safe working environments (See Annex 06). In addition, a Pesticides Management Plan (PMP) (See Annex 05) has been developed. A summary of mitigation measures is provided here:

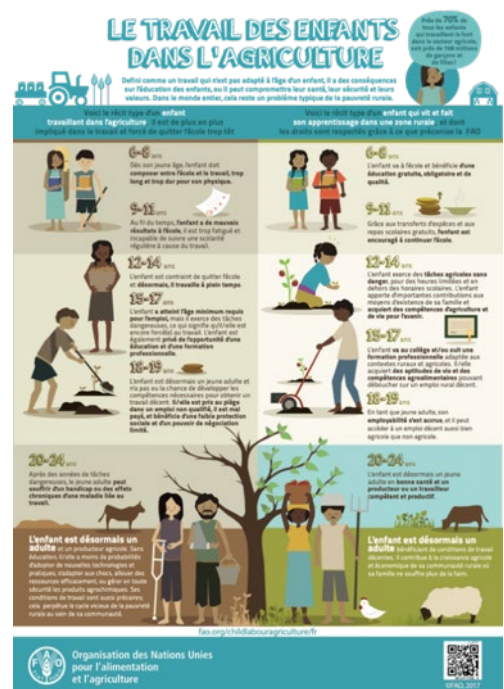
i. Strict prohibition of child labor, awareness raising, and monitoring

The project will adhere to FAO guidelines on ending child labor in agriculture, ensuring strict compliance with labor standards. Any incidence of child labor within project-supported activities will result in the immediate suspension of support to the implementing partner. Beneficiaries who employ children below the legal working age of 16 will become ineligible for technical or financial assistance. To further prevent child labor in agroforestry and Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) activities, the project will integrate child labor-sensitive messaging into its communication and training efforts. This includes raising awareness about health hazards and risks associated with hazardous work for children, supported by visual tools such as posters (See Figure 5) and targeted outreach campaigns. Additionally, the ESS Specialist will conduct regular field visits with attention to monitor compliance and prevent violations.

ii. Promoting the project Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism

The project has developed a Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) to ensure that labor-related concerns, including those regarding child labor, sexual harassment and gender-based violence (GBV), are addressed promptly. FAO employees are required to undergo training

Figure 6. Poster used to raise awareness on child labor issues.



Source: FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). *Le travail des enfants dans l'agriculture*. Rome: FAO.

on workplace sexual harassment and familiarize themselves with reporting procedures. Awareness campaigns will cover GBV, and communicable diseases through radio programs and village workshops. Further labor protections include providing workers with personal protective equipment (PPE), for example in the use of pesticides, enforcing vehicle safety measures, and requiring First Aid training for field coordinators.

iii. Safe management of pesticides

The project will ensure safe and responsible pesticide use, promoting integrated pest management (IPM), reducing dependence on pesticides, and minimizing adverse environmental and health impacts. The selection of pesticides must consider factors such as selectivity, risks to non-target species, environmental persistence, efficiency, and the likelihood of resistance development. Before approval, pesticides must be registered in the country or specifically permitted by relevant authorities, and users must demonstrate the capacity to manage them safely. Preference will be given to less hazardous, more selective, and environmentally friendly options. Any international procurement of pesticides must comply with regulations outlined at www.pic.int.

iv. Use of natural organic fertilizers and disease surveillance

While agroforestry techniques reduce the need for chemical fertilizers, some production systems may still require moderate fertilizer application. The project will ensure that fertilizers and soil conditioners are used in minimal quantities to avoid excessive environmental impact. Additionally, to mitigate the spread of latent diseases, the project will implement guidelines for disease surveillance and outbreak monitoring within the project area, ensuring prompt responses to potential health threats.

Enhancing positive outcomes

The PREFOREST project has the potential to raise the standards on labor and health and safety standards in the 13 target districts with broader benefits for other projects' interventions. By raising awareness on these topics and meeting the highest standards, expectations among stakeholders who are duly informed on their rights and of best practices, will be raised. FAO will openly share knowledge and experience on this topic with all partners.

5.2.3 Understanding and addressing ESS 6. Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence

Description of risks and impacts

Risks associated with field activities including agroforestry and assisted natural regeneration pose risk that certain groups such as women and Indigenous Peoples may be excluded from participation (as discussed under Component 1). Furthermore, there are risks of gender-based sexual violence, particularly for planting sites and ANR sites that are at a significant distance from the village (up to 10 km to 12 km respectively). According to data from 2018, 35.6% of women aged 15-49 reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months.⁸ The impacts of excluding women from field activities and exposing them (or occasionally also boys and men) to GBV include further perpetuation of gender discrimination and poverty, while in the case of GBV, negative and potentially long term mental, physical and emotional consequences for victims.

Mitigation measures

Mitigation measures to address risks of gender discrimination and GBV are outlined here:

⁸ See https://data.unwomen.org/country/democratic-republic-of-the-congo?utm_source=chatgpt.com

- i. **Awareness raising on gender and Gender Based Violence (GBV)**
The project will raise awareness on the importance of gender equality and the steps that can be taken to overcome gender discrimination. Village sessions targeting both men and women will be held. In addition, radio broadcasts will reinforce this messaging to a wide audience. The PMU is in contact with a local NGO, [AZUR Développement](#), specialized in training on gender and GBV, to potentially assist with training activities.
- ii. **Making opportunities available to women**
A Gender Assessment and Gender Action Plan (See Annex 08) has already been developed to analyze the barriers to women's active participation and benefit sharing. Such barriers include shyness, lack of literacy, lack of information and access to technology, heavy household burdens including childcare, and restrictions by husbands. PREFOREST will attempt to make opportunities for women to participate in agroforestry and ANR activities by setting a base target of 30 percent women's participation.
- iii. **Facilitate women's groups for field activities**
Besides raising awareness on GBV, the project will also facilitate the formation of women's groups for participation in field activities. Women traveling back and forth to the field site in groups will be more confident and secure to take part in these activities.
- iv. **Grievance resolution**
As previously mentioned, the project FGRM will be in place to receive complaints related to GBV. Such complaints will be dealt with swiftly and sensitively.

Enhancing positive outcomes

Using radio to raise awareness and reach a broader audience has the potential to reduce GBV not only within the project context but also at the household level and beyond project sites. To maximize this impact, messaging should be comprehensive and widely applicable. Additionally, the women's groups established for field activities can foster collaboration beyond agroforestry and Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR), such as forming savings groups and other community initiatives.

5.2.4 Understanding and addressing ESS 7: Land tenure, displacement and resettlement.

Description of risks and impacts

There is a risk that agroforestry and Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) activities may lead to the displacement of informal settlers, land occupants, or undocumented claimants on both public and private land. Additionally, these activities could impose restrictions on access to forest resources, negatively impacting traditional forest users, including Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized groups. Certain land uses, such as grazing in plantations, may also be restricted, further limiting access for local communities. Unequal land tenure systems could exacerbate these challenges, affecting the equitable distribution of project benefits. Women, Indigenous Peoples, and other vulnerable groups may face barriers to participation, particularly in securing land tenure or receiving project benefits. Agroforestry activities could also result in shifts in occupancy rights, disproportionately affecting informal settlers who lack formal land claims. Without mitigation measures, these risks could lead to inequitable benefits and land conflicts.

In the Republic of the Congo, customary land tenure practices play a dominant role in determining land ownership and use rights. According to tradition, only families recognized as "landowners" have the right to plant trees on their land, while non-landowners—who typically engage in subsistence farming on rented or informally occupied land—rarely have this right. Land tenure is primarily governed by clan- or lineage-based systems, meaning that land ownership is passed down within specific family lines. Most landowners do not possess formal land titles but instead rely on customary

recognition. High registration costs and the complexity of securing formal land titles present additional challenges, discouraging landowners from legalizing their holdings. While traditional land systems are evolving, the sale of land remains uncommon in rural areas, although exceptions exist, particularly in urban and peri-urban settings. In some cases, long-term lease agreements have been established, offering a potential avenue for integrating tree planting into rental contracts.

Mitigation measures

- i. Access to Secured Lands**

The first measure involves ensuring that beneficiaries can access land already secured by PRONAR or land from former State farms. Approximately 6,000 hectares have already been secured by PRONAR, with ongoing efforts to secure additional land in specific project areas.
- ii. Support for Land Registration**

The second option focuses on assisting families interested in registering their land and facilitating the transfer of a portion of their land for use by landless individuals or groups (*groupements*). This initiative aims to empower non-landowners by providing them opportunities to engage in sustainable agricultural practices.
- iii. Shared Remuneration Contracts**

The third option introduces a system of shared remuneration contracts, where landowners agree to make their land available for agroforestry initiatives in exchange for negotiated compensation. However, the availability of PRONAR and State lands is limited to a few villages.
- iv. Strengthening Land Rights**

Strengthening land rights is crucial for both landowners and non-landowners involved in the project. The initiative specifically targets non-landowners but also offers benefits to landowners willing to participate. Securing land titles for owners is essential for encouraging them to share their land or enter into long-term contracts.
- v. Monitoring and Adaptive Management**

To monitor risks effectively, a Land Security Subcommittee will be established within the Technical Committee. The project will implement two main management strategies:

 - **Annual Monitoring Indicators** A specific indicator will be developed to evaluate the availability of potential land options within project villages, with annual assessments conducted
 - **Participatory Analysis** At the end of each year, participatory analyses will be performed in selected villages to identify strengths and weaknesses of each option, followed by brainstorming sessions for adjustments in the following year.
- vi. Complaints resolution**

The project's FGRM will respond to project-related land conflicts. In some cases, relevant authorities will be asked to step in to assist in a fair resolution.

Enhancing positive outcomes

Peaceful resolution for the issues related to new migrants and overlapping land claims can set a useful precedent in the often sensitive and complex land sector. The project should aim to support the government in facilitating these processes. The [Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure](#) can be a reference for best practice. A workshop has already been organized on the Guidelines in November 2023 to familiarize the PMU and the implementing partners with the importance of this document for tenure reform and responsible governance.

5.2.5 Understanding and addressing ESS 8: Indigenous Peoples

Description of risks and impacts

Risks associated with agroforestry and ANR activities include the risk that certain groups such as women and Indigenous Peoples may be excluded from participation, a similar risk as for Component 1 activities. In addition, there is a concern for restriction of access by Indigenous Peoples and local communities to forest resources for subsistence, economic or medicinal purposes. Such loss would result from the transfer of land ownership rights from the State to individual beneficiaries and groups, since these lands will be subject to new rules of use and management. Excluding Indigenous Peoples from participation in agroforestry or ANR activities, as well as impeding their access to forest areas can have negative consequences for both their livelihoods and status in the village.

Mitigation measures

i. Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC)

The activities under this component are discussed with indigenous Peoples prior to implementation to discuss potential costs, risks, and benefits. These discussions provide a chance for Indigenous Peoples to raise any concerns and ensure they are addressed before on the ground work commences. See Section 9 for additional information.

ii. Provision of tools

It has already been revealed that a lack of farm tools constitutes a barrier for Indigenous People to participate in the project's planting activities. Many Indigenous Peoples in the target villages work for Bantu families and use the family's tools without a need for their own. The project has therefore decided to set aside tools that can be borrowed for the fieldwork.

iii. Ensuring continued access and use rights

Participatory mapping exercises have involved all villagers, including Indigenous Peoples, to clearly understand the traditional access and use rights in the landscape. As the project goes forward, the participatory maps will be an important reference to make sure that these rights are respected, even with shifts in land use and tenure rights.

Enhancing positive outcomes

There are opportunities to benefit from the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples with regards to forests and forest resources. Expressing curiosity and respect for this knowledge can be an entry point for improving relations between Bantu and indigenous community members. New and innovative ideas for business planning and livelihood improvement may originate with Indigenous knowledge.

5.2.6 Understanding and addressing ESS 9: Cultural Heritage

Description of risk and impacts

Risks in this category relate to landscape transformation through the project's plantations that visibly and physically change the landscape. There could be negative cultural heritage impacts, particularly for families who have lived for generations in the area. For those that rely on hunting, the disturbance and changes in the landscape could also reduce populations of wildlife such as duiker, monkey, and serval, the hunting of which may be seen as a traditional practice and a part of cultural heritage. With the project's emphasis on business and profit, younger people may be more attracted to participate in the cash economy and eventually leave the villages. The loss of these cultural values can lead to the deterioration of community traditions, a decline in respect for traditional knowledge, and the migration of young people.

Mitigation measures

i. **Respect for traditional culture**

The PMU and field staff will be oriented to the importance of understanding and respecting local traditions and culture. Aspects of culture should not be separate from the project activities, but integrated and valued through the activities. For example, agroforestry may integrate crops that are culturally important.

ii. **Participatory land use planning**

Land use planning should consider important cultural values in considering where to establish plantations or conduct ANR. Planting areas may be situated away from areas considered to be sacred.

Enhancing positive outcomes

If hunters can be convinced to reduce pressures on wildlife by turning their attention instead to opportunities in agroforestry, there can be benefits for certain threatened wildlife species. There can be other ways to value knowledge and skills related to biodiversity by involving hunters in biodiversity monitoring.

5.3 Risks related to Component 3 activities

Component 3 of PREFOREST aims to ***Strengthen agroforestry financing structures, marketing capacities and value chains***. This Component supports the growth of resilient, low-carbon community agroforestry and forest entrepreneurship in Congo by increasing beneficiaries' access to rural credit and developing commercial capacity. PREFOREST will address the main barriers faced by farmers in accessing microfinance, on both the demand and supply sides. On the demand side, the project will support the development of market-oriented agroforestry systems through training and mentoring in the development and implementation of business plans. On the supply side, the project will support capacity building for microfinance institution (MFI) loan officers in climate finance and the development of new credit products/services tailored to farmers' needs. The project will also support intermediation between farmers and MFIs to ensure effective use of the new credit products/services, as well as the establishment of purchase contracts.

Component 3 activities trigger two ESS Standards:

- **ESS 6. Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence**
- **ESS 8: Indigenous Peoples**

5.3.1 Understanding and addressing ESS 6. Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence and ESS 8. Indigenous Peoples

This section combines the description of risks and mitigation measures related to ESS 6 and ESS8 since there are many similarities due to the common issue of marginalization faced by both women and Indigenous Peoples.

Description of risks and impacts

Women and Indigenous Peoples face significant risks of exclusion from business planning support, primarily due to a lack of land rights, which can limit their ability to participate in key project activities. These same barriers extend to accessing financial instruments, purchase contracts, and sales platforms, as these mechanisms may not fully consider the needs and priorities of marginalized groups.

Ensuring gender equity in financial inclusion is critical, as gender-based violence (GBV) and social biases can further marginalize vulnerable populations and negatively impact their ability to engage in economic opportunities.

High standards for participation in agroforestry and forestry initiatives could also present challenges, as many beneficiaries, particularly women and Indigenous Peoples, may have limited experience with business planning and financial management. Without proper support, they may struggle to meet project application requirements, further excluding them from potential benefits. Additionally, limited management capacity could hinder their involvement in key activities such as planning, financial strategy development, and institutional strengthening.

These risks could also affect financial inclusion initiatives, including the development of a national financial inclusion strategy (Act. 3.2.3), capacity building for financial institutions on rural finance for agriculture (Act. 3.2.1), and capacity building for financial institutions on green investment in agroforestry and forestry sectors (Act. 3.2.2).

In the absence of equity and equality, the actions planned by PREFOREST could have negative impacts on gender relations within local communities and Indigenous Peoples. These impacts could range from the aggravation of existing imbalances to conflict within families and communities.

Mitigation measures

Mitigation measures may be summarized as follows:

- i. Improve skills and capacities to increase participation**

The Project will aim to accurately match capacity building needs with training and other technical assistance through capacity needs assessments tailored to different stakeholder groups. To address these challenges, the project must implement targeted interventions that enhance financial literacy, business skills, and inclusive financial mechanisms, ensuring that women and Indigenous Peoples can fully participate and benefit from project activities.
- ii. Assign mentors for women and Indigenous Peoples**

The Project will assign mentors with established experience to each group of beneficiaries for mentoring support in respect to the development and implementation of their respective business plans over the course of their activities. To this end, the Project will put in place an incubator structure.
- iii. Set participation targets and address literacy issues**

The project sets clear targets for women's and Indigenous Peoples participation and strategies to achieve targets. Minimize reliance on literacy or provide supplementary lessons for those with limited literacy.
- iv. Increase awareness on gender and Indigenous Peoples**

Increase awareness on discrimination and prejudice through village sessions and radio broadcasts.

Enhancing positive outcomes

Indigenous women are considered to face 'double discrimination' as both female and indigenous. The project can pay special attention to involve and mentor these individuals to change attitudes on both fronts.

Figure 7. Women in Ombimba village learn about the project's proposed activities.



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5.4 Cumulative impacts

In addition to the negative environmental and social impacts of the project's activities, this study considers the cumulative negative impacts arising from the numerous programs and projects underway in the area. Indeed, while most of the activities to be carried out may have insignificant negative effects taken individually, the combination of several negative effects on both the biophysical and socio-economic environment can, in the long run, lead to unfortunate consequences because of their accumulation. Cumulative effects are changes to the environment caused by a combination of past, present and future human actions. There are two possible scenarios: (i) the multiplication of similar (identical) projects, carried out at the same time or successively, with the same minor or moderate negative impact on a given area, but whose cumulative effect may prove harmful to the environment; (ii) the implementation of different projects, generating minor or moderate individual negative impacts, but whose cumulative effect may prove harmful to the environment. This is the case of the Bacasi and Ecozamba projects in the Plateaux district, which implement agroforestry activities identical to those of PREFOREST/PROREP, with identical minor risks for the environment and local communities and indigenous populations.

5.5 Cross-cutting and other risks

5.5.1 Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse is a cross-cutting risk that can affect PREFOREST. In general, FAO is committed to preventing and addressing SEA in all its project work by implementing strict policies, awareness training, and accountability measures. FAO upholds a zero-tolerance approach to SEA, ensuring that all staff, partners, and contractors adhere to the highest ethical standards. The organization integrates SEA prevention into its programs by conducting risk assessments, strengthening reporting mechanisms, and promoting a culture of accountability. It also works closely with local communities to ensure that beneficiaries are aware of their rights and know how to report any misconduct safely and confidentially.

FAO's approach includes the establishment of safeguarding policies, codes of conduct, and mandatory training for personnel to recognize, prevent, and respond to SEA incidents. The organization collaborates with other UN agencies and humanitarian partners to share best practices and strengthen protection measures in the field. Additionally, FAO ensures that complaint mechanisms are accessible, survivor-centered, and responsive to the needs of affected individuals. By embedding SEA prevention into its operational frameworks, FAO aims to create a safe and respectful environment for all.

5.5.2 Climate change Impacts

Rainfall and temperature are the two climatic parameters with the greatest impact on resources and the main sectors of activity due to their current trends and, above all, their inter-annual and intra-seasonal variability. Predicted climate change - rising temperature extremes, increased rainfall deficits and more violent precipitation events - has potentially disastrous consequences for the country, which relies primarily on rain-fed agriculture. The effects of climate change affect the productivity of plants and thus their overall yields. Likewise, agroforestry initiatives will be susceptible to climate conditions, particularly in the early stages. Marginalized groups and individuals are particularly vulnerable to changes in climate.

PREFOREST aims to build resilience and reduce greenhouse gas emissions as part of the country's climate change mitigation goal; however, its influence on climate change remains limited considering the results in terms of emissions removal and avoidance. The project employs an adaptive

management approach, continuously reviewing implementation and adjusting its strategy as needed, while staying within its capacity.

5.6 Environment and Social Management Plan

Table 12. Environment and Social Management Plan for PREFOREST

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT PLAN							
Activities ⁹	Potential environmental and social risks and impacts	ESS	Mitigation Measures ¹⁰	Implementation Arrangements	Monitoring Arrangements	Timeline	Estimated costs
COMPONENT 1. LAND AND RESOURCE USE PLANNING AND STRENGTHENING ACCESS RIGHTS AND LAND TENURE SECURITY							
Development of Participatory mapping (Act. 1.1.1)	<p>Women and Indigenous Peoples will not be fully involved in the process and therefore their needs and priorities not fully considered.</p> <p>Literacy levels will be so low that it is difficult to engage Indigenous Peoples in some activities.</p> <p>Mapping exercise may ignore the presence of new migrants in potential planting areas</p>	<p>ESS 6 Gender</p> <p>ESS 8 Indigenous Peoples</p> <p>ESS 7 Land tenure</p>	<p>a. Setting and monitoring a target of ensuring at least 30% women’s participation across all activities.</p> <p>b. Orientation of field staff on selection process and criteria; indigenous representative on the local committee responsible for selection of participants</p> <p>c. Face to face meetings will not rely on written material but instead on oral communication, photos, and graphics.</p> <p>d. Conduct ground-truthing of participatory mapping to validate prior to decision making on planting, If needed attempt to resolve any overlapping claims.</p> <p>e. Conduct awareness raising sessions and radio broadcasts on the topic of gender-based violence.</p>	<p>Assist. FAOR- Programme (a)</p> <p>ESS Specialist (a, b)</p> <p>Facilitation team (c, d)</p> <p>Communications Specialist (c)</p>	National ESS Specialist part of participatory mapping facilitation team.	Y1 – Y3	See budget in Section 7.2. Indicative budget

⁹ All activities take place in the 13 districts (5 departments) chosen as the project target area.

¹⁰ For additional details on risks and mitigation actions, please see the corresponding plan, including Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP), Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP), Gender Analysis and Action Plan (GAP), Pesticide Management Plan (PAP), Labour, Health & Safety Management Plan, and Chance Find Procedure.

<p>Identification and selection of potential beneficiaries and land owners, partners (Act. 1.2.1)</p>	<p>Participation of women and Indigenous Peoples will be limited due to discrimination and other factors (dominance of Bantu men)</p>	<p>ESS 6 Gender ESS 8 Indigenous Peoples</p>	<p>a. Setting a target of ensuring at least 30% women's participation across all activities.</p> <p>b. Orientation of field staff on selection process and criteria</p> <p>c. Establishment of a Selection Committee with representatives of Indigenous Peoples and women.</p> <p>d. Ensure transparency in application review and screening for beneficiaries, particularly through dissemination of the selection criteria, publication of the selection results and reasons for selection/rejection.</p> <p>e. Awareness raising on the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism</p> <p>f. Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances</p>	<p>Assist. FAOR-Programme (a)</p> <p>ESS Specialist (a, b, d, e, f)</p> <p>Implementation partners (c, d, e)</p> <p>Selection Committee (d)</p> <p>M&E Specialist (a)</p>	<p>Selection Committees responsible for diversity of beneficiaries with support from implementation partners</p> <p>ESS Specialist to visit field sites on a quarterly basis and manage the FGRM.</p> <p>M&E Specialist to compile and report data</p>	<p>Y1 – Y6</p>	
<p>Establishment of formal agreements with beneficiaries and landowners and provision of support to strengthen tenure security rights (Act. 1.2.2)</p>	<p>Due to women's and Indigenous People's lack of access to land and information, they will not receive tenure security support.</p>	<p>ESS 6 Gender ESS 8 Indigenous Peoples ESS 7 Land tenure</p>	<p>a. Setting a target of ensuring at least 30% women's participation across all activities. The % of indigenous beneficiaries should aim to reflect at least their % in the village population.</p> <p>b. Provide clear information on tenure support opportunities during the FPIC process and awareness campaigns engaging all strata of the population.</p> <p>c. Modify, if necessary, the minimum land size requirements for women's or Indigenous Peoples.</p>	<p>Assist. FAOR-Programme (a, c, d, e)</p> <p>ESS Specialist (a, b, f)</p> <p>PMU Field Team and Implementing partners (a, b, d, e)</p> <p>M&E Specialist (a)</p> <p>Communications Specialist (f)</p>	<p>PMU Field team and implementing partners manage agreements.</p> <p>ESS Specialist and M&E Specialist monitor to ensure diversity (quarterly basis)</p>	<p>Y1 – Y6</p>	

			<p>d. Provide access to land already secured by PRONAR or land available on former state farms to women and Indigenous Peoples.</p> <p>e. Support landowners interested in registering their land and transferring part of it for agroforestry projects by non-landowners.</p> <p>f. Use radio broadcasts to provide information on land tenure security to a wide audience.</p>				
COMPONENT 2. SETTING UP AGROFORESTRY AND FORESTRY SYSTEMS TO MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE							
<p>Provision of assistance for the establishment of fast start tree plantations for energy purpose (Act. 2.1.1)</p> <p>&</p> <p>Provision of technical assistance for the establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems (Act. 2.2.4)</p>	<p>Disturbance of flora and fauna through agroforestry activities.</p> <p>Adverse impacts on water sources and biodiversity corridors</p> <p>Increased trade in bushmeat due to increased access</p> <p>Pollution of soil and water by pesticides and fertilizers</p> <p>Child labour</p> <p>Payment issues (late payment) and conflicts over payments</p> <p>Abusive working conditions / forced labour by Indigenous Peoples to substitute for Bantu workers</p> <p>Indigenous / women will suffer GBV on the way to and from the planting site</p> <p>Poisoning by pesticides</p>	<p>ESS 1. Biodiversity conservation</p> <p>ESS 4. Decent work</p> <p>ESS 5 Health, safety and security</p> <p>ESS 6 Gender</p> <p>ESS 8 Indigenous Peoples</p> <p>ESS 9 Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>a. Increase awareness on value of biodiversity (meetings and awareness raising meetings)</p> <p>b. Prohibit off-road driving</p> <p>c. Include conserved grasslands/savanna and forest areas in participatory planning and tenure mapping.</p> <p>d. Conserve existing trees in the planting areas.</p> <p>e. Put restrictions on cocoa plantations to limit impacts and prevent invasive potential of acacia magnum through monitoring activities</p> <p>f. Prohibit fires to clear planting areas.</p> <p>g. Prohibit hunting and bushmeat purchase by FAO and partner staff.</p> <p>h. Raise awareness on key topics including biodiversity conservation, gender and GBV, FGRM, child labour through radio programs and village workshops. Promote IPM and safe management of any pesticides that might be used.</p>	<p>Assist. FAOR-Programme (b, e, f, g, m, n, o)</p> <p>ESS Specialist (a, b, h, j, k, p, q)</p> <p>PMU Field Team and Implementing partners (c, d, e, f, g, l, n, p, q)</p> <p>FAO and Implementing Partner Drivers (m, o)</p> <p>Communication Specialist (h)</p>	<p>ESS Specialist conducts overall field monitoring and organizes awareness raising on key topics.</p> <p>PMU Field Team and Implementing partners responsible for minimizing biodiversity impacts during field activities, ensuring health and safety, and ensuring participation of women and Indigenous Peoples</p> <p>Drivers to ensure First Aid Kit available</p>	Y2 – Y6	See budget in Section 7.2. Indicative budget

	<p>Accidents</p> <p>Spread of communicable diseases</p> <p>Women and Indigenous people will not be selected for participation in project activities due to discriminatory practices favouring Bantu men</p> <p>Culturally important aspects of the landscape will be lost through visual transformation</p>		<p>i. Facilitate women’s groups for field activities.</p> <p>j. Build awareness of project personnel on invasive species and adverse impacts.</p> <p>k. Monitor water bodies near plantations</p> <p>l. Equip workers using heavy equipment with personal protective equipment (PPE) and require it to be worn</p> <p>m. Vehicle safety (according to FAO Office Policy)</p> <p>n. First Aid Training and Certification for Field Site Coordinators</p> <p>o. First Aid Kit available</p> <p>p. Beneficiary selection to require fair representation of women (>30%) and Indigenous Peoples. Farm tools will be lent to those who don’t have their own.</p> <p>q. Integrate cultural values in participatory mapping and respect traditional culture, for instance in tree and crop species selection.</p>				
<p>Awareness raising on climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems (Act. 2.2.1)</p>	<p>Women and Indigenous people will not participate in project activities due to gender bias and discriminatory practices favouring Bantu men</p>	<p>ESS 6 Gender</p> <p>ESS 8 Indigenous Peoples</p>	<p>a. Specifically target women (>30%) and Indigenous Peoples on awareness raising activities.</p> <p>b. Use communication techniques that do not rely on literacy.</p>	<p>Assist. FAOR- Programme (a)</p> <p>ESS Specialist (a, b)</p> <p>Communications Specialist (b)</p> <p>PMU Field Team and Implementing Partners responsible (a,b)</p> <p>M&E Specialist (a)</p>	<p>ESS Specialist conducts field monitoring</p> <p>Communication Specialist prepares materials</p> <p>PMU Field Team and Implementing Partners responsible for awareness raising</p>	<p>Y1 – Y6</p>	

					M&E Specialist to compile data		
Transfer of access and use rights on government land to smallholder farmers / producers (Act. 2.2.2)	Women Indigenous people will not be selected for participation in project activities due to discriminatory practices favoring Bantu men Overlapping land claims lead to conflict	ESS 6 Gender ESS 8 Indigenous Peoples ESS 7 Land tenure	a.Set targets for women (>30%) and Indigenous Peoples for transfer of access and use rights. b. Ensure clear and participatory land mapping prior to transfer of access and use rights to avoid conflict.	Assist. FAOR-Programme (a, b) ESS Specialist (a,b) M&E Specialist (a) PMU Field Team and Implementing partners (b)	ESS Specialist conducts field monitoring PMU Field Team and Implementing Partners responsible for mapping. M&E Specialist to compile data	Y2 – Y7	
Organization of practical training on climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems (Act. 2.2.3)	Women and Indigenous people will not be selected for participation in training due to discriminatory practices favouring Bantu men, limited literacy, and high household burdens for women.	ESS 6 Gender ESS 8 Indigenous Peoples	a.Set targets and specifically target women (>30%) and Indigenous Peoples for training using materials and communication methods that don't rely on literacy.	Assist. FAOR-Programme (a) ESS Specialist (a) Communications Specialist (a) PMU Field Team and Implementing partners (a) M&E Specialist (a)	ESS Specialist conducts field monitoring PMU Field Team and Implementing Partners responsible for training and diversity of participants M&E Specialist to compile data	Y2 – Y6	
Rehabilitation of nurseries (Act. 2.3.1)	Introduction of invasive species Adverse impacts on water sources upon which wildlife depend Women and Indigenous People will not be selected for participation in nursery activities due to discriminatory practices favoring Bantu men	ESS 1. Biodiversity conservation ESS 4. Decent work ESS 6 (Gender)	a.Raise awareness on invasive species, safety procedures, gender, and gender-based violence among work crews. b. Avoid excessive use of water. c. Set targets and recruit a fair proportion of (>30%) women and Indigenous Peoples to rehabilitate and tend nurseries. d. First aid training and kit for field coordinator	Assist. FAOR-Programme (b, c, d) ESS Specialist (a, d) PMU Field Team and Implementing partners (b, c, d) M&E Specialist (all)	ESS Specialist to raise awareness on key topics PMU Field Team and Implementing partners to monitor water use, ensure diverse participation, and provide first aid. M&E Specialist to compile data on participation	Y1 – Y5	

	Accidents Gender based violence	ESS 8 Indigenous Peoples ESS 5 Health, safety and security					
Deployment of Assisted natural regeneration (Act. 2.3.2)	Same risks as for agroforestry systems	Same	a.Same mitigation measures as for agroforestry systems	See above	See above	Y3 – Y8	
COMPONENT 3. STRENGTHENING AGROFORESTRY FINANCING STRUCTURES, MARKETING CAPACITIES AND VALUE CHAINS							
Development, implementation and monitoring of business plans (Act. 3.1.1)	Indigenous / women will not be able to participate due to high household burdens, limited literacy etc.	ESS 6 Gender ESS 8 Indigenous Peoples	a.Set targets for (>30%) women’s and Indigenous Peoples participation and strategies to achieve targets. Minimize reliance on literacy or provide supplementary lessons/capacity building for those with limited literacy. b. Assign mentors to support those in need of additional assistance.	Assist. FAOR-Programme (a) ESS Specialist (a) PMU Coordinator and Implementing partners (a, b) M&E Specialist (a)	ESS Specialist to conduct quarterly field monitoring PMU Coordinator and Implementing partners to ensure diversity of participants M&E Specialist to collect and compile data	Y1 – Y6	See budget in Section 7.2. Indicative budget
Capacity building of national financial institutions on rural finance for agriculture and green investment (Act. 3.2.1 / Act. 3.2.2)	Few women will be selected to participate in capacity building sessions	ESS 6 Gender	a.Set targets and use strategies to increase women’s participation (>30%)	Assist. FAOR-Programme (a) ESS Specialist (a) M&E Specialist (a)	ESS Specialist to encourage gender balance M&E Specialist to compile data	Y3 – Y5	
Development of a national financial inclusion	No risks anticipated	n/a	n/a	ESS Specialist	Manage FGRM in case of complaints	Y4 – Y5	

strategy and formalization of MFI's (Act. 3.2.3)								
Identification and development of suitable credit lines for forestry and agricultural sectors (Act. 3.3.1)	No risks anticipated	n/a	n/a	ESS Specialist	Manage FGRM in case of complaints	Y3 – Y5		
Development of inclusive financial products and services for agri-food value chain (Act. 3.3.2)	Financial products and services will not be fully inclusive for women and Indigenous Peoples	ESS 6 Gender ESS 8 Indigenous Peoples	a.Set targets and ensure participation of women (>30%) and Indigenous Peoples in the development of financial products and services.	Assist. FAOR-Programme (a) ESS Specialist (a) PMU Coordinator (a) M&E Specialist (a)	ESS Specialist to advise on the process and monitor PMU Coordinator to ensure women's and Indigenous Peoples' active participation in development of products and services M&E to compile data	Y3 – Y5		
Facilitation of interactions between beneficiaries and national financial institutions for suitable financial products and services / purchase agreements (Act. 3.3.3 / 3.4.1)	Indigenous people will not participate due to discriminatory practices favouring Bantu Women will not be able to participate due to gender bias and high household burdens, etc.	ESS 6 Gender ESS 8 Indigenous Peoples	a.Set targets and ensure participation of women (>30%) and Indigenous Peoples.	Assist. FAOR-Programme (a) ESS Specialist (a) PMU Coordinator (a) M&E Specialist (a)	ESS Specialist to advise on the process and monitor PMU Coordinator to ensure a fair proportion of agreements with women and Indigenous Peoples. M&E to compile data	Y2 – Y8		
Support of local market platform and	Women will not participate due to limited literacy	ESS 6 Gender	a.Minimize reliance on literacy for the use of the market platform	ESS Specialist (a, b)	ESS Specialist to advise on the process	Y3 – Y5		

<p>operationalization of purchase agreements with buyers (Act. 3.4.2)</p>	<p>Indigenous Peoples will find it difficult to market their products due to discrimination</p>	<p>ESS 8 Indigenous Peoples</p>	<p>b. Increase awareness on discrimination and prejudice through village sessions and radio broadcasts</p>	<p>Communications Specialist (a, b) PMU Coordinator and Implementing partners (a, b)</p>	<p>Communications specialist to prepare awareness raising materials PMU Coordinator and Implementing partners to manage the platform and support operationalization of agreements, ensuring additional support to women and Indigenous Peoples as needed.</p>		
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5.7 Implementation Calendar

Table 13: Implementation calendar

Measures	Proposed Activities	Calendar (by year)							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Institutional measures	Recruitment of a specialist in environmental and social safeguards, gender and intellectual property Identifying local ESMP focal points								
Technical measures	Elaboration of necessary ESMP and other safeguards plans (biodiversity, pest management, labour, health & safety, chance find procedures, etc.)								
	Implementation of the different safeguards management plans: ESMP, IPP, Biodiversity plan, LHSMP, Pesticide management plan, chance find procedures Classification of every sub-activities, identification and implementation of risks mitigations measures for each								
Monitoring and evaluation	Overall monitoring								
	Proximity monitoring Supervision								
	Final evaluation								
Training/capacity building	Training/strengthening of the capacities of beneficiaries in the management of risks related to environmental and social impact.								
	Training/capacity building of ESMP focal points								
Information and awareness	Dissemination of the results of the ESMP and/or consultations/outreach to local stakeholders.								

6. Institutional arrangements and estimated costs

6.1 Project implementation and coordination structures

The governance of the project will be ensured by two entities mandated for the supervision and technical control of the project. These are: (1) the Steering Committee (COFIL) and (2) the Technical Committee (COTECH). The Project Management Unit (PMU) is responsible for coordinating and implementing all project activities.

Project Steering Committee

The Project Steering Committee (COFIL) is the highest decision-making body throughout the implementation of the project. It provides oversight and guidance, ensuring that links and appropriate coordination are maintained with all relevant programs and projects, as well as with international conventions (UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD). It is jointly chaired by the government and FAO, and its members are the implementing entities, the GCF focal point, the MEF national project coordinator, the FAO senior project technical advisor, and other relevant ministries. Strategic development partners (WB, AFD, EU, UNDP, etc.), representatives of civil society and the private sector are independent COFIL observers. The COFIL meets at least twice a year to supervise project activities and take the necessary decisions for their implementation.

Project Technical Committee

The institution of the COTECH is not mentioned in the FAA (Commitments of the Activity Financing Agreement) but in the project document. The Technical Committee (COTECH) ensures the technical soundness of the project by providing technical advice to the PMU and coordinating project implementation with government agencies. The COTECH reports to the COFIL on the effective monitoring of procedures, as well as on the acquisition of products and deliverables essential to the Project. It specifically supports the PMU in overseeing project activities and serves as a communication channel for coordinating the implementation of activities, notably with government agencies. It is co-chaired by the government (MEF) and FAO and is made up of representatives of the government entities that support implementation. If necessary, representatives of development partners, NGOs, research institutions and civil society are invited to take part in meetings. COTECH decisions are based on the agreement of most members. As with the COFIL, the consent of FAO will be required for all committee decisions. The COTECH meets 4 times a year, once every quarter.

Project Management Unit

The Project Management Unit (PMU) is responsible for the day-to-day management of the project, the management of human resources, financial and procurement services, the coordination and implementation of project activities, the development of work plans and the preparation of reports. In particular, the PMU is responsible for implementing project activities in accordance with the AWPB (Annual Work Plan and Budget) submitted to and approved by the COFIL. The PMU will be responsible for the management of both PREFOREST and PROREP, to ensure consistency between activities and budgets. The PMU is made up of:

- The FAO-TA team (Technical Assistance) headed by the project Chief Technical Advisor
- The National Project Coordinator (NPC), accompanied by the Focal Points of the main Ministries concerned (PF-GOUV)

- Government technical staff supporting project implementation, reporting both to the government as part of their regular duties and to the FAO Principal Technical Advisor as part of project activities.

Safeguards Expertise

In terms of environmental and social safeguard competency and expertise, PREFOREST's managers and counterparts have been equipped with the technical knowledge and skills to effectively oversee the implementation of the ESMP and ensure compliance with all safeguards requirements. In addition, the project is supported by the Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialist, a full-time project staff in the PMU. This individual is responsible for the safeguard activities including training and capacity building, awareness raising, monitoring, reporting, and management of the project's grievance redress mechanism. For particular safeguard topics such as gender-based violence and biodiversity monitoring, partnerships are formed with external organizations with specialized expertise and experience (e.g. [AZUR](#), [Wildlife Conservation Society](#) - Congo).

6.2. Indicative budget

Table 14: Estimated cost of ESMP implementation

Components	Outputs	Description	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6	Y 7	T 8	Total cost (USD)	
Component 1	Output 1.2	Environmental, social, gender and Indigenous Peoples expert (national expert, full time position). 1/3 of the cost	8.630	11.737	12.208	12.574	12.951	13.340	13.740	14.152	99.332	
		Gender expert	2.742	2.742	2.742	2.285	2.285	2.285	2.285	2.285	19.651	
		International mission of the gender expert Verification of gender mainstreaming in project implementation Communication on safeguards aspects	5.000	5.000	5.000							15.000
		Consultations and monitoring of environmental, social, gender and indigenous aspects (meetings) Implementation of FPIC Training of project team in gender and indigenous issues.	4.000	4.000	4.000	4.000	4.000	4.000	4.000	4.000		28.000
		Consultations and monitoring of environmental, social, gender and indigenous aspects (travel required for technical support, monitoring and risk management). Training and refresher courses for project staff on environmental and social safeguards (Biodiversity Management Plan; Labour Management Plan; Pesticide Management; Chance find procedure; Indigenous Peoples Plan) to ensure greater ownership. Communication on all aspects of safeguards	4.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	60.000
Component 2	Output 2.2.	Environmental, social, gender and Indigenous Peoples expert (national expert, full time position). 1/3 of the cost	8.630	11.737	12.208	12.574	12.951	13.340	13.740	14.152	99.332	
		Consultation and monitoring of environmental, social, gender and indigenous aspects (meetings) Development of training modules (ESMP and related documents)	4.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	4.000	4.000		52.000

		Training of beneficiaries in compliance with environmental and social regulations (management and mitigation of risks and negative impacts of project actions: establishment of agroforestry plantations). Communication on safeguards aspects									
		Consultation and monitoring of environmental, social, gender and indigenous aspects (travel required for technical support, monitoring and risk management). Training of PMU and beneficiaries on the inclusion of gender/GBV indicators Communication on risk management and the FGRM	4.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	60.000
		Gender expert (Monitoring the implementation of gender and GBV indicators)	5.484	5.484	5.484	4.570	4.570	4.570	4.570	4.570	39.302
		International mission of gender expert			6.000		6.000		6.000		18.000
		Consultations and monitoring of environmental, social, gender and indigenous aspects (meetings)		4.000	4.000	4.000	4.000	4.000	4.000		24.000
		Consultation and monitoring of environmental, social, gender and indigenous issues (verification missions) Follow-up of environmental and social requirements developed in the Biodiversity Management Plan; Labour, Health and Safety Management Plan; Pesticide Management; Chance find procedure; Indigenous Peoples Plan, in relation to the establishment of plantations (site preparation; planting); establishment of FPICs; implementation of the FGRM	4.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	60.000
Component 3	Output 3.3	Environmental, social, gender and Indigenous Peoples expert (national expert, full time position). 1/3 of the cost Training beneficiaries to take account of environmental and social requirements in forestry and agroforestry plantation business plans.	8.630	11.737	12.208	12.574	12.951	13.340	13.740	14.152	99.332
		TOTAL									673.949

7. Monitoring arrangements

Environmental and social monitoring of activities is carried out as part of the project's overall monitoring system.

- **Supervision:** The monitoring activities for the ESMP are supervised at the highest level by the Project Steering Committee (*COPIL*) alongside the FAO representative and the Principal Technical Advisor. The members of the COPIL and the COTECH provide guidance to the PMU and to the Safeguards and Gender Specialist at each regular meeting.
- **Monitoring:** Local monitoring of the work is carried out by the Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialist, supported by the DGE's central and departmental services, and any local consultants hired by the project.
- **Reporting:** Semi-annual and annual reports are prepared for the GCF. These reports include a section on the implementation of the ESMP and related safeguards.
- **Evaluation:** Evaluations will be carried out by independent consultants (national and/or international), at the mid-term and at the end of the project. These evaluations will include a review of the ESMP's implementation.

Additional information on monitoring may be found in the ESMP Matrix (Table 5.4 Environment and Social Management Plan).

8. Stakeholder engagement

The stakeholders and their interest and relevance to the project have been identified. Stakeholders were defined mainly during the project formulation phase and in collaboration with government authorities and civil society organizations active in the five departments. This stakeholder list is regularly updated during project implementation. The list of stakeholders has also been examined and validated by the Steering Committee (SC – *Comité De Pilotage, COPIL*). In general, stakeholder involvement in PREFOREST aims to:

- Facilitate the smooth implementation of activities and increase the likelihood of sustainability of project results.
- Guarantee respect for human rights through proper implementation of the FPIC process and rapid resolution of complaints through the grievance mechanism.
- Ensure a gender-sensitive and socially inclusive approach, in which women and Indigenous Peoples are fully involved and enjoy equitable benefits.
- Over time, use stakeholder feedback to adapt project management and design to better meet the needs of beneficiaries.
- Ensure clear and transparent information sharing on project activities

FAO and its partners must be able to clearly explain the short- and medium-term objectives of the project and the details of project activities. It is also necessary to explain the potential benefits and risks of the project for the community. During Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC) meetings with all communities, including Indigenous hamlets, a session is included to describe all the project activities (using photos and illustrations) followed by a participatory discussion on potential costs, risks, and benefits and ensuring wide participation, including of women and Indigenous Peoples. As such, communities are aware of potential risks. They are also informed about the feedback and grievance redress mechanism (FGRM) in case any risks or problems arise during implementation. A project facilitator explains to the community the purpose of this mechanism and the channels through which to send a complaint, with details of how complaints are handled and resolved. Local authorities sit on the grievance management committee as observers (See Section 10).

Further discussions on the project activities and associated benefits, costs and risks have also been discussed during participatory mapping exercises in each target village as well as during a rapid assessment on the tenure rights of women and Indigenous Peoples (See Table 19).

To continue engagement with stakeholders on these topics, the PREFOREST [Stakeholder Engagement Plan](#) (SEP) has been put in place. It is guided by several key elements and approaches described below.

Close collaboration with government partners

FAO ensures that the government and local authorities understand the objectives of the project and their own roles and responsibilities within it. In general, government authorities facilitate and authorize project implementation.

FPIC process for collaboration with local communities and Indigenous Peoples

In the case of local communities and Indigenous Peoples, the project will conduct an FPIC process to ensure that these groups have fully understood and consented to project activities impacting them or their territories/lands prior to implementation. All community sub-groups, including women and

youth, are consulted (if necessary, through separate focus groups). The project requires written consent signed by the village chief, as village representative.

Communication methodologies, media and channels adapted to different stakeholders

Communication experts support the project by developing relevant documents in formats appropriate for different stakeholder groups. These include leaflets, newsletters, radio programs, etc.

Table 15. Consultation Activities on the ESMP

Consultation (Place, time)	Stakeholder group(s)	Topic(s) covered	Findings/ Feedback received	Project Response
FPIC consultations from April 02 to 06, 2024 in the Mpouya district	Local community	Presentation on the project benefits, risks, impacts and eligibility criteria	Acceptance of the project. Survey on land security through disputes already observed in the region.	The project does not take land from the community. The objective in securing land is to support traditional landowners in obtaining land titles.
FPIC consultations in NGO district October 15 to 19, 2023	Local community and Indigenous Peoples	Presentation on the project benefits, risks, impacts and eligibility criteria	Acceptance of the project by all communities. Request for the management of agricultural tools for indigenous populations.	Support for indigenous populations is fully considered. Farm tools are provided on loan.
FPIC consultations in Ignié district November 06 to 11, 2023	Local community	Presentation on the project benefits, risks, impacts and eligibility criteria	Involvement of women and indigenous populations	Women and indigenous people are encouraged, and measures are taken to ensure their participation in the project
FPIC consultations in Loudima district October 22 to 31, 2024	Local community and Indigenous Peoples	Presentation on the project benefits, risks, impacts and eligibility criteria	Acceptance of the project and request for awareness-raising among young people in all villages concerned	Awareness-raising takes into account all sections of the population
FPIC consultations in Madingou district May 02 to 08, 2024	Local community	Presentation on the project benefits, risks, impacts and eligibility criteria	Project acceptance. The land in dispute is currently being resolved by the Madingou court. Some villages, such as Moussenengue, have proposed that the project introduce assisted natural regeneration in degraded forests that have already been secured.	The procedure will begin with the involvement of local authorities and the Ministry of Land Affairs, who will confirm the secure boundaries of these private forests.
FPIC consultation in Hinda district June 11 to 17, 2024	Local community	Presentation on the project benefits, risks, impacts and eligibility criteria	The project was accepted. The public wants to be involved in all activities.	The local population and authorities will be informed and involved in all activities. Local beneficiary selection and plantation monitoring committees will be informed and consulted on all activities.

Participatory mapping in the Goma Tsé Tsé district from March 20 to 29, 2024	Local community	Presentation on the project benefits, risks, impacts and eligibility. Community representation of the village on the field map. Community validation of village boundaries	The community agrees with the project and would like to see the boundaries respected, considering the usual workspaces.	The project will not work on spaces where the community is accustomed to working. The communities have shown us other accessible areas where agroforestry could be implemented.
Participatory mapping in the Kinkala district from February 14 to 22, 2024	Local community	Presentation on the project benefits, risks, impacts and eligibility. Community representation of the village on the field map. Community validation of village boundaries	Communities accept the project and make land available to work with the project.	The project takes note and asks the landowning families to get together to produce the minutes of acceptance.
Participatory mapping in the Louvakou district from July 18 to 24, 2022	Local community	Presentation on the project benefits, risks, impacts and eligibility. Community representation of the village on the field map. Community validation of village boundaries	Communities accept the project and make land available to work with the project.	The project takes note and asks the landowning families to get together to produce the minutes of acceptance.
Participatory mapping in the Mpouya district from December 13 to 20, 2023	Local community	Presentation on the project benefits, risks, impacts and eligibility. Community representation of the village on the field map. Community validation of village boundaries	Communities accept the project and make land available to work with the project.	The project takes note and asks the landowning families to get together to produce the minutes of acceptance.
Rapid assessment on tenure rights of women and Indigenous Peoples in Ngo and Ignié districts, August to September 2024	Women and Indigenous Peoples	Discussion on tenure rights and constraints	It is unusual for women to have secure tenure rights in their own name and resistance to changing male-dominant norms. For Indigenous Peoples, they generally do not have tenure rights except in one village where they are the dominant group.	The project is planning to address tenure issues in the project and find socially acceptable ways for women and Indigenous Peoples to also benefit.

9. Grievance redress mechanism

As a United Nations agency, FAO is obliged to respect human rights - including the rights of local communities and Indigenous Peoples - in all its activities and interventions in a country. The establishment of a feedback and grievance redress mechanism (FGRM) is an essential element of compliance with human rights obligations and serves as an entry point for reporting and addressing any violations. Such a mechanism also provides a procedure for the submission of all types of complaints with a view to ensuring that FAO interventions avoid negative impacts on the intended beneficiaries, other project stakeholders or natural ecosystems. In addition, this mechanism enables the submission of useful suggestions and information that can help FAO improve its work and increase stakeholder satisfaction.

Grievances mechanism objectives and principles

The main objectives of the PREFOREST FGRM are as follows:

- To establish an accessible and responsive procedure for resolving PREFOREST-related complaints quickly and appropriately.
- To adhere to the FAO FESM, as well as the requirements of the GCF and CFI (the donors) in terms of safeguards.
- To gather ideas and suggestions from project stakeholders to improve the implementation and results of PREFOREST.

The principles to be respected during the procedure are confidentiality, impartiality, respect for human rights, including those of Indigenous Peoples, compliance with national standards, equality, transparency, honesty and mutual respect.

Who can lodge a complaint and how?

Anyone can file a complaint with the FGRM, including people who have been directly involved in project activities or those who have merely observed them. The complaint will be treated as confidential. The complainant may also file a grievance anonymously, but it is preferable to include personal information and contact details for reporting purposes.

To make it easier to understand the complaint, as much information as possible should be included. For example: what happened, who was involved, and when it happened. A form is available to facilitate the gathering of information. All allegations of misconduct and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) involving an FAO employee or partner should be sent to the OIG (Office of Inspector General) at FAO headquarters.

Main contact details

In the event of a complaint or suggestion concerning the PREFOREST project, the contact channels below can be used. To increase the possibility for those with limited or no literacy, complaints can be lodged by telephone, through a village chief, or during regular monitoring visits of the ESS Specialist. Unless the complaint is very urgent, it should be submitted first via a Level 1 contact. The complaint will be treated confidentially by FAO.

Canal de communication	Contacts
Level 1	
<u>Option 1</u> : Hotline for PREFOREST (Managed by Safeguards Specialist)	Tel. 06 741 81 76 05 696 11 14 Email : Seth.oumbabazola@fao.org

<p>Option 2 : Focal points for the grievance mechanism in the intervention zone.</p>	<p>Department of Plateaux</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NGUEWOUYA Brel Fiacre (Animateur GRET) Ngo district Tel. 06 646 30 93 2. OMBLOUD OMBE Françoise (Technicienne SNR) Ngo district Tel : 06 662 82 66 <p>Department of Pool</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MOUNIANGUI Rollet, Animateur (GRET), Ignié district Tel. 06 664 11 37 2. LOUTELAMIO BABAKANA Micelle Sandra (Technicienne PRONAR) Ignié district Tel : 06 674 4563 <p>Department of Bouenza</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NGUEMBO Paterne Tel: 06 538 54 27 <p>Department of Niari</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MOUAYA Toussaint Tel: 06 974 22 49 <p>Department of Kouilou</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MABONDZO Vivaldi Tel: 06 661 26 27 <p>(Additional focal points will be added as they are identified)</p>
<p>FAO Representation in Congo</p>	<p>FAO Representation Email: FAO-CG@fao.org Tel: +242 06 660 64 00 / +242 05 346 46 30 Address: 14, Rue Behagle, B.P. 972 – Brazzaville</p>
<p>Level 3</p>	
<p>Office of the Inspector General</p>	<p>Email: Investigations-hotline@fao.org Tel: +242 678 896 4032 (Congo) (+ 39) 06 570 52333 (Italie) by internet: https://secure.ethicspoint.eu/domain/media/en/gui/109199/phone.html https://secure.ethicspoint.eu/domain/media/en/gui/109199/report.html Available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week</p>

From complaint to resolution

The process when filing a complaint or suggestion through one of the channels listed above is as follows:

The complaint is first assessed according to its degree of seriousness and admissibility. If the complaint is very serious or urgent (e.g. violent criminal behavior, emergency), it will be submitted directly to FAO representation and/or administrative or judicial authorities for immediate action. If the complaint is not related to PREFOREST or other FAO activities, the complainant will be informed, and the file will be closed (in a database at the FAO office in Brazzaville). In some cases, FAO may be able to provide another, more relevant contact.

For all other complaints, the normal procedure is as follows:

- An acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint is sent to the complainant within five days of its receipt.
- FAO will analyse the complaint (in collaboration with the grievance mechanism focal point in the district concerned) and gather additional information if necessary.

- The proposed solution will be discussed with the complainant within 10 days of receipt. If the complainant accepts the solution, it is implemented, and the file is closed. If the complainant does not accept the solution, the complaint can be escalated to the next level.
- In certain more complicated cases, or when the proposed solution is not accepted, FAO may decide to convene an ad hoc committee to further investigate and evaluate the complaint. The project manager or regional coordinator will be responsible for coordinating this committee of 3 to 5 people, with the support of the safeguards and gender specialist. The selection of the members of this committee will depend on the geography of the incident and the need to represent women and Indigenous Peoples (especially if the complaint comes from a woman or an indigenous person). In this case, conflict resolution will take longer. Once the complaint is closed, the complainant is notified of the end of the procedure and the solutions undertaken.
- For complaints relating to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), the complaint is also reported directly to the OIG by the FAO Representative or the Safeguards and Gender Specialist.

Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) of the GCF

The PREFOREST FGRCM integrates the Green Climate Fund Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) as an additional channel to lodge grievances directly to the project's donor. This option would typically be a last resort or else used in the case where there could be a conflict of interest in addressing a grievance to FAO. Information on the IRM is included in the poster that has been displayed at the village level and circulated to other stakeholders (See poster below).

Traditional grievance resolution processes

The PREFOREST project has put in place several means to ensure the effective participation of indigenous populations in the management of grievances. First, regular monitoring visits are conducted to the villages by the ESS Specialist since villagers are generally more comfortable discussing issues face-to-face rather than in writing or by telephone. Second, village chiefs play a facilitating role in communicating or relaying grievances to the ESS Specialist or implementing partner, thus respecting their traditional role. Finally, communication on grievances is in the local language to ensure ease and accuracy in collection of information.

Figure 8. Poster to communicate on the PREFOREST grievance mechanism



MECANISME DE GESTION DES PLAINTES

POUR LES PLAINTES LIÉES AUX ACTIVITÉS DES PROJETS PREFOREST ET PROREP

1^{ère} étape

Soumettez votre plainte

Qui contacter pour porter plainte?

A Les comités locaux de gestion des plaintes pour les projets PREFOREST/PROREP



B Contacter le bureau de la FAO au Congo

- > Par courrier
14 Rue Béhagle-BP972-
Brazzaville
- > Par téléphone
06 741 81 76
05 696 11 14
- > Par Email
fao-cg@fao.org




C Mécanisme de recours indépendant du Fonds Vert pour le climat (Le bailleur)

 GREEN CLIMATE FUND

Si c'est PREFOREST contacter GCF:

IRM@GCFUND.ORG
Bureau: (+82) 10-4296-1337 (kst)
Mobile: (+82) 32-458-6186 (kst)
Formulaire en ligne: <https://irm.Greenclimate.e>
Fund/case-register/fil-comp | à rt




 INITIATIVE POUR LA FORÊT DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE

Si c'est PROREP contacter (CAFI):

- **Par la poste:** CAFI Secrétariat, Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement, Maison internationale de l'Environnement, 7^{ème} étage, 11-13 chemin des anémones, Châtelaine CH 1219, Suisse
- **Par courrier:** à secretariatcafi@mafi.ch

2^{ème} étape


Reconnaissance et examen de la plainte

 Nous vous répondrons dans un délai de 5 jours. Votre demande sera ensuite examinée en vue d'une action ultérieure.



3^{ème} étape

Résolution du problème

 Après avoir examiné votre plainte, nous vous contacterons dans un délai de 10 jours



4^{ème} étape

Clôture de la plainte/du cas

Vous recevrez une lettre de notification sur la résolution de la plainte.



Projets de "Réduction des émissions de gaz à effet de serre provenant des forêts" et de "Renforcement du potentiel en Bois énergie durable" en République du Congo

Source: FAO Congo

Dissemination on the FGRM

Dissemination and awareness raising on the FGRM has been a part of the project's Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC) process to ensure that stakeholders are informed about the FGRM from the start of the project. To enhance understanding among all beneficiary groups, including women, Indigenous Peoples, and other marginalized groups (often with higher rates of illiteracy), the FGRM was explained during in-person workshops through role play exercises and the key contact information was shared directly. The poster on the FGRM has been posted in all villages that have granted consent. This poster emphasizes graphic illustration to make the process of submission as clear as possible.

10. Information disclosure

Disclosure of project information enables stakeholders to participate effectively in project consultations. FAO strives to ensure that project information is relevant, understandable, accessible and considered culturally appropriate by stakeholders. Particular attention is paid to the specific needs of community groups affected by project implementation (e.g. literacy, gender, differences in language or accessibility of technical information or connectivity). The Environment and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has already been made public on the FAO disclosure portal since 2021. This ESMP, including all its annexes will be shared on the same portal in both French and English once completed. The French version of the ESMP documentation will also be kept and made available at the FAO Congo office, the liaison office in Dolisie, the Forest Economy Departmental Directorates in the five departments and in the sub-prefectures of the 13 districts.

To ensure the widest dissemination and disclosure of project information, including access to information by local communities (many members who are illiterate), in-person meetings, including those meetings which were part of the Free, Prior, Informed Consent process, and radio broadcasts will complement the more formal channels.

The above information disclosure provisions satisfy the Congolese regulations on information disclosure (See *Loi n°27- 2020 du 05 juin 2020 portant lutte contre la cybercriminalité, Loi n° 29-2019 portant protection des données à caractère personnel*).

ANNEXES

Annex 1: FAO environmental and social risk screening checklist

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISK SCREENING CHECKLIST		Project Risk Category				Moderate	
Question ID	Environmental and Social Safeguards	Applicability	Assessment (if Yes is selected)			Risk Category	Risk mitigation measures
		Yes, No, TBD (to be determined)	Likelihood	Impact	Impact description		
ESOP 2	Stakeholder Engagement						
ESOP 2.1	Is it likely that the project will cause or increase tensions between community members, for example between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries?	Yes	-	-			
ESOP 2.2	Will the project collect and process beneficiaries' personal data?	Yes	-	-			
ESS 1	Biodiversity conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources Could the project positively or negatively affect biodiversity or habitats (water or land), through activities or policy?	Yes	-	-	-	Moderate	
ESS 1.1	Could the project lead to land use change, fragmentation, conversion, or degradation of habitats (water and/or land)?	Yes	-	-	-	Moderate	
ESS 1.2	Could the project include activities in marine or terrestrial areas that are or may become legally protected?	No			-	Low	
ESS 1.3	Could the project include any activity on the ground related to agroforestry, forest plantation, harvesting, or management of forest resources (native or planted) for timber and non-timber forest products uses (e.g. seeds collection, spices, honey, mushrooms, bush meat)?	Yes	-	-	-	Moderate	

ESS 1.4	Could the project implement aquaculture activities?	No	-	-	-	Low	
ESS 1.5	Could the project provide or lead to the use of non-native species, varieties or breeds (terrestrial or aquatic)? Or Is there a risk that (agro) biodiversity might be lost because of monoculture?	Yes	Likely	Moderate	These will be used at a larger scale than demonstration plots. However, monitoring and conservation measures exist for local varieties, breeds, strains, or farmed types that may be threatened, and the project could support expanding these measures.	Moderate	
ESS 1.6	Could the project lead to the introduction of genetically modified organisms (GMOs)?	No			-	Low	
ESS 1.7	Could the project affect animal welfare e.g. include transport or slaughter of animals?	No			-	Low	
ESS 1.8	Could the project use genetic resources for research or (commercial) development - including from Indigenous Peoples or local communities, and/or associated traditional knowledge - for which prior informed consent/mutually agreed terms are required?	No			-	Low	
ESS 1.9	Could (processed) natural resource commodities be procured in the context of the project? E.g. primary/retail suppliers buying harvested wood, gravel or sand?	Yes	Likely	Low	Project-related procurement cannot reasonably be expected to lead to negative impacts on biodiversity.	Low	
ESS 2	Resource efficiency and pollution prevention and management Could the project positively or negatively affect soil and water resources, or water-related ecosystems, through activities or policy (e.g. through pollutants, pesticides, fertilizers, hazardous materials or waste)?	Yes	-	-	-	Low	
ESS 2.1	Could the project lead to significant consumption/extraction of raw materials, surface or ground water and/or energy (e.g. water extraction is above sustainable levels or recharge capacities)?	No	Likely	Low	-	Low	

ESS 2.2	Could the project implement irrigation activities (including rehabilitation of irrigation schemes) and/or restrict or alter riverine systems (e.g. dams, reservoirs, river basin development, water diversion)?	No				-	Low	
ESS 2.3	Could the project implement activities on, or potentially lead to, degraded, depleted or polluted soil?	No				-	Low	
ESS 2.4	Could the project directly or indirectly lead to the use and/or management of pesticides?* This also includes activities related to management or disposal of waste pesticides, obsolete pesticides or pesticide contaminated waste materials.	Yes				-	Moderate	
ESS 2.5	Could the project lead to the use and/or management of fertilizers?	Yes	Unlikely	Low	Use of fertilizers is managed in the most efficient and sustainable way.		Low	
ESS 2.6	Could the project activities lead to the one-time or continuing increase in the release of pollutants (e.g. nitrates from fertilizers, methane from livestock)?	No				-	Low	
ESS 2.7	Could the project involve the use of hazardous substances and materials AND/OR lead to significant generation and handling of wastes (e.g. plastic, construction and demolition-related waste, wastewater, pesticide-related waste, veterinary waste or animal residue)?	No				-	Low	
ESS 3	Climate change and disaster risk reduction Could the project positively or negatively affect people's vulnerability to climate change?	Yes	-	-			Low	
ESS 3.1	Could the project activities negatively affect communities not targeted by the project that rely on the same natural resources? E.g. a community that depends on the same river downstream.	No				-	Low	
ESS 3.2	Could beneficiaries develop dependencies on climate-adaptation resources or services promoted by the project that may be hard to	No				-	Low	

	maintain after project completion (due to factors such as cost, expertise, etc.)?						
ESS 4	Decent work Could the project positively or negatively affect working conditions, generate employment or provide work-related training or technical support?	Yes	-	-			Moderate
ESS 4.1	Could the project lead to work-related training, cash for work, or will the project employ people? Note that this question should be triggered by projects that involve construction activities.	Yes	Likely	Moderate	Project includes cash for work or will generate employment for a small number of people. It may need to take extra care to follow international commitments as regulatory controls are not strictly enforced in the project area, e.g. levels of informality are high and national regulations are not applied or cannot be monitored.		Moderate
ESS 4.2	Could the project use, or operate in, a value chain where there have been reports of forced labour? Or will it work in areas with increased risk of forced labour e.g. crisis, fragile and conflict-affected area or a host community for internal migration or refugees?	No				-	Low
ESS 4.3	Could the project operate in a context or agricultural value chains (including fisheries) where there have been recent documented reports of child labour?	No				-	Low
ESS 4.4	Could the project: (a) operate in a sector, area or value chain where workers are typically exposed to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) risks, and/or (b) implement activities, promote or use technologies or practices that pose OSH risks to workers such as farmers, fisherfolk, laboratory staff, animal health professionals, other workers or rural populations?	Yes	Likely	Low	Project will have minimal occupational safety and health risks that are easily manageable and will not promote or use any technologies or practices that pose risks for farmers, other rural workers, or rural populations in general.		Low
ESS 5	Community health, safety and security Could the project positively or negatively affect	Yes	-	-			Low

	health, safety and livelihoods of communities (including women, men, youth, as well as marginalized, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups)?						
ESS 5.1	Could the project expose communities to health risks such as: pollution and the contamination of land, resources or food; biological hazards, including transboundary animal diseases; incidents of soil-borne, water-borne, vector-borne diseases, zoonotic diseases, food-borne diseases; the availability of drinking water; injuries; and detrimental effects on mental health and well-being?	Yes	Unlikely	Low	Health risks to communities and their livestock due to the project's activities are expected to be negligible. E.g. project will not implement activities on the ground, or communities are used to managing such risks so they are effectively avoided or minimized. (Evidence may be required)	Low	
ESS 5.2	Could the project jeopardize the availability, accessibility and/or affordability of safe and nutritious foods that contribute to healthy and balanced diets? E.g. by sourcing foods from polluted sources.	No			-	Low	
ESS 5.3	Could the project expose communities to hazardous materials (including biohazardous, e.g. vaccines) or equipment (e.g. agricultural machinery accessible to the community), or will the project involve the design or construction of new infrastructure, changes (including renovation and rehabilitation) to existing infrastructure, transportation, or storage?	Yes	Likely	Low	Project will be implemented in well-confined areas, not develop infrastructure, or lead to disposal of hazardous materials.	Low	
ESS 5.4	Could the project lead to an influx of project workers?	No			-	Low	
ESS 5.5	Could the project have impacts on ecosystems and ecosystem services that may result in direct and indirect health and safety risks to communities? E.g. loss of natural buffer that increases the risk of flooding, removal of vegetation cover that increases the risk of landslides.	No			-	Low	
ESS 5.6	Will the project involve construction of buildings or infrastructure in areas prone to (natural) disasters such as earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding, forest fires)?	No			-	Low	

ESS 5.7	Could the project lead to the engagement of security personnel to protect facilities and property or to support project activities?	No			-	Low	
ESS 5.8	Could the project implement activities in areas with potential presence of mines and unexploded ordnances (UXOs)?	No	-	-	-	Low	
ESS 6	Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) Could the project positively or negatively affect people based on their gender, through activities or policy?	Yes	-	-		Low	
ESS 6.1	Could the project lead to increased gender-based discrimination or inequalities?	Yes	Likely	Low	Project areas do not experience high levels of gender inequalities or gender-based discrimination, and activities are not expected to increase these. However, the project may inadvertently perpetuate existing gender inequalities, if it does not properly identify and address gender-related concerns.	Low	
ESS 6.2	Could this project operate in a context with high risks of gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls, such as in conflict situations, camps or shelters, areas where women's mobility is restricted, or with high numbers of poor female-headed households or unaccompanied minors?	No	Unlikely	Low	Foreseen project sites do not suffer high levels of gender-based violence and gender inequalities. Implementing partners DO NOT have direct contact with women and children.	Low	
ESS 6.3	How is the project planning to address Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) risks? (Describe risk mitigation measures in the comments column)	Yes	-	-	-	-	
ESS 7	Land tenure, displacement, and resettlement Could the project, through activities or policy,	Yes	-	-		Moderate	

	positively or negatively affect areas where people live or their access to locations they need for their livelihood? Note that this includes tenure rights that are not formally recognized.						
ESS 7.1	Could the project implement activities related to building infrastructure (i.e. warehouses, buildings, ponds), creation of protected areas or restoration of degraded areas, or any other activity that could involve or result in temporary or permanent displacement of people? I.e. people may be living in the project sites and be asked to move.	No			-		Low
ESS 7.2	Has there to the best of your knowledge been prior displacement in anticipation of the project?	No	-	-	-		Low
ESS 7.3	Could any of the project activities lead, directly or indirectly, to restriction to land use and/or access to natural resources (agricultural or livestock or fish production, forest products, soil, land and water resources, grazing areas, etc.)? I.e. land users are no longer allowed to use the area for livelihood activities, or for access to natural resources. *In case this affects Indigenous Peoples, see also ESS 8.	Yes	Unlikely	Moderate	Project may lead to potential losses in terms of access to resources and/or livelihood opportunities and loss of ownership for a small number of persons.		Moderate
ESS 8	Indigenous Peoples Could the project positively or negatively affect, through activities or policy, Indigenous Peoples, ethnic groups or minorities, aboriginals, hill tribes, minority nationalities, scheduled tribes, first nations, tribal groups, pastoralists, hunter-gatherers, nomadic groups, or forest dwellers (described below as 'Indigenous Peoples, ethnic minorities and minorities')?	Yes	-	-			Moderate
ESS 8.1	Could the project be located on or near lands and territories owned or claimed by Indigenous Peoples, ethnic groups, or minorities?	Yes	-	-	-		Low

ESS 8.2	Could the project negatively affect Indigenous Peoples, ethnic groups, or minorities through its activities or policy advice – e.g. affect their human rights, land use and ownership, natural resources access, territories, and traditional livelihoods?	Yes	Unlikely	Moderate	Project activities could lead to negative impacts on Indigenous Peoples. However, risks are well understood by the project team and implementing partners.	Moderate	
ESS 8.3	Could the project use genetic resources or associated knowledge from Indigenous Peoples, ethnic groups or minorities for research or commercial purposes?	No	-	-	-	Low	
ESS 8.4	Could the project negatively affect Indigenous Peoples', ethnic groups', or minorities' access to resources upon which their livelihoods depend ("economic displacement")?	Yes	Unlikely	Low	Project will not implement activities on the ground. OR in the unlikely event the project would result in loss of access to resources and/or livelihood opportunities, this would have minimal negative effects on stakeholders and could be quickly and easily mitigated and offset within the project scope.	Low	
ESS 9	Cultural heritage Could the project positively or negatively affect tangible or intangible cultural heritage, through activities or policy?	No	-	-		Moderate	
ESS 9.1	Could the project through activities or policy advice negatively impact places, objects, values or knowledge and practices of cultural importance to communities?	No			-	Low	
ESS 9.2	Could the project lead to excavations, flooding, demolitions, movement of earth, landscape transformation, or alteration to social/ cultural uses or heritage?	Yes	-	-	-	Moderate	
ESS 9.3	Could the project directly or indirectly make use of tangible and/or intangible forms (e.g. collections, areas, practices, traditional knowledge) of cultural heritage for commercial or other purposes .without prior consent and extensive community engagement?	No	-	-	-	Low	

Annex 2: Biodiversity Management Plan



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

PREFOREST CONGO

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

GCP /PRC/021/GCF

Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP)



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This document is intended to be used solely for the purpose of FAO projects disclosure

November 2024

Introduction

1.1 PREFOREST Project Overview

This Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) is prepared in the framework of PREFOREST, a project in the Republic of the Congo Implemented under a collaboration between FAO and the Ministry of Economics and Forestry (MEF). The project aims to reduce pressure on natural forests surrounding urban centers which are under threat primarily from charcoal production driven by growing energy demand. PREFOREST is financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and runs from 2021 – 2029. The project is co-financed by the Central African Forestry Initiative (CAFI) whose support runs from 2021 – 2026. The project covers areas in five departments and 13 districts of the country (See Table 1), and it aims to engage a range of stakeholders with an emphasis on ensuring significant benefits to smallholders in local communities and to Indigenous Peoples. The three major components of PREFOREST are:

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

On the ground activities, which include establishment of agroforestry plantations and assisted natural regeneration are estimated to affect 11,800 ha and 5000 ha respectively, a total of approximately 16,800 hectares. While savannahs and degraded forests are not the richest ecosystems in the country from a biodiversity perspective, they are nonetheless important habitats for many species of flora and fauna, some of which have global significance. It is of paramount importance that the activities of the project avoid or minimize biodiversity impacts, while by contrast seeking to enhance biodiversity in the project zones.

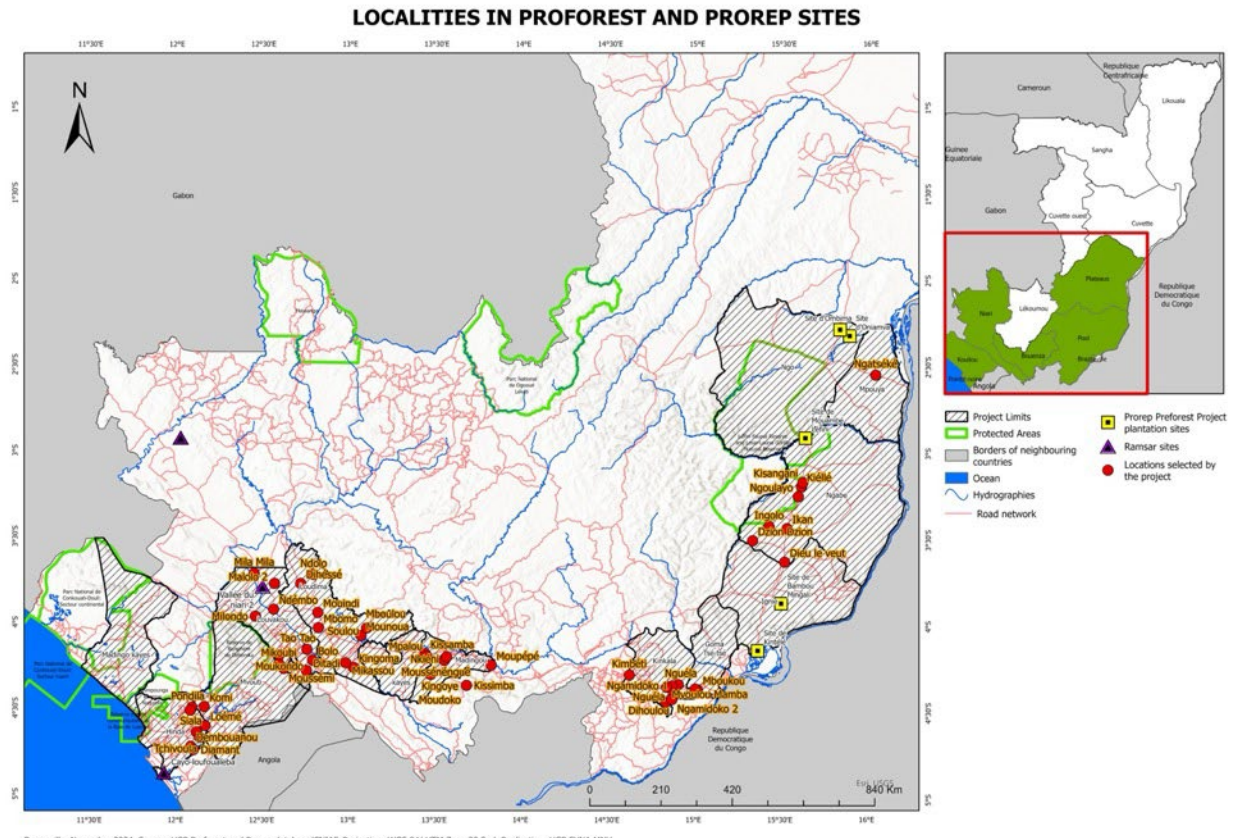
1.1.1 Study Area

The PREFOREST project activities will take place in 13 districts across 5 departments (See Table 1). The desk study portion of the biodiversity assessment reviews biodiversity assessment reports and scientific studies from all this region, while the biodiversity field assessment takes place in representative ecosystems in Madingou and Ignié districts. The map below shows the areas designated for project activities following participatory mapping activities with a range of local stakeholders. For further details on the project districts, please consult the PREFOREST project document.

Table 16. PREFOREST Project Area

Department	Districts
Buenza	Madingou, Loudima, Kayes
Kouilou	Hinda, Madingou-kayes, Mvouti
Niari	Louvakou
Plateaux	Ngo, Mpouya
Pool	Kinkala, Goma Tsé Tsé, Ngabé, Ignié

Figure 9. Map of the PREFOREST target districts and planting sites.



Brazzaville, November 2024, Source: UGP Preforest and Prorep database/CNIAF, Projection: WGS 84/ UTM Zone 33 Sud, Realization: UGP SYNA-MNV

Source: UGP PREFOREST and PROREP database/CNIAF

Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

1.2 Purpose and Scope of the BMP

The main aim of the BMP is to prevent adverse impacts of PREFOREST activities on the biodiversity in the project area and, wherever possible and relevant, to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services. At a minimum, the project should have a net positive impact on biodiversity. This plan includes a set of actions towards this aim, ensuring compliance with national laws as well as international environmental requirements and best practice. This BMP is designed to meet the safeguard requirements of the project donors: the Green Climate Fund and the Central African Forestry Initiative, as well as the requirements of FAO.

The baseline biodiversity data collection and ongoing monitoring activities take place in two of the 13 project target districts, while mitigation measures are implemented throughout all 13 districts.

The biodiversity assessment and mitigation measures consider both direct and indirect impacts of project activities. Both secondary literature and primary research were used in the development of the BMP. In addition, a geospatial analysis identified vegetation types, ecosystem services, restoration potential, water sources, and protected area boundaries to guide project decision-making and ensure protection of resources.

The project's activities primarily take place in savannah and degraded forest ecosystems. Some of the project activities present risks to biodiversity, triggering Environmental and Social Safeguards 2 (ESS2 – Biodiversity, Ecosystems, and Natural Habitats) and 3 (ESS3 – Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture). These activities are primarily associated with agroforestry and Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) efforts conducted in nurseries, lands surrounding local villages, and degraded forest areas. The identified risks include potential disturbances to flora and fauna from planting activities, alterations to the landscape, and the use of water and pesticides. Additionally, there are risks linked to increased human presence in these remote areas, such as human-wildlife conflicts, the introduction of invasive species, and a rise in bushmeat trade.

The focus of data collection was to acquire a better understanding of the biodiversity in these ecosystem types to inform planning and management of project activities.

Another critical aspect of the BMP is the engagement with the project team (including partners), the local communities and other stakeholders to heighten awareness on the importance of biodiversity conservation in the context of PREFOREST activities.

1.3 Methodology

The research underlying this BMP results from a desk study including geospatial analysis, a field survey, and expert interviews.

Desk Study

The desk study reviewed the potential conservation importance of the project area's ecosystems which include savannahs and degraded forests. A literature review and a geospatial analysis were undertaken as part of the analysis (See literature references in the annex). The assessment determined the presence of threatened species, protected areas, Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), including important bird areas (IBA) and endemic bird areas (EBA). Other factors assessed included land use land cover (LULC), soil and geology, and hydrology.

Field Survey

Several strategies were employed for the field survey to determine species diversity and abundance.

- **Line Transect Survey** – This is a common method for both flora and fauna, where researchers walk along a straight line (transect) and record the species observed within a certain distance. This technique was used for birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and plants higher than one meter. Researchers walked a 500 m transect with the orientation randomly selected. Data on species observations were observed by different experts in the team. For mammals, researchers used visual observation and recording of tracks/dung. For birds, researchers used binoculars and recorded all birds seen or heard along the transect. Researchers also recorded environmental variables at the end of the transect. The first survey, which was conducted in early morning, took place during the rainy season (October – November). Another survey is planned for the dry season (June - September 2025).
- **Participatory Monitoring (Integrated in Line Transects)** – The first steps towards participatory community monitoring of biodiversity were taken by involving local community members in the field research teams. Community members assisted in identification of species by providing local names of plants, animals, and birds found (or heard) during the surveys.
- **Soil** – A simple soil type test was conducted, and a photo of a soil samples was taken during the field survey and soil type recorded.

Expert Interviews and Review

Several interviews were conducted with biodiversity experts in the Republic of the Congo to request existing field data and to discuss the methodology, potential risks, and management actions (See Questions in Annex). These discussions took place with experts at the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Sekoi Plantation, and Conkouati Douli Park. In addition, biodiversity experts / conservation biologists were requested to review the findings and mitigation measures proposed.

Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

The BMP has engaged a range of stakeholders in consultations and design of the biodiversity management activities. See details in Section 8.

It is important to note that the above processes are part of the development of the BMP, but they are also ongoing processes that will be repeated throughout the project lifetime. The transect walks will be repeated every two years and results will be shared and discussed with communities, experts, and other stakeholders for feedback and awareness raising.

1.3 Role of the BMP in the ESMP

This BMP is an annex of the ESMP. The risks and mitigation actions have been integrated into the environmental and social risk management framework in the ESMP.

1.4 Alignment with FAO and GCF Environmental and Social Safeguards

This BMP is designed to comply with GCF and FAO requirements with regards to safeguards protecting biodiversity. A summary of each institution's requirements is provided below.

1.4.1 Environmental/Biodiversity Safeguards of the Green Climate Fund

The GCF sets specific requirements for safeguarding biodiversity in moderate-risk projects such as PREFOREST (Category B), where potential impacts are less severe but still significant. For such projects, the GCF requires an Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA) to identify potential risks to biodiversity and ecosystem services, with a focus on areas that may be sensitive or significant for conservation. In addition, projects must apply the mitigation hierarchy—avoid, minimize, restore, and offset—to address biodiversity risks. Avoidance is prioritized, but if risks cannot be fully eliminated, measures must be taken to reduce and mitigate impacts. A detailed BMP must be developed to ensure that biodiversity risks are managed effectively. This includes monitoring and adaptive management strategies to respond to environmental changes during project implementation. Other requirements include compliance with national and international standards (such as the Convention on Biological Diversity), stakeholder engagement and involvement in planning and decision-making, as well as monitoring and reporting.

1.4.2 FAO's Framework for Environmental and Social Management

Under its Framework for Environmental and Social Management (FESM) FAO's biodiversity criteria for projects focus on protecting and conserving biodiversity, maintaining ecosystem services, and promoting sustainable management of natural resources. The framework aligns with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and emphasizes an ecosystem approach for managing terrestrial, freshwater, and marine resources. Key objectives include avoiding adverse impacts on biodiversity, promoting fair use of genetic resources, and recognizing the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in conservation. Projects must assess risks to biodiversity and ecosystems, and apply mitigation measures, including avoidance, minimization, and compensation when necessary.

2. Regulatory and Policy Framework

2.1 International Treaty Obligations

The Republic of the Congo has been a member of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) since 1996 by ratification. This accession commits the Congo to the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of biological resources, and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources. The country has also acceded to subsequent protocols including the Cartagena Protocol (2006), the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (2015), and the Nagoya – Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress (2018).

The country has developed and validated in 2006 a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) under the CBD, but it has not yet received government endorsement. As a result, actions in the plan have not yet been systematically implemented. A National Council for the Environment was created in 1992, but it has not been operational.

In addition, the Congo is a party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, 1983 (CITES) which calls for regulation in the trade of endangered species. The country has also acceded to the Ramsar Convention (1998) which aims to protect important wetlands. Ramsar identifies 14 sites in the country, including two in the departments where the project is located: 1) Cayo-Loufoualeba, a coastal wetland complex in Kouilou, and 2) and Loubetsi-Nyanga, in Niari Department, a mix of gallery forests, swamp forests, and river ecosystems, home to endangered species such as forest elephants, gorillas, and leopards.

Other relevant conventions, including regional ones to which the Congo is a party include the Convention on Climate Change, the World Heritage Convention, the Convention on Migratory Species, the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, the Convention to Combat Desertification, as well as the African Convention of Nature and Natural Resources.

2.2 National Legislation

The Republic of the Congo has developed a legal and policy framework to protect its rich biodiversity, primarily through laws, decrees, international agreements and national policies. These instruments aim to safeguard ecosystems, conserve species, regulate natural resource use, and ensure sustainable development. The Republic of the Congo's biodiversity protection framework is built on several key laws, such as the Forest Code (2000), Wildlife Law (2008), and Environmental Law (1991, 2020). These laws regulate sustainable resource use, protect endangered species, establish protected areas, and promote

the rights of indigenous communities. Below is a summary of key laws and policies related to biodiversity protection in the Republic of the Congo:

Law/Policy	Description	Key Provisions
Forest Code (Law No. 16-2000, 2000)	Regulates the sustainable management, protection, and exploitation of forest resources, which are critical for biodiversity. Establishes guidelines for forest concessions, conservation areas, and reforestation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of protected forest zones. • Regulation of logging activities to prevent deforestation. • Promotion of sustainable forestry practices.
Law No. 37-2008 on Wildlife and Protected Areas	Cornerstone of wildlife conservation governing the protection of wildlife species and the establishment and management of national parks, reserves, and other protected areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibition of hunting endangered species. • Regulation of hunting seasons and the use of wildlife products. • Designation of protected areas such as national parks and wildlife reserves. • Imposition of penalties for poaching and illegal wildlife trade.
Law No. 003/91 on Environmental Protection (1991)	Provides the foundation for environmental protection, including biodiversity conservation. Emphasizes sustainable development, environmental impact assessments (EIA), and pollution control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement for EIAs for development projects that may affect biodiversity. • Control of pollution and harmful activities that could damage ecosystems. • Conservation of natural resources, including biodiversity.
Decree No. 2009-415 (2009) Establishing the National Nature Conservation Service	Establishes the National Nature Conservation Service (Service National des Parcs Nationaux - SNP), the government body responsible for managing national parks and protected areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandates the SNP to oversee protected areas, enforce conservation laws, and manage conservation projects. • Coordinates efforts to monitor wildlife and prevent poaching.

Law No. 5-2011 on the Protection of Indigenous Peoples' Rights	Recognizes the rights of indigenous communities, including their role in biodiversity conservation through traditional knowledge and sustainable practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of indigenous people's rights to access and use natural resources. • Inclusion of indigenous knowledge in conservation planning.
National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP, 2015)	Outlines key priorities for conserving biodiversity in alignment with the CBD, promoting sustainable resource use, and integrating biodiversity into national planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening protected area management. • Reducing threats to biodiversity, such as deforestation and poaching. • Enhancing community participation in biodiversity conservation.
Law No. 43-2010 on Sustainable Development	Promotes sustainable development through the integration of environmental protection, economic growth, and social equity. Incorporates biodiversity conservation as a critical component of sustainable development strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandates the inclusion of biodiversity conservation in all development projects. • Encourages the use of green technologies and conservation-friendly practices.
Law No. 48-2020 on the Environment	Strengthens biodiversity protection measures, building on earlier legislation. Provides clearer guidelines for protecting ecosystems, regulating resource use, and imposing penalties for environmental crimes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of mechanisms for monitoring biodiversity. • Increased penalties for illegal activities that harm biodiversity, such as poaching and illegal logging. • Promotion of climate resilience and ecosystem restoration projects.

3. Baseline Biodiversity Assessment

The biodiversity assessment focused on the geographical area of the PREFOREST project (i.e. southern region of the Republic of the Congo) and on the savannah and degraded forest ecosystems where project activities are planned. Literature review provided general contextual background, while the biodiversity line transect surveys and stakeholder engagement provided more specific information on ecosystems, species, and potential risks.

3.1 Republic of Congo Biodiversity Profile

3.1.1 Overview

The Republic of the Congo spans 342,000 km², bordered by Gabon, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, with a short coastline and straddling the Equator. The population is concentrated in three southern cities—Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, and Loubomo. The landscape ranges from 300–800 meters in elevation, with a warm, humid climate and varied rainfall. The biodiversity of Congo, while rich, is poorly understood and under threat due to deforestation, agricultural expansion, and overhunting. Major forest areas include the Mayombe, Chaillu, and North-Congo forests, accounting for 65% of the land. Yet, logging and land clearing, particularly in southern forests, have degraded many areas. (Nzala et al., 2019)

Congo's ecosystems support diverse flora and fauna, including endangered species like forest elephants, leopard, and western lowland gorillas.

Forest resources are crucial to the livelihoods of many Congolese, providing food, medicine, and fuel, while the forestry sector remains a key part of the economy. Despite a timber industry with over 150 tree species identified, national production relies heavily on only seven species. Agricultural land remains underdeveloped, with cassava as the dominant crop.

Knowledge gaps persist regarding the full scope of Congo's biodiversity, with ongoing needs for research in areas such as non-timber products and low-impact exploitation methods.

Approximately 27% of the national territory of the country is protected through the protected areas system. This brings the country close to reaching Target 3 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework under which at least 30% of the terrestrial and inland waters are conserved and managed.

The national bird list numbers 640 species (2001) including 237 proven to breed and 496 likely to (King, T., 2013).

3.1.2 Climate

The climate in the Congo Basin is characterized by annual rainfall ranging from 1,600 to 2,100 mm and average temperatures between 23°C and 25°C, with monthly averages consistently above 18°C throughout the year. Rainfall exceeds 1,500 mm annually, surpassing potential evaporation, and the region experiences a four-month dry season typical of monsoon climates. Rainfall is more abundant from October to May while June, July and August characterize the dry season.

Sunshine is limited, with less than 1,700 hours of insolation per year, while humidity remains high, averaging around 80%, with minimal monthly variation but significant daily fluctuations. The major dry season typically runs from June to September, while a shorter, less pronounced dry season occurs in January and February.

Climate models project a temperature increase of +1.5°C to +6°C by 2100, depending on future greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation trends. However, regional rainfall projections remain uncertain, with significant discrepancies among studies regarding the direction and magnitude of changes. There is concern that the Congo Basin's forests may become less tolerant to rising temperatures, especially if they are already near their thermal limit. In the event of a significant decrease in rainfall, some scientists hypothesize that these rainforests could shift to savanna ecosystems. Under future climate and land-cover change scenarios, a 27% loss of tree cover is projected in countries such as Cameroon, Gabon, and the Republic of the Congo, with additional forest fragmentation expected in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and northern Republic of Congo, even under moderate climate scenarios.

3.1.3 Geology

The Batéké Plateau in Congo consists mainly of undulating grasslands at elevations of 300 to 800 meters, with peaks in the northern region near Brazzaville. The geological structure of the plateau is divided into two main layers: polymorphic sandstones (Ba1) at depths of 50 to 300 meters and sandy silts or ocher sands in the upper layers. The sandstones are aeolian in origin, characterized by fine grains, and have quartzitic levels at the top. The overlying sandy loams, 40 to 90 meters thick, exhibit signs of aquatic processes and likely represent a lacustrine phase.

The soils in the Ngo District, where this geological structure is found, are highly desaturated ferralitic soils, formed from sandy-clay materials. They are acidic, poor in nutrients, and composed of 60% to 75% sand, two-thirds of which is fine. Organic matter is scarce, and the soil profile consists of a 5 to 10 cm thick litter layer, followed by loose sand with termitic aggregates (20-30 cm), a humus penetration layer (40-60 cm), and finally, unstructured yellow-ochre material at the bottom.

3.1.4 Savanna Ecosystems

Savanna ecosystems in the Congo feature diverse types of grassland, such as the open *Loudetia simplex* prairies of the Téké Plateau, wooded grasslands with 10-30% tree cover dominated by *Hymenocardia acida* from Brazzaville to Odzala, and more open areas on the coastal plain where *Annona senegalensis* is the main small tree. Seasonally wet dambos and bogs (known locally as *izobé*) are prevalent around Oyo-Owando, north of the Téké Plateau. The shrub layer of these savannas is dominated by species such as *Hymenocardia acida*, *Annona arenaria*, *Ochna gillettii*, *Syzygium guineense*, *Bridelia ferruginea*, and *Vitex* species, while the herbaceous layer includes *Loudetia* species, *Panicum* species, *Landolphia* species, *Trachypogon thollonii*, *Ctenium newtonii*, and *Hyparrhenia* species.

Savannas in the Congo are home to several mammal species, such as the flank-striped jackal (*Canis adustus*), Grimm's duiker (*Sylvicapra grimmia*), aardvark (*Orycteropus afer*), and vervet monkey (*Cercopithecus aethiops pygerythrus*). Other species, like the reedbuck (*Redunca arundinum*) and the lion (*Panthera leo*), have disappeared from the area, while the serval (*Felis serval*) is only occasionally seen.

Birds, including species like *Lanius souzae*, *Cisticola rufilata*, *Francolinus finschi*, *Myrmeocichla tholloni*, and *Ploceus nigriementum*, are also present in the southern savannas and on the Téké Plateau. In some areas *Cubitermes* termite mounds are found.

3.1.5 Degraded Forest Ecosystems

In southern Congo, degraded forest ecosystems are characterized by fragmented forest islands, often interrupted by fire-induced grasslands and subjected to frequent bushfires. These fires hinder the forests' natural progression toward mature stages and reduce their expansion. The forest areas outside of continuous gallery forests along rivers exhibit significant degradation. Dominant tree species include *Diospyros crassiflora* and *Milletia laurentii*, though the floral diversity is notably higher in less disturbed areas, such as the control zone of the Léfini Wildlife Reserve, compared to more impacted regions. In these degraded ecosystems, forests are limited to galleries near rivers, including swamp forests with *Raphia* palms, and patches of dry forest. Key wildlife species in these areas include *Syncercus cafferanus*, *Tragelaphus speki*, various duikers, and primates like *Cercopithecus neglectus*.

3.1.6 Threats to biodiversity

Biodiversity in the Congo faces a variety of significant threats, primarily driven by human activities such as deforestation, poaching, and illegal wildlife trade. The expansion of logging roads has made wildlife more accessible to poachers, leading to a decline in already endangered species like the western lowland gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*), forest elephant (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*), marshbuck (*Tragelaphus spekii*), and bongo (*Tragelaphus euryceros*). Additionally, species such as waterbucks and wild dogs (lycaons) have already disappeared from the region.

Bushmeat hunting, driven by both rural and urban demand, further exacerbates the threat to wildlife. Commonly hunted species include the blue duiker (*Cephalophus monticola*), African brush-tailed porcupine (*Atherurus africanus*), red river hog (*Potamochoerus porcus*), and various primates such as *Cercopithecus* species. The consumption of bushmeat includes threatened species listed on the IUCN Red List, with artiodactyls, rodents, and primates being among the most commonly consumed animals (Ngakabi, 2023).

Additional threats come from unsustainable agricultural practices like slash-and-burn farming, destructive fishing methods, and pollution from oil exploitation. These activities degrade ecosystems, disrupt the balance of aquatic and terrestrial habitats, and contribute to the fragmentation of wildlife populations. Invasive alien species and overexploitation of natural resources further compound the risks to the Congo's biodiversity.

The degradation of forests, wetlands, and coastal ecosystems is progressing at an alarming rate, endangering not only wildlife but also aquatic species and the broader ecological balance. Without effective conservation measures and proper enforcement of wildlife protection laws, many species, including iconic ones like the chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) and leopard (*Panthera pardus*), remain at risk.

Natural ecosystems are also under threat from invasive species whose proliferation is the consequence of the degradation, both on land and in water. The invasive species on land are *Chromolaena odorata*, *Clerodendron inerme*, and *Tithonia diversifolia*, among others.

Those of aquatic environments are: *Eichhornia crassipes*, *Salvinia molesta*, *Pistia stratiotes*, and *Azolla africana*. These species smother native plants and animals in marshy areas, rivers, lakes, backwaters, streams and lagoons. Sometimes they form dense mats by blocking traffic on waterways and hinder access to water for riverside communities. The thick layer of these species reduces the penetration of light into the water and significantly disrupts the gas exchange between air and water, which leads to the degradation of water quality and a reduction in biological diversity. Sometimes, invasive species enter new ecosystems by attaching themselves to boats. (6ième Rapport Nationale)

3.2 Geospatial analysis

With the help of remote sensing experts, a geospatial analysis has been conducted to better understand the landscapes of the project districts. A series of maps have been produced including:

- Geological map
- Soil map
- Protected areas (including Ramsar sites, Important Bird Areas)
- Land cover
- Land use

Please find a summary of the conditions in each district where the project activities take place followed by the referenced maps:

Bouenza Department

- **Madingou** – The geology of Madingou is characterized by Schist limestone series and Upper Tillite Bas Congo. Ferralitic soils are concentrated in the middle of the district, surrounded by shale grit and shale limestone soils. The district's dominant vegetation type is savanna woodland, however, there are also areas of forest-savanna mosaic particularly in the west of the district. Land use is characterized by a mosaic of large- and small-scale cropland interspersed with tree cover. The Niari river traverses the north of the district.
- **Loudima** – This district's geology is characterized by Schist limestone series while soils are primarily shale-grit and shale-limestone with areas of ferralitic soils in the northwest and southeast of the district. Grasslands are the dominant vegetation type with some smaller areas of tree cover south of the Niari river which forms the northwest border of the district before passing north of Loudima district town. The district has significant area areas of large-scale cropland with tree cover concentrated in the south of the district and long the Niari river. Areas of small cropland are found primarily surrounding Loudima town.
- **Kayes** – the geology of Kayes district is entirely of Schist limestone according to remote sensing analysis, while soils are ferralitic in the south and shale-grit and shale-limestone in the north of the district. Like the other districts in Bouenza Department, expansive grasslands are found here with some patches of forest cover in the north. Remote sensing shows a mosaic of large- and small-scale agriculture with a mosaic of tree cover. The Niari river forms the western border of this district.

Kouilou Department

- **Hinda** - Hinda, located on the coast, is primarily characterized by the Chaillu metamorphic complexes, except for its northeastern tip, which consists of alluvial deposits. The soils in the district include yellow sandy and sandy-clay soils, along with hydromorphic peat soils found at the center. The *Réserve Marine Naturelle Communautaire de la Baie de Loango* crosses the districts northwestern part. However, project activities are mainly focused in the eastern area, therefore with no anticipated impact on the reserve. The district's land cover is predominantly cropland, with patches of tree cover inside the reserve and in the northeastern region. Remote sensing data highlights agricultural activity, including both large- and small-scale farming. The district also has plantation forests, featuring crops such as rubber and cashews.
- **Madingou-kayes** – Madingou-kayes district is characterized by geology dominated by the Série of Louila and Bouenza, comprising sedimentary formations such as sandstone, shale, and potentially limestone. Adjacent areas include the Schist-limestone series. The south of the district is characterized by igneous formations referred to as Chaillu tetamorphic complexesu. In terms of soils, the district predominantly features yellow soils on sandy and sandy clay material, as well as peat hydroporphic soils and soils on metamorphic rocks. The district primarily features large forested areas in the center and north of the district with the protected area *Park National de Conkouati-Douli* intersecting across

the eastern side. Grasslands and cropland are found in the south closer to the coast. These areas are used for large and small scale agriculture, while land in the interior is dedicated to rubber, oil palm and cacao, suggesting the development of agro-industrial plantations in selected zones.

- **Mvouti** - Mvouti district, based on the geological map, is dominated by Stanley Pool and Carnot sandstone series and Schist limestone series. The soils map indicates that the region's soils are primarily soils on metamorphic rocks. These soils are supported by underlying granite and gneiss formations. Land cover is characterized by vast forest areas, intersecting with the protected area '*Réserve de Biosphère Oïmonika*' found in the north of the district. The post-deforestation land-use map shows that Mvouti's land is used predominantly for small-scale cropland and pasture, reflecting local agricultural practices. Significant areas retain tree cover, while some sections are utilized for plantation forests, including cash crops like oil palm and rubber.

Niari Department

- **Louvakou** - Louvakou district, as shown on the geological map, is primarily underlain by the Schist-limestone series and Série of Louila and Bouenza, both of which are sedimentary formations. The Schist-limestone series likely includes shale, limestone, and other sedimentary rocks, while the Série of Louila and Bouenza comprises sandstone and related materials. The soils map indicates that the district is dominated by feralitic soils, typical of tropical weathering and characterized by nutrient depletion due to leaching. Additionally, the region contains soils on schist-grit and shale-limestone. Land cover is characterized primarily by grasslands with stretches of forest in the southwest of the district, closer to the river which forms the border with Mvouti district. The post-deforestation land-use map reveals that Louvakou is largely used for small-scale cropland and pasture, indicating localized agricultural practices. Areas of tree cover remain prevalent, with some sections converted to plantation forests and oil palm cultivation.

Plateaux Department

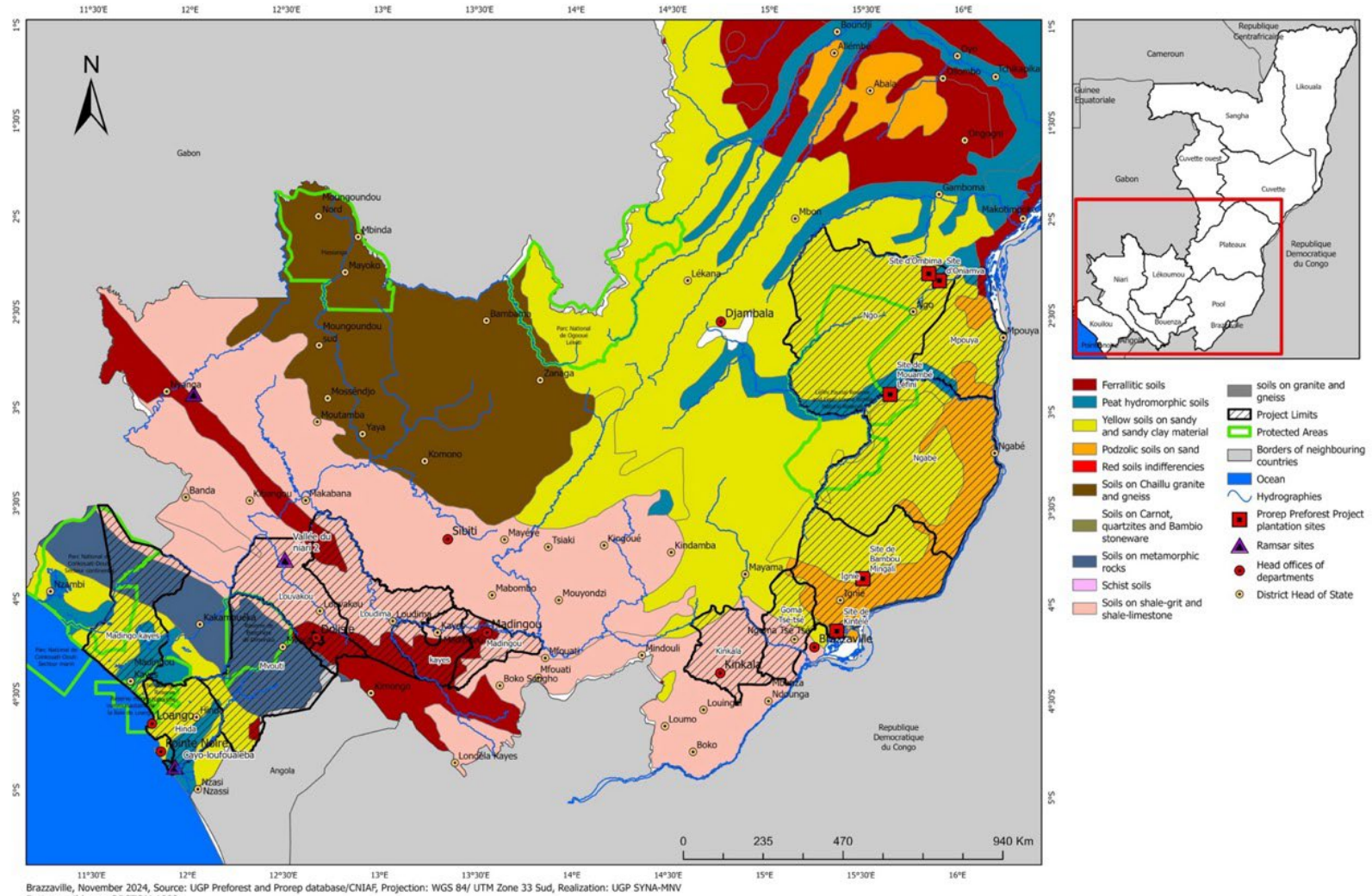
- **Ngo** - Ngo district, based on the geological map, is primarily associated with Stanley Pool and Carnot sandstone series. These geological layers consist of sandstone deposits, typically interspersed with other sedimentary layers like shale. These deposits are known for their age (dating back to the Cretaceous period) and are significant in regional paleogeography, representing ancient river and coastal environments. The soils map shows yellow soils on sandy and sandy clay material dominate with some areas of peat near river edges. Land cover is predominantly savannah grasslands with smaller patches of tree cover. The protected area *Lefini and Leslo-Louna Gorilla Natural Reserve* extends across a large portion of the south of the district. The post-deforestation land-use map highlights that the land in Ngo is predominantly utilized for small-scale cropland and pasture, reflecting subsistence agriculture. Significant areas retain tree cover, while some portions are allocated to plantation forests and cash crops like oil palm.
- **Mpouya** - Mpouya district, similar to Ngo district, is associated with Stanley Pool and Carnot sandstone series, with alluvium geology type in the north. The soils map indicates predominance of yellow soils on sandy and sandy clay material with some areas of podzolic soils on sand, which tend to be highly acidic and less fertile, in the south and north. The land cover map indicated dominance of grasslands, while significant tree cover is found in the south of the district and near the Congo river to the east. The post-deforestation land-use map shows that Mpouya district is primarily used for

small-scale cropland and pasture, indicating subsistence-level agricultural activity. Some areas retain tree cover, and there are pockets of land allocated for plantation forests and oil palm cultivation.

Pool Department

- **Kinkala** - Kinkala district, as depicted on the geological map, is underlain by Stanley Pool and Carnot sandstone series as well as Chaillu tetamorphic complexes and Upper Tillite of Bas-Congo geological types. The soils map indicates that the district's dominant soils are soils on shale-grit and shale-limestone with yellow soils on sandy and sandy clay material found in the north. Land cover is characterized by grasslands and tree cover interspersed. The post-deforestation land-use map shows that Kinkala district is mainly used for small-scale cropland and pasture, with subsistence agriculture being the dominant activity. Some areas retain limited tree cover, and smaller portions of the district are dedicated to plantation forests.
- **Goma Tsé Tsé** - Goma Tse Tse district, is of the Stanley Pool and Carnot sandstone series according to the geological map, while the soil map shows that the district is primarily covered by yellow soils on sandy and sandy clay material, soils on shale-grit and shale-limestone and podzolic soils on sand. The land cover map indicates the predominance of grasslands. The post-deforestation land-use map reveals that the district is predominantly utilized for small-scale cropland and pasture, indicative of subsistence agricultural practices. Some tree cover remains intact, while smaller areas are dedicated to plantation forests and oil palm cultivation. Settlements are dispersed across the region, with limited evidence of large-scale agricultural or industrial land use.
- **Ngabé** - Ngabé district, as shown on the geological map, is predominantly underlain by Stanley Pool and Carnot sandstone series. The soils map for the district reveals the presence of two main soil types: yellow soils on sandy and sandy clay materials in the west and podzolic soils on sand to the east. The district is characterized by grasslands and croplands across the district, with higher tree cover in the east near the Congo river. The post-deforestation land-use map indicates that Ngabé's landscape is predominantly utilized for small-scale cropland and pasture, reflecting a subsistence farming system. There are also plantation forests and oil palm cultivation. The district also has scattered settlements, with limited infrastructure development.
- **Ignié** - Ignié district, based on the geological map, is primarily underlain by the Stanley Pool and Carnot sandstone series. The soils map for the district indicates yellow soils on sandy and sandy clay material to the north and podzolic soils on sand to the south. Land cover in Ignié is primarily grassland and cropland, with some forest patches along the border with the Congo river. The post-deforestation land-use map shows that Ignié district is predominantly used for small-scale cropland and pasture. There are some areas where tree cover remains intact, and portions of the land are dedicated to plantation forests and oil palm cultivation. Settlements are scattered across the district, with no significant evidence of large-scale agricultural or industrial development.

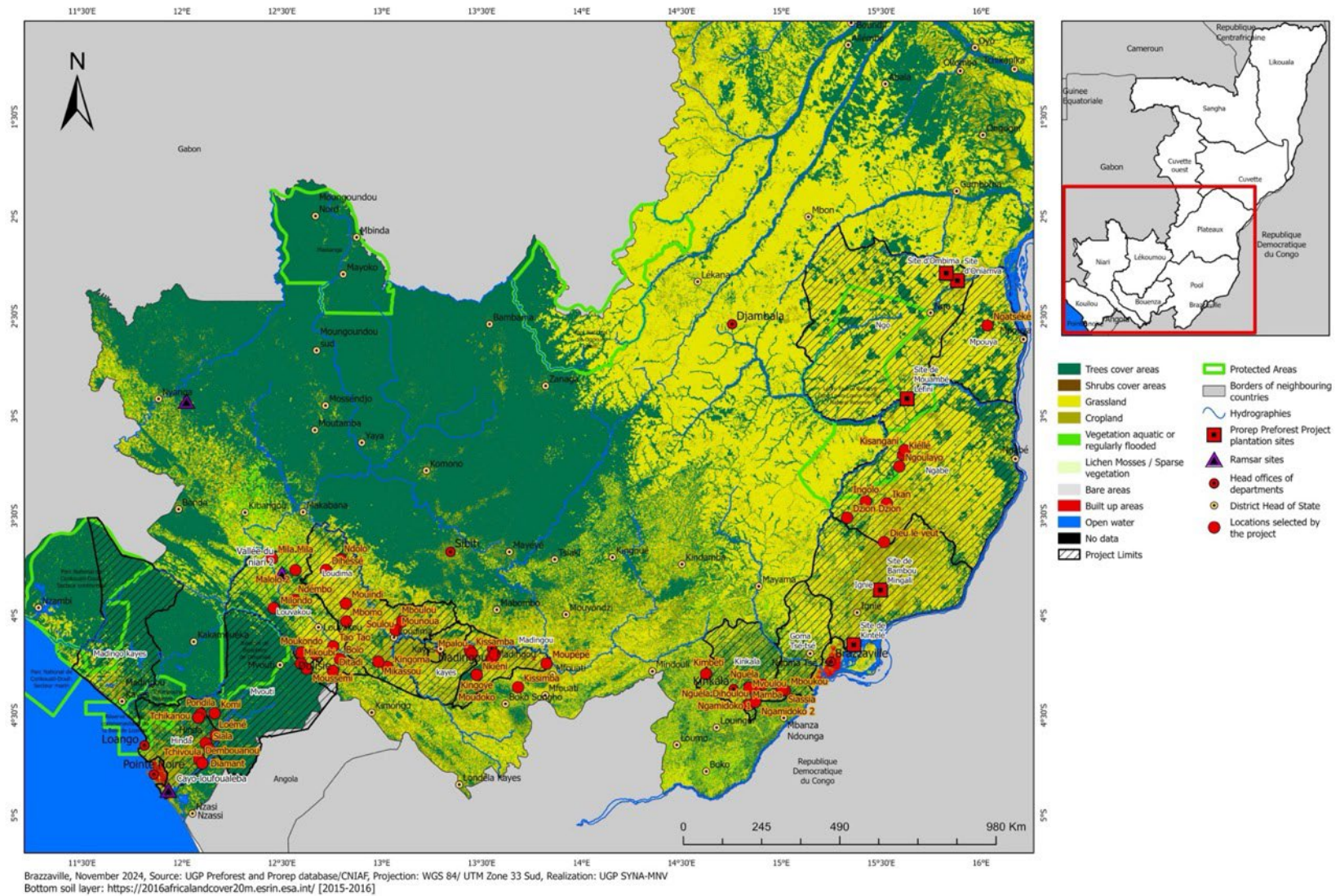
SOIL MAP OF PREFOREST AND PROREP SITES



Source: UGP PREFOREST and PROREP database/CNIAF

Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

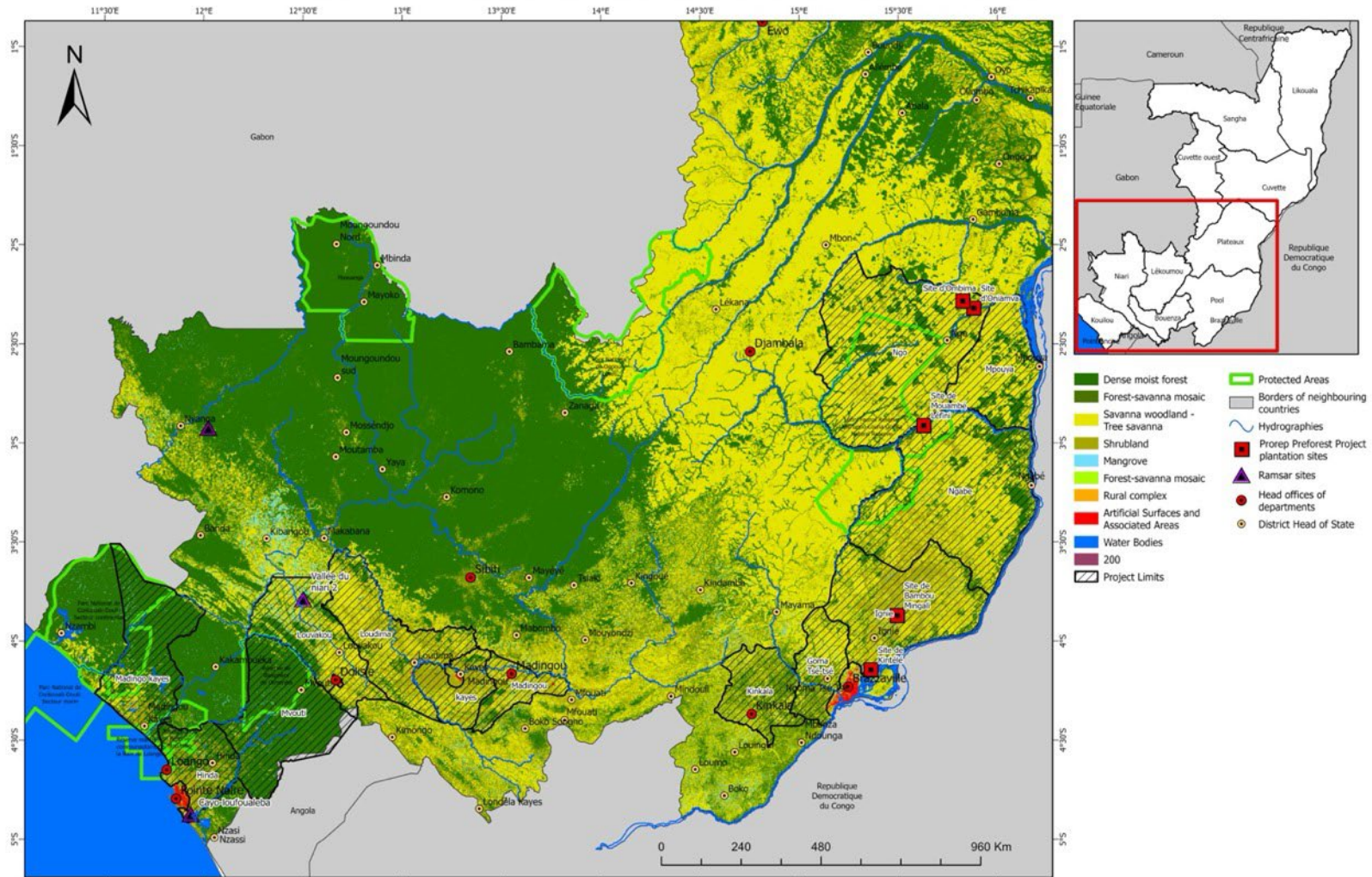
LAND-COVER MAP OF THE PREFOREST AND PROREP SITES



Source: UGP PREFOREST and PROREP database/CNIAF

Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

MAP OF VEGETATION TYPES IN PROFOREST AND PROREP SITES

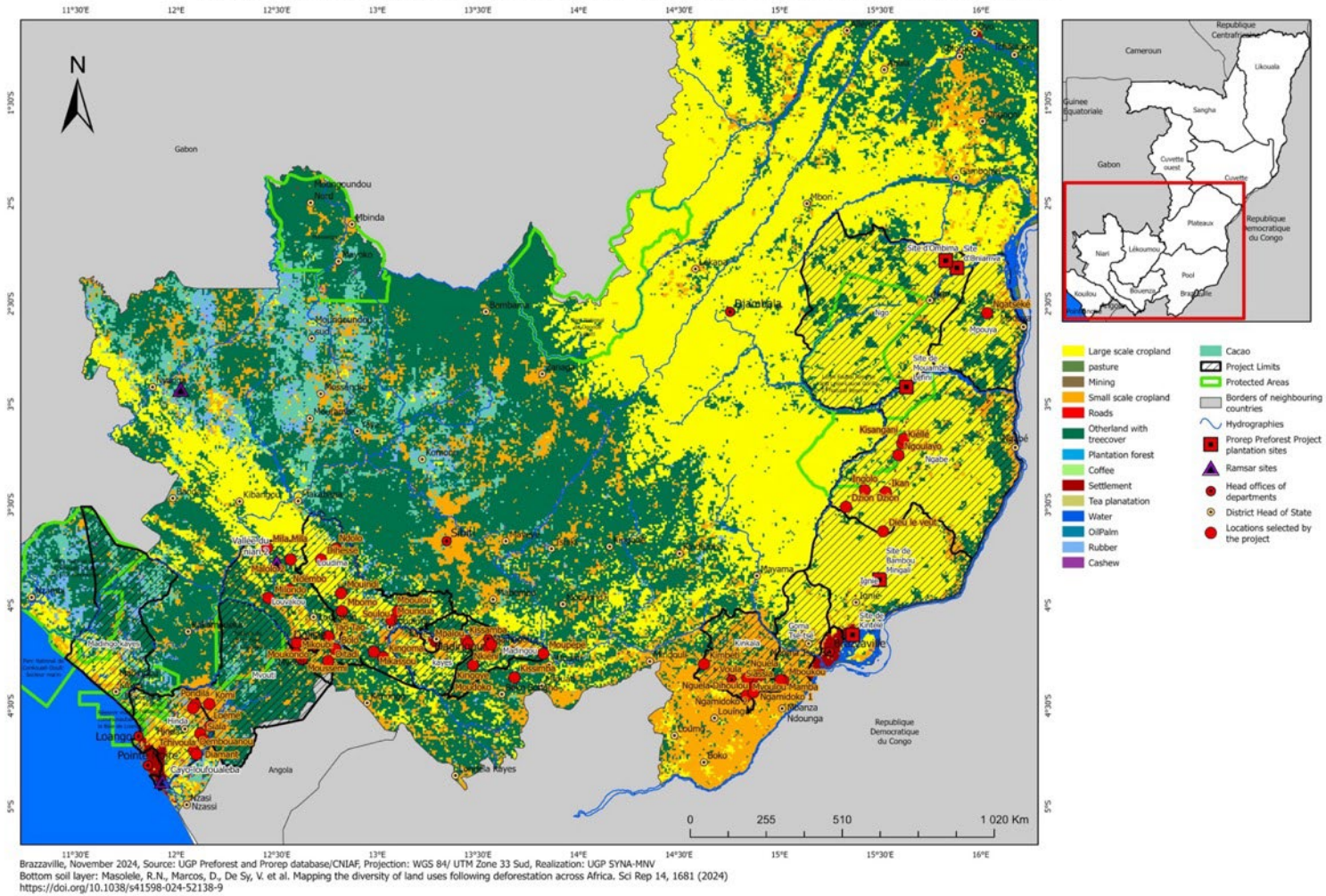


Brazzaville, November 2024, Source: UGP Preforest and Prorep database/CNIAF, Projection: WGS 84/ UTM Zone 33 Sud, Realization: UGP SYNA-MNV
 Bottom soil layer: Verhegghen, A., Mayaux, P., de Wasseige, C., and Defourmy, P.: Mapping Congo Basin vegetation types from 300 m and 1 km multi-sensor time series for carbon stocks and forest areas estimation, Biogeosciences, 9, 5061–5079, <https://bg.copernicus.org/articles/9/5061/2012/>

Source: UGP PREFOREST and PROREP database/CNIAF

Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

POST-DEFORESTATION LAND-USE OF THE PREFOREST AND PROREP SITES



Source: UGP PREFOREST and PROREP database/CNIAF

Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

3.3 Field Survey Results

The results of the field surveys, including biodiversity line transect walk and community consultations are summarized in this section. In addition, a separate Excel database has been created to log all species identified. New data from future surveys will be input to this database to support monitoring. The aim of the line transect walk was to establish a measure of species richness and abundance, while also recording some key ecosystem factors. The objective of involving community members in both the field survey as well as in the consultations after the survey, was to enrich and validate the data as well as to seek information on species of value to communities, potential threats, and conservation actions (See Community Meeting Guidelines in Annex D). These sessions also served to raise awareness of biodiversity conservation.

3.3.1 Mammals

DEPARTMENTS	MAMMALS IDENTIFIED IN THE PROJECT ZONE
Kouilou Niari Pool Bouenza Plateaux	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Congo white-cheeked otter - Spotted neck otter - African Palm Civet (Nandinie) - Elephant - Hyppopotame - African civet cat - Tiger Genet (Genette tigrine) - Servaline Genet (Genette servaline) - Striped jackal - Long-snouted mongoose - Marsh mongoose - Red mongoose - Giant Otter Shrew (Potamogale) - Aardvark (Oryctérope) - Bushpig - Forest buffalo - Marshbuck (Sitatunga) - Black-fronted duiker - Black-banded duiker - Yellow-backed duiker - Grimm's duiker - Tricuspid-scaled pangolin - Giant pangolin - Gambia Rat - Greater Cane Rat (Grand Aulacode) - African bush-tailed Porcupine (Athérure africain)

3.3.2 Amphibians and Reptiles

Additional research will be undertaken; however, the following reptiles and amphibians have already been observed in the project area:

Turtles

1. Nile Softshell Turtle (*Trionyx triunguis*).
2. Aubry's Softshell Turtle (*Cycloderma aubryi*).
3. Terrapin species (*Pelusios maran*)

Snakes

- Gabon Viper (*Bitis gabonica*).

Fish

- Catfish (*Siluridae* family)

3.3.3 Birds

A number of bird species have been confirmed in the project areas. These include Finch's Francolin, the Congo Anteater, the Black-chinned Weaver and the Brazza Swallow, which inhabit the savannahs of the Plateaux and Pool departments, and the White-bellied Bustard (see photo).

3.3.4 Trees and Plants

Depending on the soil type, the shrub layer of the savannahs is dominated in the Pool and Plateau regions by *Hymenocardia acida*, *Annona arenaria*, *Ochna gilletii*, *Syzygium guineense*, *Bridelia ferruginea*, *Vitex spp.* The herb layer is dominated by *Loudetia spp.*, *Panicum spp.*, *Landolphia spp.*, *Trachypogon thollonii*, *Ctenium newtonii*, *Hypparrhenia spp.*

3.3.5 Invasive Species

In the process of being identified.

3.3.6 Ecosystem Factors

Details of this information can be found in section 4.1 Physical and biological environment of the ESMP main document.



Figure 9. Savanna grassland with sparse trees in Ngo District.



Figure 10. Local man with his catch, 'Sillure', in Ngo District.



Figure 11. Orchid in savannah grasslands in Ngo district



Figure 12. A white-bellied bustard (*Eupodotis senegalensis*)

(All photos on this page by ©FAO / A. Bradley)

4. Potential Biodiversity Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Project biodiversity risk	Impacts	Mitigation measures	Responsible party	Estimated cost
Disturbance of wildlife through resource tenure, agroforestry, and ANR activities.	Direct	- Increase awareness on value of biodiversity (meetings and awareness raising meetings)	FAO Partners	\$800 per radio broadcast
		- Prohibit off-road driving when other options are available	FAO Partners	None
		- Include conserved grasslands/savanna and forest areas in participatory planning and tenure mapping.	FAO Partners	None
Clearing of trees and other valuable plant species for planting activities.	Direct	- Conserve existing trees in the planting areas.	FAO Partners	None
		- Prohibit fires to clear planting areas.	FAO Partners	Community meetings
Trade in bushmeat by project personnel	Indirect	- Prohibit hunting and bushmeat purchase by FAO and partner staff during missions and fieldwork.	FAO Partners	None
Improved access to markets and business planning contributes to increased sales of bushmeat	Indirect	- Raise awareness on importance of biodiversity conservation through radio programs and village workshops.	FAO Partners	Community meetings, radio programs

Introduction of invasives through increased traffic to remote sites and planting areas.	Indirect	- Build awareness of project personnel on invasive species and adverse impacts.	FAO Partners	None
Adverse impacts on water sources upon which wildlife depend and on animal habitat more generally due to the improper storage and use of pesticides.	Indirect/ Direct	- Monitor water bodies near plantations - Minimize use of pesticides. Apply integrated pest management (IPM) techniques. - Ensure proper storage of pesticides (i.e. locked storage rooms).	FAO Partners	Included in transect costs
Adverse impact on biodiversity corridors	Direct	- Design planting areas with biodiversity corridors in mind	FAO Partners	None
Risks of human-wildlife conflict due to changes in the landscape	Direct	- Raise awareness among local population through village sessions on human-wildlife conflict issues and wildlife injury and how to manage. - Provide additional inputs for recovery to those whose plantations are destroyed by wildlife.	FAO Partners	Included in existing budget

5. Implementation Plan

The key performance indicators (KPI) for biodiversity will be measured one time per year during every year of project implementation, beginning in 2024.

The KPI are defined as follows:

- I. **Species richness** – The diversity of species will be calculated based on sightings during the transects.
- II. **Species abundance patterns** – These patterns will be compared across transects during the same season and of the same ecosystem type and over time.
- III. **Environmental disturbance** – Signs of environmental disturbance will be tracked over time.
- IV. **Presence of invasive species** – The presence of absence of invasive species will be tracked.
- V. **Community perceptions** – Qualitative information will be collected in relation to community attitudes and behavior in relation to biodiversity.

Activity	2024	2025				2026	2027	2028	2029
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
Biodiversity Management Plan Development	X								
Biodiversity Transect Line		X	X			X	X	X	X
Community Engagement (Village Meetings)	X		X			X	X	X	X
Awareness raising on biodiversity		X				X	X	X	X
Annual reporting and review	X				X	X (Q4)	X (Q4)	X (Q4)	X (Q4)

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The main responsibility for implementing the BMP lies with FAO and the project team, with responsibilities divided among different members of the team. In addition, PREFOREST's partners will play a role in implementing mitigation measures. The results of the BMP will be presented during the project's regular Steering Committee (COFIL) meetings. Please find a Table defining responsibilities.

Responsible individual	Affiliation	Role in BMP
Minister	MEF	Ensure conformance of PREFOREST with Congolese legal and policy framework
Representative	FAO	Oversight of PREFOREST implementation, approval of field missions related to BMP, final decision-making on budget.
Chief Technical Advisor	FAO	Day-to-day management responsibility for PREFOREST and supervisory role for UGP, review of strategies and actions, guidance on problem solving.
National Safeguards Expert	FAO	Direct oversight and responsibility on the implementation and monitoring of the BMP including training and coaching for UGP and partner field staff, field monitoring, and reporting.
Agroforestry Experts	FAO	Implementation of mitigation measures, monitoring, and reporting.
Field staff	GRET	Implementation of mitigation measures, monitoring, and reporting
Field staff	PRONAR	Implementation of mitigation measures, monitoring, and reporting
Field staff	SNR	Implementation of mitigation measures, monitoring, and reporting
Local communities	13 project districts	Species identification, implementation of some mitigation measures, reporting.
Indigenous Peoples	13 project districts	Species identification, implementation of some mitigation measures, reporting.

7. Stakeholder Engagement and Community Involvement

Community and wider stakeholder engagement is an important element of the BMP. Several steps have been taken to involve communities and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of the BMP, as well as in broader efforts to protect biodiversity. The actions taken are described below:

- 1. Consultation with project partners** – The draft of the BMP has been shared for comments with project partners including the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEF), GRET, PRONAR, and SNR. Feedback on the potential risks and mitigation actions has been a focus for discussions to ensure that these partners contribute to the BMP in implementation.
- 2. Consultation and awareness raising among local communities and Indigenous Peoples** – The importance of protecting and enhancing savanna and degraded forest landscapes and biodiversity has been discussed during the PREFOREST free, prior, informed consent (FPIC) process. In addition, a radio broadcast focused on biodiversity protection of these ecosystems is planned. Priorities for biodiversity conservation of local communities and Indigenous

Peoples - with special attention to women’s perspectives – will be discussed in village workshops and meetings.

3. **Interviews with biodiversity experts** – Key biodiversity experts have been interviewed as part of the biodiversity assessment process. These experts, from private sector, non-profits, government, and academia, have helped to ensure that the assessment is comprehensive and well-informed. See interview records in Annex B.
4. **Inclusion of local experts in the assessment** – To learn from local indigenous knowledge of biodiversity, FAO invites a local person(s) with knowledge of flora and fauna, to join the assessment team. Where residing in the area, Indigenous Peoples (both men and women) are considered for this role.
5. **Sharing of biodiversity assessment results** – The biodiversity assessment results, including the plan for mitigating any risks to biodiversity, are shared with all stakeholders through village meetings, workshops, and the project’s quarterly bulletin.

PREFOREST has developed a Feedback and Grievance Redress Procedure (FGRP) which is accessible to all stakeholders and for which awareness raising sessions have been held during the FPIC process. This mechanism is designed to address feedback and complaints related to biodiversity, among other topics.

Please find a list of key stakeholders that will be engaged in or informed on PREFOREST’s biodiversity monitoring.

Stakeholder / Partner	Level of Engagement	Means of Engagement
Local communities	High	Community meetings, radio programs
Indigenous Peoples	High	Community meetings, radio programs
Wildlife Conservation Society	Medium	Interviews, email
PRONAR	High	Project meetings, presentation of BMP
SNR	High	Project meetings, presentation of BMP
GRET	High	Project meetings, presentation of BMP

8. Capacity Building and Training

Following the completion of the BMP, FAO intends to organize training and awareness campaigns to facilitate the successful implementation of the BMP. Awareness campaigns will be organized primarily through radio broadcasts (as mentioned above) with the aim to provide information about the importance of biodiversity protection and present practical suggestions to support conservation.

Radio programs related to biodiversity will be broadcast in the 13 districts of the project on a bi-annual basis.

The awareness raising campaigns will be complemented by training workshops for project partners and local stakeholders on the project’s BMP. These trainings, to be organized in each of the 13 project districts, will provide context and skills building exercises to increase competencies in biodiversity monitoring, restoration, and conservation.

9. Budget and Financial Resources

The budget for implementation of the BMP has been integrated in the overall budget for PREFOREST safeguards and communications activities.

At the end of the project lifecycle, it is envisioned that the awareness and capacity built on this topic will help to sustain conservation actions.

10. Sustainability and Long-Term Conservation

PREFOREST is implemented through the MEF with regular and close collaboration on activities with SNR and PRONAR. According to their mandate, these government agencies are responsible for the long-term conservation of biodiversity in the project area.

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12. Annexes

- A. Biodiversity Line Transect Procedure
- B. Expert Interview Records
- C. Community Meeting Guidelines
- D. Biodiversity Baseline Data
See Excel

Annex A. Biodiversity Line Transect Procedures

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Biodiversity Line Transect Walk (500m) in Savanna Grassland and Degraded Forest

Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to guide field researchers in conducting a standardized biodiversity line transect walk over savanna grasslands and degraded forest ecosystems. The procedure allows for the systematic recording of plant and animal species to assess species diversity¹¹, abundance and habitat conditions.

Materials Needed

1. Fishing line with a spool measured to 500 meters
2. 2 tape measure of at least 5 meters
3. Compass
4. 2 pieces of rebar with flagging tape for marking start and end of **each** transect walk (multiply for # of transect walks during one trip).
5. Mallet to insert the rebar
6. GPS or cell phone with application www.what3words for georeferencing the start and end of the transect
7. Binoculars
8. A small spade
9. Data recording sheets (hard copy or tablet) – about 50 copies
10. Pen/pencil
11. A bottle of water for soil type testing
12. Camera / mobile phone camera with date and time stamp
13. Species identification guides or mobile apps (if available)
14. Personal protective gear (hat, boots, raincoat, umbrella, etc.)

Procedure

1. Preparation

- Identify the research team. The team should include several members:
 - A field team leader who holds the compass and the rope and checks the data
 - A person familiar with birds and bird calls
 - A person familiar with mammals, amphibians and reptiles
 - A person familiar with trees and plants
- Select a representative area of 1) the savanna grassland and 2) degraded forest for the transect in the vicinity of the project area, but where activities have not yet taken place. The site should have minimal disturbance and be representative of the habitat. No planting or ANR activities should have taken place yet. Consider that the transect walk may be repeated the following season / year.
- Plan to arrive at the site at dawn since more animals are active in early morning.
- Team members should install and trial beforehand several applications:
 - **what3words**
 - **Tiny decisions**
 - **Soil Types**
 - **iNaturalist**
 - **Birds of Africa**

¹¹ Shannon's diversity index will be used.

- **Merlin Bird ID**
 - **Plantsnap**
 - **PlantNet**
 - **HerpMapper**
 - **SnakeSnap**
- *Request the GIS team to provide several starting points in grassland and degraded forest ecosystems.*

2. Setting up the Transect

- The team goes to the assigned starting point.
- The transect length shall be 100 meters in length.
- The Team leader chooses a randomized direction to walk using the App called '**Tiny Decisions**' and notes the orientation on the data sheet. (Input the number selection 1-360). If any significant barriers are ahead (rivers, cliffs), a new random orientation can be selected.
- Use a cellphone with the application *what3words* or a GPS device to record the coordinates of the start of the transect (or both). Record the location on the data sheet.
- Using the mallet, place a piece of rebar with flagging tape at the starting point.

3. Walking the Transect

- The field team leader slowly leads while unspooling the fishing line using the compass to adjust the orientation.
- The other team members follow slowly and very quietly behind to reduce disturbance.
- The mammal/amphibian/reptile focal person will first record any mammals within sight as well as any amphibians or reptiles within 5 meters (using the tape measure) on either side of the transect. When possible he/she takes a photo. He/she fills in the data sheet for each species sighted.
- The person familiar with birds will record any birds heard or seen on either side of the transect (with no distance limit). Birds may also move in the same direction as the transect, so try not to record the same bird multiple times. Take a tagged photo and fill in the data sheet for each species sighted.
- The person familiar with trees and plants will record any trees or plants over 1 meter high (a 1m stick or tape measure may be used) found within 5 m of the transect line on either side. For each new species, take a photo of the plant (bush or tree).
- If a species is repeated during the transect walk, there is no need to do a new entry in the data sheet, but the data collector should make a tick in the column labeled 'abundance'.
- At the end of the transect walk, use the mallet to place another piece of rebar with flagging tape and carefully rewind the fishing line.
- The team leader records environmental variables using the environmental data sheet.
- He/she uses the spade to extract some soil and takes a photo to identify the color. Next he/she uses the app 'Soil types' to identify the soil type and record on the data sheet.

4. Safety and Environmental Considerations

- Ensure you are equipped with protective clothing and plenty of water.
- Avoid disturbing wildlife and tread carefully to minimize habitat disruption.
- Stay aware of local wildlife (e.g., snakes, large herbivores) and ensure a safe distance from potentially dangerous species.

5. Post-Fieldwork

- Review your data for completeness and accuracy.

- Transfer the data to an Excel spreadsheet for further analysis.
- Use species identification guides or online resources to verify any unidentified species.

Biodiversity Transect Walk Data Worksheet Template

Transect ID <i>Name of District/# of Transect</i>	Date <i>dd.mm.yyyy</i>	Start Time	Location <i>GPS coordinates or what3words</i>	Orientation <i>(from compass)</i>	Participant Names
			Start: End:		

Environmental Data Table

Environmental Factor	Observation
Habitat type	
Vegetation height	
Disturbance (human or natural, including presence of invasive species)	
Presence of water	
Soil type & color <i>(Use Soil Type app & take photo)</i>	
Presence of invasive species	
Animal tracks, dung, or signs of predation	
Weather conditions	

Species Data Table

Transect ID:

Species Group: *(Circle one)* **1) Plants, 2) Mammals, 3) Reptiles, 4) Amphibians, 5) Birds**

#	Species Name	Identification Method	Abundance <i>(Use a tick mark for multiple sightings)</i>	Photo ID <i>(Exact time taken)</i>	Notes
	Acacia tortilis	Field guide	Few		Tree species, near termite mound

Annex B. Expert Interviews

Interview with GAMA Gildas, Assistant in the Research and Monitoring Department at Odzala-Kokoua National Park

1. Please tell us about your experience working on biodiversity in grassy savannah and degraded forest ecosystems in the southern region of the Republic of the Congo.

Answer: I had the opportunity to work on biodiversity conservation projects in particularly sensitive ecosystems in the north of the country, in Odzala-Kokoua National Park and its periphery. My experience focused on two types of habitats: grassy savannahs and degraded forests. In grassy savannahs, I participated in aerial census missions to assess the geographical distribution of different animal species and better understand their population dynamics. At the same time, I conducted ground monitoring to identify the species present, assess signs of human activities (poaching, deforestation, etc.) and set up fire monitoring and management protocols. These fires, although natural, must be managed carefully to promote the regeneration of savannahs and limit colonization by woody species. Concerning degraded forests, I worked on mapping degraded areas of the former Atama forest concession. I also conducted studies to identify invasive plant species and implement control and eradication strategies. In addition, I participated in the development of a forest restoration plan aimed at restoring the biodiversity and ecological functions of these environments. I also carried out inventories of degraded forests around the Odzala-Kokoua National Park, particularly in transition zones, and implemented agroforestry restoration projects. Finally, I monitored the restored areas to assess the effectiveness of the actions implemented."

2. Which species are particularly important in these ecosystems and why?

Answer: The grassy savannas and degraded forests of the Congo are home to a diversity of animal species, some of which are endemic or threatened. Here are some:

Fauna: Forest elephants, buffaloes, okapis (in certain forest areas), western lowland gorillas, chimpanzees, mandrills, different species of antelopes (duikers, sitatungas, etc.), Primates (colobus, cercopithecus), rodents, insectivores, bats.

Flora: There are umbrella trees, acacias, baobabs, and those adapted to forest environments such as mahogany, okoumé, and fromagers. Grasses are dominant in the savannas, while ferns and Mosses are more abundant in forested areas.

These key species play a vital role in:

Maintaining ecosystem structure: Some species, such as large herbivores, influence plant composition by grazing on certain species and favoring others. Pioneer trees, for their part, play a crucial role in the regeneration of degraded forests.

Trophic interactions: Predators regulate prey populations and thus maintain the balance of the ecosystem.

Seed dispersal: Frugivorous animals contribute to seed dispersal and vegetation regeneration.

3. Do you have any advice for recognizing or encountering these species?

Answer: The recognition and observation of animal and plant species in the savannahs and forests of Congo-Brazzaville require a specific methodological approach. Here are some techniques and tips:

For wildlife:

- **Censuses:** Research teams use methods such as direct counting, camera traps, linear transects, and nighttime listening to estimate populations. Clues (noises, odors, and disturbances to vegetation can be indirect signals).

- Genetic analyses: Environmental DNA, taken from water or soil, can detect the presence of species without observing them directly.

For flora:

- Flora inventory: Make a survey plan and sample by plot

Field botany:

- Herborization: Collecting plant specimens can identify them in the laboratory.
- Morphological description: Observing leaves, flowers, fruits, and bark can characterize species.
- Identification keys: Practical tools for identifying plants based on their characteristics.

4. We are going to do a 500m transect walk. Do you have any advice on this procedure from your experience?

Answer: Setting up a 500m transect is an excellent method to study the biodiversity of an ecosystem but it is better to associate camera traps for wildlife. Here are some tips to help you carry out this procedure:

- Make the sampling plan well: the transects must be perpendicular to the watercourses, the strata must be established according to the ecosystems, habitats or status of the areas.
- Recruit and train staff for good data collection;
- Involve communities and use local knowledge for field orientation, species identification and others;
- Have the necessary materials and equipment;
- Plan missions and organize logistics well;
- Collect data well in the field;
- Consult experts for processing, data analysis and interpretation of results.

5. In the context of a large-scale agroforestry project, what risks could you anticipate for biodiversity (animals, plants)?

Answer: A large-scale agroforestry project, although it can bring many environmental and socio-economic benefits, also presents risks for biodiversity. It is essential to identify them:

Risks for animal biodiversity

- Habitat fragmentation: The creation of large agroforestry plantations can divide natural habitats, isolating animal populations and limiting their movements.
- Habitat loss: Some specialized species, adapted to specific habitats (primary forests, savannahs, etc.), can see their habitat drastically reduced.
- Introduction of invasive species: Plantations can promote the introduction of invasive exotic species that can compete with or predate local species.
- Disruption of ecological corridors: Ecological corridors, essential for wildlife movement, can be cut by plantations.
- Hunting and disturbance: An increase in human activity linked to agroforestry can lead to an intensification of hunting and disturbance of animals.

Risks to plant biodiversity

- Simplification of ecosystems: Planting a limited number of tree species can reduce natural plant diversity.

- Homogenization of landscapes: Plantations can create monotonous landscapes, reducing the diversity of habitats and microclimates.
- Introduction of diseases: Plantations can promote the spread of plant diseases, also affecting wild flora.
- Erosion of genetic diversity: Planting a small number of clones or varieties can reduce the genetic diversity of cultivated species and increase their vulnerability to diseases and climate change.

6. For these risks, what would you recommend to avoid or minimize these risks?

Answer: To minimize these risks, it is essential to implement specific measures:

- Conservation of natural habitats: Preserve existing natural areas and create ecological corridors.
- Selection of adapted species: Choose tree species that are adapted to local conditions and that promote biodiversity.
- Sustainable management of plantations: Implement sustainable management practices, such as crop rotation, biological pest control, and soil conservation.
- Biodiversity monitoring: Implement regular biodiversity monitoring to detect potential negative impacts and adjust management practices.
- Collaboration with local communities: Involve local communities in the management of plantations to ensure their sustainability and reduce land use conflicts.
- Ecological restoration: Implement ecological restoration projects to compensate for biodiversity losses.

7. Do you have any suggestions on how the project activities could improve biodiversity?

Answer: The recommendations in question 6 can serve as suggestions

8. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

Answer: No, I have no comments

9. Any applications? Any experts?

Answer: Several experts work on biodiversity issues in Congo. I would advise you to contact national research institutes or private firms. It is true that specialists are present in the projects, but it is not easy for them to set aside their activities to devote time to other projects.

Interview with MOUANGA Sokath Dulsaint, Manager of the Environmental and Social Safeguards Department at the Sekoi plantation organization

1. Please tell us about your experience working on biodiversity in grassy savannah and degraded forest ecosystems in the southern region of the Republic of the Congo.

Answer: As part of the project I am currently working on at Sekoi plantation, we have not yet implemented a biodiversity management plan. It will be difficult to share some experience in this area. However, having worked with foresters, I can provide answers to questions that will be easy for me to address.

2. Which species are particularly important in these ecosystems and why?

Answer: All species are very important in the biodiversity of Congo in general and in southern Congo in particular. Each plays a particular role in the harmony of biodiversity. There should be no hierarchy between these animals. However, in their protection it is possible to put the conservation action and more funding on those that are in danger of extinction.

3. Do you have any advice for recognizing or meeting these species?

Answer: During my work experiences with foresters and even the strategy that Sekoiplantation provides for species recognition is observation. Teams of experts accompanied by community members must be in the field making transects day and night to observe movements in the forests and savannahs. This same strategy of camping in the forests makes it easy to meet nocturnal animal species. This data is then analyzed by the experts. It is a strategy that takes time. This is why in projects it is advisable to sometimes refer to the documentary research of studies already carried out on the project intervention areas, if the documentation exists.

4. We will carry out a 500 m transect walk. Do you have any advice on this procedure from your experience?

Answer: I advise you to work with experts who have already carried out transect work. Who are specialized in different areas on which you are looking for information (fauna and flora). Knowledge of the sites is also important. All these elements will make the work easier with analyses that will sometimes be done in the field.

Of course, it will be necessary to consider the logistics with the equipment and all the preparation well in place so as not to fail in the transect circuit.

5. In the context of a large-scale agroforestry project, what risks could you anticipate for biodiversity (animals, plants)?

Answer: In the context of the project like PREFOREST, the greatest risk is to see the modification of certain biodiversity. During my visit to your plantations in Ngo I saw that you put agroforestry plantations on savannahs. It turns out that the savannah is home to flora and fauna species that are only adapted to this environment. The establishment of plantations will make this ecosystem disappear and in particular the animals will migrate to other areas which will make them easy prey. The most important risk for me is therefore the modification of species through the transformation of savannahs into community forests.

In the departments of Pool and Plateaux for example, populations depend a lot on hunting and gathering. The disruption of biodiversity will have a considerable impact on the inhabitants, a change in behavior that risks exposing the surrounding villages to food insecurity.

6. For these risks, what would you recommend to avoid or minimize these risks?

Answer: It is true that this agroforestry project is an advantage for local communities and indigenous populations but to minimize the risks it is important to properly identify and recognize all the species that are in the project area, their habitats. Then set up a biodiversity management plan integrating permanent monitoring that will promote their protection.

7. Do you have any suggestions on how the project activities could improve biodiversity?

Answer: My suggestion is that you put in place a biodiversity management plan with effective monitoring to see what species were there before the project and what about the situation during the project, whether other species have been added or there has been an escape of species.

Interview with Modeste MAKANI, Community Development Manager at Conkouati Douli National Park

Conkouati Douli National Park is a young park in terms of compliance with national and international requirements, with a new management partner. It is therefore difficult to find documentation that can inform your project on biodiversity data because even the teams planned for this research work are currently being recruited. We therefore do not yet have a strategy on the issue. But it is possible that we will come back to you in the future.

In my experiences I have not had to carry out activities related to biodiversity. It is true that I have worked in conservation projects, but always in community development. This is therefore my first experience as a community development manager with supervision of the safeguard teams that are being set up.

Annex C. Community Meeting Guidelines

It is very important that communities, including Indigenous Peoples, women, and youth, are engaged in the biodiversity management activities. These groups bring rich local knowledge on species, risks to biodiversity and conservation measures. PREFOREST can provide an opportunity to highlight the importance of biodiversity conservation as an important asset for community livelihoods.

The objective of community meetings on biodiversity are:

- To expand the project's understanding of biodiversity in the local area
- To better understand the threats to biodiversity
- To better understand how the community relies on biodiversity
- To increase awareness on the importance of the sustainable management of biodiversity

DO (Beforehand): Contact village leaders to help in assembling a diverse group of stakeholders with emphasis on those who are familiar with biodiversity (elders, hunters, NTFP collectors).

DO (Beforehand): Prepare the photos of all the species found during the transect walk on a fully-charged laptop computer.

SAY: Welcome everyone to the meeting and explain the objectives of the meeting.

ASK: Ask 1-2 questions to stimulate the participants to think about biodiversity.

- What animals or plants do you collect from the forest?
- Have the animals in the area become more or less plentiful over the last 10 years?

SAY: Explain the concept of biodiversity and the importance of sustainable conservation of biodiversity.

Biodiversity means the variety of all living things around us, like animals, plants, trees, insects, and even tiny organisms in the soil or water. It's about how these living things work together to keep nature healthy and provide what we need to survive. Examples:

Farming: Explain that different crops grow better when the soil has many nutrients, which comes from tiny organisms like worms and bacteria. These organisms are part of biodiversity.

Forests: Point out how forests have many types of trees, birds, and animals. The birds eat insects, which helps protect the trees. This balance is biodiversity in action.

Rivers and Lakes: Talk about fish and plants in the water. If one kind of fish disappears, it can affect the plants and animals that depend on them.

SAY: Explain that the PREFOREST needs to make sure that the activities don't negatively impact biodiversity.

SAY: Explain that the community members who spend time in the savannas and forests are the true biodiversity experts because they know the ecosystem and the plants and animals best.

ASK: Do people have local names for birds, plants, animals? How many can they recognize? Can they recognize bird calls?

SAY: Explain that we would like to ask for the collaboration of the community members to help identify the species found in the area.

ASK: Ask if the participants agree to share their knowledge and if so, you will show some photos.

DO: Show the photos of the species from the transect walk

ASK: Ask the community if they are familiar with the species and what they call it. Take a note.

ASK: If they are familiar with the species ask them if they collect it and/or if it has value for them. Take a note.

ASK: Ask the participants if there are other species that they rely on which were not included in the photos (for collection, for hunting, for selling, etc.). Take a note.

SAY: Thank the participants for sharing their valuable knowledge.

SAY: Next introduce the topic of threats to biodiversity. Explain how many species in the Congo are very rare and globally recognized but some are reducing in numbers due to many factors like loss of habitat. PREFOREST wants to ensure that the project does not increase threats to biodiversity.

ASK: What threats to people see to biodiversity in the area?

ASK: If PREFOREST clears the grassland to establish an agroforestry plantation, what plants or animals might be threatened?

ASK: If any are threatened, how could we reduce the threats?

SAY: Thank you for your ideas on protecting biodiversity.

ASK: Is there anyone with knowledge on biodiversity who would like to be more involved in future monitoring?

ASK: Thank you again. Do you have any questions on this exercise?

SAY: Remind people about the project feedback and grievance mechanism and invite participants to get in touch if they have other ideas or concerns.

Annex 3: Indigenous Peoples Plan



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

PREFOREST CONGO

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

GCP /PRC/021/GCF

Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP)



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November 2024

Acronyms

ANR	Assisted Natural Regeneration
BTOR	Back-to-Office-Report
CAFI	Central African Forestry Initiative
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ESMG	Environmental and Social Management Guidelines
ESMP	Environment and Social Management Plan
ESMS	Environmental and Social Management System
FGRM	Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GRET	Groupe de recherche et d'échange technologique
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPP	Indigenous Peoples Plan
IPPF	Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
MEF	Ministry of Economics and Forestry
OCB	Office of Climate and Biodiversity
PMU	Project Management Unit (<i>Unité de Gestion de Projet</i>)
PREFOREST	Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments in the Republic of the Congo
PRODOC	Project Document
PRONAR	Afforestation and Reforestation National Programme
PROREP	Project to Strengthen the Sustainable Wood Energy Potential in the Republic of the Congo
RENAPAC	National Indigenous People Network
SNR	Afforestation National Service
TBD	To Be Determined
UNDRIP	Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UN-REDD	United Nations REDD Programme
USD	United States Dollars

Executive Summary

This Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) was developed as part of the PREFOREST project in the Republic of the Congo, led by the FAO in collaboration with the Ministry of Economics and Forestry (MEF). This project aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by protecting and sustainably managing forest resources in five departments across 13 districts. The project is funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Central African Forestry Initiative (CAFI), and is designed, among others, to engage and benefit Indigenous Peoples while promoting sustainable land-use practices, protecting biodiversity, and addressing socio-economic disparities. Indigenous Peoples in the Republic of the Congo, such as the Batwa, Babongo, and Mbendjele, face significant challenges, including discrimination, limited land access, and marginalization in socio-economic and cultural spheres. The IPP aims to address these issues in the context of the project by focusing on three key objectives: (1) securing land access and strengthening tenure rights for Indigenous communities, (2) deploying low-emission agroforestry systems and climate-resilient forestry practices to support sustainable livelihoods, and (3) enhancing capacity-building efforts through skills development, financial literacy training, and improving market access for Indigenous Peoples. These goals align with the projects' broader aims of reducing deforestation and supporting local development.

The IPP adheres to national and international legal and policy frameworks, including the 2011 Congolese Law on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and GCF's Indigenous Peoples Policy. It ensures compliance with the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) to guarantee that Indigenous Peoples are fully informed, consulted, and empowered to participate in project decision-making. The IPP also includes safeguards to mitigate risks, such as inequitable benefit-sharing or discrimination. The focus on FPIC ensures that all project activities are culturally appropriate, and that Indigenous Peoples retain their right to refuse participation if necessary.

The IPP also seeks to strengthen Indigenous Peoples' participation in local governance and decision-making processes while recognizing and safeguarding their traditional knowledge, cultural heritage, and semi-nomadic lifestyle. Specific measures, such as mapping land parcels and establishing tenure rights, aim to reduce conflicts and provide Indigenous communities with secure access to land and resources.

To implement these goals, the IPP takes an inclusive and participatory approach. This includes creating local committees to oversee project activities, ensuring Indigenous Peoples' representation, and integrating their perspectives into planning and implementation. The plan also emphasizes the importance of gender inclusion, aiming for at least 35% female participation in project activities, and takes specific steps to address gender-based violence, child labor, and other vulnerabilities faced by Indigenous women and children.

The IPP outlines mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and grievance redress to ensure transparency and accountability. Field visits, participatory monitoring, and data collection on gender and Indigenous participation are key components of the monitoring framework. The plan also incorporates a Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) to address concerns or disputes promptly and effectively. Reports and evaluations will track progress, ensuring that Indigenous Peoples derive equitable benefits from project activities.

1. Introduction

An Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) aims to put in place a process and requirements for ensuring that project activities are developed and implemented in such a way that fosters full respect for and the active protection and promotion of Indigenous Peoples dignity, rights, identities, aspirations, natural resource-based livelihoods, autonomy, protagonism and cultural uniqueness. An IPP must be based on a rigorous FPIC process. An FPIC process is iterative, requiring indigenous peoples' consent before any project activity is undertaken based on their own independent deliberations, and based on adequate information provided in a manner that is understood by indigenous peoples. FPIC aims to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are fully informed, consulted about, and provided adequate and legitimate opportunities to oppose or actively participate in project design and project implementation arrangements.¹²

This IPP is prepared in the framework of PREFOREST, a project in the Republic of the Congo Implemented under a collaboration between FAO and the Ministry of Economics and Forestry (MEF). The project aims to reduce pressure on natural forests surrounding urban centers which are under threat from charcoal production driven by growing energy demand. PREFOREST is co-financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Central African Forestry Initiative (CAFI) and runs from 2021 – 2029. The project covers an area located in five departments and 13 districts of the country; the project aim to engage a range of stakeholders with an emphasis on ensuring significant benefits to smallholders in local communities and Indigenous Peoples. The three major components of PREFOREST are:

5. Land-use and resources planning and strengthening of land access and tenure security rights. Deployment of low emission climate resilient agroforestry and forestry systems
6. Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems for climate change mitigation.
7. Strengthening agroforestry financing structures, market capacities and value chains.

In 2019, during the project formulation stage, FAO and MEF became aware of Indigenous Peoples living in the proposed project area. As a result, further research was conducted and an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) was prepared, in alignment with GCF obligations. This IPP builds on that initial study but goes several steps further in 1) updating relevant data on Indigenous Peoples in the projects' target areas, 2) reviewing the relevant legal and policy framework, and 3) outlining a comprehensive plan to minimize and mitigate risks to Indigenous Peoples related to project implementation. The IPP is a 'living document' designed to meet the requirements of the GCF and in alignment with its Indigenous Peoples Policy. It should be updated as new data becomes available and the implementation plan should be reviewed and adapted on an annual basis.

This IPP is in alignment with laws, policies, and guidelines related to Indigenous Peoples, including those of the Republic of the Congo, FAO, and the projects' donors. Section 3 provides a summary description of these instruments while a list of key documents with relevant links is found in the bibliography section. This IPP draws on both literature review and a consultative process together with stakeholders and legitimate representatives of all indigenous communities present in the project area.

¹² GCF Operational guidelines: Indigenous Peoples Policy

2. Legal and institutional framework relevant to Indigenous Peoples in the Republic of the Congo

This section outlines the laws and policies relevant to Indigenous Peoples in the Republic of the Congo, focusing on the country's legal and policy framework and the policies of FAO, GCF, and CAFI. The IPP must be in alignment with these laws and policies.

2.1 Laws and policies of the Republic of the Congo

The Republic of the Congo is a party to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which it signed in 2007, however, the country has not yet ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.

In 2011, the Congolese government became the first in Africa to adopt a law on indigenous peoples: the *Law on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Autochthonous Population (Law No. 5-2011)*. This law sets out the legal foundation for indigenous peoples to claim their rights, protect their culture and livelihood, gain access to basic social services, and protect their civil and political rights (IWGIA).

In 2015, the need to promote and protect indigenous peoples' rights was given constitutional recognition in Article 16 of the new Constitution which states 'The law guarantees and assures the promotion and the protection of the rights of the autochthonous Peoples.'

In 2019, six decrees were adopted to implement Law No. 5-2011 by providing special measures to facilitate civil registration and access to basic social services and education. The decrees also provided guidance on holding consultations with a view to obtaining the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of indigenous peoples in the context of socioeconomic projects and development programmes and to protecting indigenous cultural, intellectual, spiritual and religious property and knowledge.

An interministerial committee was established to guide the Government's actions for indigenous peoples, in particular its implementation of national action plans to improve the quality of life of indigenous peoples. Under Decree No. 2017-260 of 25 July 2017, the lead role for the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples was transferred to the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and the Promotion of Indigenous Peoples, which has, since then, had a dedicated directorate-general for the promotion of indigenous populations.

The Decree No. 2019-201 is particularly relevant to PREFOREST because it defines the consultation procedures for development projects that aim to engage with Indigenous Peoples. This decree obligates FPIC consultations with Indigenous Peoples to be led, not by the project team, but rather by a 'consultation commission' composed of ministerial representatives, an elected local official, and a member of civil society working on Indigenous Peoples' rights. The Ministry of Justice is currently developing a national policy on FPIC to further guide these efforts, and PREFOREST has been engaged in supporting these efforts, complemented by funding from the UN-REDD Programme.

Please see a list of relevant laws in the Bibliography section.

3. Policy Obligations

PREFOREST is implemented by FAO (in collaboration with the Ministry of Economics and Forestry) and funded by the GCF and CAFI. This section summarizes the policy obligations of these three institutions with regards to projects involving indigenous peoples.

3.1 FAO policies and obligations related to Indigenous Peoples

FAO's work with regards to Indigenous Peoples is guided by the [FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples](#) (2010). According to this policy, Indigenous Peoples must be considered an undeniable stakeholder in a development agenda. The policy gives information about indigenous peoples' livelihoods, world views and concerns about development, including certain "core principles" which should be at the heart of joint activities. The policy also defines a series of thematic areas where collaborative opportunities are most feasible. The core principles include respect for Indigenous Peoples' rights, inclusion and participation, and recognition of traditional knowledge, while specific objectives include empowerment and capacity building, empowering Indigenous women and youth, recognizing their roles in maintaining food systems and cultural heritage, sustainable livelihoods and food systems, support for land tenure and resource rights, partnerships and collaboration, and policy advocacy to promote the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' rights and interests in national and international frameworks. FAO also emphasizes the importance of participatory research involving Indigenous Peoples' communities to gather data that reflects their realities and needs.

FAO projects undergo a safeguards screening to determine if Indigenous Peoples or their territories will be affected by the project activities. If this is the case, then a project will receive at least a 'moderate' risk rating and subsequent measures must be taken to reduce risks. As per FAO's safeguards policy (ESMG, 2015), the project is required to prepare an Environment and Social Management Plan (ESMP). This IPP is one of the required safeguards documents to be annexed to the ESMP to ensure the risks associated to Indigenous Peoples are minimized in a way that firmly positions the projects in Category B ("moderate") in terms of risk.

3.2 Green Climate Fund policies on Indigenous Peoples

In 2018, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) adopted its [Indigenous Peoples Policy](#) to ensure the respect, inclusion, and active participation of Indigenous Peoples in GCF-funded projects and activities, safeguarding their rights and integrating their traditional knowledge in climate action initiatives. The policy sets out the approach to incorporating the circumstances of indigenous peoples into decision-making while working towards climate change mitigation and adaptation. Like FAO, the GCF lays out core principles for engaging Indigenous Peoples, which include respect for rights and participation, inclusion and empowerment, meaningful participation and capacity building, cultural sensitivity and knowledge integration. The policy also emphasizes the importance of funding accessibility and equitable benefit sharing.

Projects funded by the GCF are required to prepare an IPP once the locations of project activities have been determined, and the Indigenous Peoples Policy provides a list of the key elements that must be included in this document.¹³

3.3 CAFI policies on Indigenous Peoples

The Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) has a policy framework that is highly attentive to the rights and roles of Indigenous Peoples in forest conservation and sustainable development. The core elements of CAFI's Policy on Indigenous Peoples include respect for rights and knowledge including rights to land and resource rights and traditional knowledge; participation, inclusion and FPIC; support for sustainable livelihoods; protection of cultural heritage; safeguards implementation and risk management; equitable benefit sharing; and monitoring and accountability. Indigenous peoples must be involved in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of CAFI-funded projects. Furthermore, all activities must adhere to environmental and social safeguards that protect the interests of Indigenous Peoples, ensuring that projects do not negatively impact their communities.

13 The key elements are defined as: (a) Baseline information (b) key findings and analysis of impacts, risks and opportunities, (c) measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate negative impacts, and enhance positive impacts and opportunities, (d) community-based natural resource management, (e) results of consultations including a list of people and organizations that participated, a timetable, responsible person, FPIC, and future engagement plans, (f) gender assessment and action plans, (g) benefit sharing plans, (h) tenure arrangements, (i) grievance redress mechanisms, (j) costs, budgets, timetables, organizational responsibilities, and (k) monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

4 Indigenous Peoples in the Republic of the Congo and in the PREFOREST target areas (the baseline)

4.1 Introduction to Indigenous Peoples in the Republic of the Congo

In the Republic of the Congo, the Indigenous Peoples' population includes the Baka, Mbendjele, Mikaya, Luma, Gyeli, Twa (or Batwa¹⁴), and Babongo Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous people represent between 1.25 to 10 percent of the population (depending on the source) and are present in most of the country's 12 departments, but the largest concentrations are found in the north and north-eastern part of the country and in the south. Traditionally, most indigenous peoples were mobile hunter-gatherers, but today only a few groups follow this lifestyle while most have settled in hamlets, most often near Bantu villages (IWGIA, 2022).

Despite legal reforms, many Indigenous Peoples in Congo suffer from discrimination, land dispossession, and socioeconomic and cultural marginalization. This situation is the result of historical factors as well as more recent developments such as logging concessions, deforestation, oil exploration, commercial plantations, and infrastructural developments. Logging is the most serious threat against the forest-dwelling groups' survival. As for the sedentary communities, their access to agricultural land is generally controlled by the Bantu, and as landless squatters on the edge of Bantu villages, they have few job opportunities and are faced with ill treatment and discrimination by their Bantu neighbours. With the sedentarization process, indigenous peoples are in general under strong pressure to renounce their cultural characteristics and they are increasingly adopting the Bantu's ways of life, including polygamy. The latter has entailed a series of problems related to health in general and to sexual and reproductive health in particular (IWGIA, 2022).

There exists a long-standing tradition of interaction between Indigenous Peoples' communities and their Bantu neighbours. This tradition was originally based not only on mutually beneficial exchanges—metal tools, clothes, etc., being bartered against game, ivory, and forest produce. Seen as gifted with special powers, the indigenous peoples also held an important place in their neighbours' rituals and even participated in them; their knowledge of the forest, their skills as dancers, singers, and musicians, their healing and diviner practices, etc., were and still are both admired and feared. While these relations still exist in some places, they have in most cases degenerated into a repressive master-slave relationship because of the promotion of commercial agriculture (coffee, oil palm, and cacao) where Indigenous Peoples' labour is used by the Bantu to avoid the hardest chores. This has established a relationship of domination and exploitation. Bantu "masters" may control a number of Indigenous Peoples' families; consider them as a "property" that can be inherited; do not pay for their work or pay them with alcohol or very low wages (IWGIA, 2022).

Further progress is needed to eliminate structural discrimination against indigenous peoples and to acknowledge the importance of preserving the Indigenous Peoples' cultural practices, traditional

¹⁴ In Lingala, Batwa is the plural form of Twa.

knowledge and semi-nomadic lifestyle that are inherently linked to indigenous peoples' spiritual connection to the forest (IWGIA, 2022).

Tenure Rights and Access to Land and Resources

Indigenous peoples rely on large tracts of land for their livelihood and spiritual sustenance. Law No. 5-2011 acknowledges their rights to land and resources, requiring the state to facilitate legal recognition based on customary rights. However, land dispossession continues. Those living near conservation areas face abuse from state or eco-guards, and sedentary indigenous peoples often depend on the goodwill of Bantu communities for access to agricultural land (IWGIA, 2022).

Health and Education

Health Law No. 5-2011 and Decree No. 2019-202 aim to improve indigenous peoples' access to healthcare, requiring facilities to provide free services to impoverished communities and protect traditional medicines. Despite these measures, indigenous communities still struggle to access healthcare, facing high rates of diseases like tuberculosis and malaria, and significantly lower access to health services compared to other groups. Efforts to address these issues include developing local health centers, although many indigenous people still lack access to clean water, sanitation, and health information (IWGIA, 2022).

Education for Indigenous Peoples children is mandated to be free and compulsory, with special measures like scholarships and school supplies provided under Law No. 5-2011. Despite improvements in national primary school access, Indigenous Peoples children have high illiteracy rates, low enrolment, and retention due to factors like remote school locations, costs, and curricula not suited to their lifestyles (IWGIA, 2022).

Situation of Indigenous Women and Children

Indigenous Peoples women face dual discrimination based on ethnicity and gender, lacking access to reproductive healthcare, and suffering from gender-based violence, early marriages, and high maternal and infant mortality. Indigenous Peoples children also face significant challenges, including lack of birth registration, engagement in hazardous child labor, and high rates of malnutrition (IWGIA, 2022).

4.2 Indigenous Peoples in the PREFOREST project area

4.2.1 Living standards and vulnerabilities

In the PREFOREST project area, there are two ethnic groups recognized as Indigenous Peoples: the Batwa and the Babongo. The data in this section is based on field interviews conducted during the project formulation, the start-up, and during ongoing activities.

Demographics

The Indigenous Peoples communities involved in the project are concentrated in Ngo district in Plateau district where there are four villages with separate hamlets of Bantu and Indigenous Peoples engaged with PREFOREST. In addition, there are Babongo Indigenous People living in Ndolo village in Loudima district in Bouenza Department. A total of 84 Batwa households are found in the villages in Ngo district (Onianva, Ombima, Ngampion and Oyonfoula) which are located on national road N°2, 25 km from the center of the Ngo district center. In the case of Ndolo village in Loudima district, Babongo

households make up the majority with a total of 62 Indigenous Babongo households among a total of 80 households. Whereas in Ngo district, Bantu and Batwa families live separately, in Ndolo the houses are geographically mixed.

Socio-cultural characteristics

Both the Batwa and Babongo Indigenous Peoples in the project area experience significant socio-cultural disparities and tensions in their relationships with the Bantu, though the situation is somewhat better for the Babongo in Ndolo village where the Babongo are the majority and where the village chief is also Babongo. According to local accounts, particularly from the Batwa, relations between the indigenous communities and Bantu are generally strained. For example, if conflicts arise between the Batwa and Bantu, the village chief, who is generally from the Bantu community, tends to side against the Batwa, suggesting systemic bias in local governance.

Educational inequalities are also evident. In some communities, Batwa children in primary schools are reportedly made to sit on the ground in the dust, while Bantu children sit on benches, highlighting a clear difference in treatment. This unequal access to basic resources reflects a broader pattern of marginalization. Social exclusion is also visible in everyday practices. The Bantu reportedly refuse to drink from the same glasses as Indigenous Peoples, implying a stigma rooted in perceived differences in hygiene or status. There are also strong gender dynamics that contribute to tensions. Bantu men are said to sometimes pursue Batwa or Babongo women for sexual relationships, while indigenous men face severe consequences, including violence, if they attempt to engage with Bantu women. Culturally, the Batwa/Babongo face further discrimination in economic interactions. Bantu individuals generally avoid purchasing food prepared by the Batwa/Babongo, particularly prepared cassava (chiquong), likely due to cultural prejudices surrounding hygiene.

In the Ngo district villages, leadership structures further emphasize the social separation between the Batwa and Bantu groups. While the Batwa have their own chiefs within each village, these leaders are subordinate to the village chief, who is Bantu. The position of Batwa chief is often hereditary but can also be determined by consensus or based on the founder of the village. There is little to no interaction between the Batwa chiefs across different villages, and unlike the Bantu, the Batwa villages do not have executive committees to oversee village matters. As a result, the level of Batwa involvement in village-level decision-making varies considerably, often leaving them without a significant voice in governance.

Most Batwa people in the project area speak their native language Téké. They also generally understand Lingala, while some only understand and are unable to speak. Babongo people speak Kikongo, which is widely spoken and understood, including by the project team.

BOX 1. Indigenous Peoples' experiences of discrimination (based on project formulation field surveys)

- Indigenous Peoples groups regularly perform weeding/manual labor for the Bantu. They are paid a lot less than the Bantu are paid for the same work - typically 50% of what the Bantu are paid and very often less than 50%.¹⁵ Two indigenous groups stated that they do not know

¹⁵ The percentages vary enormously. An attempt must therefore be made to triangulate this information, or to use it cautiously. However, all groups in the villages claim that they are paid a lot less than the Bantu.

how much the Bantu are paid for weeding. It is only the IP from the Mpala neighborhood of the small town of Ngo who claim they are paid the same rates as the Bantu.

- Two Indigenous Peoples groups on the Djambala route said that they are not able to engage tractors for mechanized plowing because the Bantu threaten the tractor drivers that they will no longer use them if they plow for the Indigenous Peoples. One Indigenous group clearly stated that the Bantu do not want indigenous peoples to develop. They want the Indigenous Peoples to remain poor so that they will always be available to do weeding at very low cost.
- The Indigenous Peoples from two villages plus those from the Mpala neighborhood in Ngo said that they cannot have tables in the Ngo market (constructed by the Town Hall) to sell their products. They are forced to sell their products at low prices to the Bantu who resell them at the market at higher prices. They were not asked about their ability to pay for a table in the market.
- Most of the Indigenous Peoples groups state that the Bantu set low prices for the products they collect through hunting, gathering and farming. If they do not accept the low prices, they are threatened by the Bantu.
- Two groups were part of mixed Bantu and Indigenous groups that planted eucalyptus and acacia trees in combination with agricultural crops (WCS funding). When the agricultural crops were harvested and sold, the Bantu kept the income for themselves.

Economic characteristics

The Batwa and Babongo people in the project villages commonly engage in manual labor for the Bantu community. They typically work in Bantu-owned fields and earn approximately 1.7 USD per day for their labor. Unlike the Bantu, the Batwa and Babongo do not cultivate their own fields, largely due to a lack of tools, even though land is usually available to them.

Batwa and Babongo women contribute economically by selling arrowroot, while the community as a whole relies on hunting, gathering, and purchasing cassava from the Bantu for sustenance. One of the primary concerns raised by the indigenous communities is their strained relations with the Bantu, which affects their economic and social well-being.

Vulnerabilities

Indigenous peoples in the project target area are particularly vulnerable for several reasons including lack of secure access to land, limited access to healthcare and education, and the impacts of climate change.

Health and education

Indigenous people in the villages targeted by the project benefit from free access to health care in case of illness. However, the remoteness of health centers represents a major challenge, particularly for those in Ndolo village. In Ngo district, on the Oyonfoula - Ngampion axis, there is only one dispensary, which lacks equipment and pharmaceutical products. As a result, residents are forced to buy their medicines from street vendors, further complicating their access to the necessary care.

By law, Indigenous People benefit from free access to education, which is a significant advantage. For example, in the village of Oyonfoula, indigenous and Bantu children attend school together without fees. However, a major problem persists: many young indigenous people drop out of school, often due to traditions that do not value the pursuit of education.

In the Ngo region, three of the four villages have a school, which is encouraging. However, in Ndolo, the nearest school is too far for most children to attend.

Situation of indigenous women and children

This section will be developed after additional research is conducted.

4.2.2 Tenure rights and access to land and resources

Recently, FAO conducted a survey on tenure rights in 8 villages (including 2 indigenous hamlets) to collect more qualitative data on cultural norms, challenges and potential interventions. The survey focused on the tenure rights of women and indigenous peoples. The results will inform the activities in Component 1 on land-use and resources planning and strengthening of land access and security rights.

Since land resources are relatively abundant in the project area, most Indigenous Peoples' households have access to land, but usually only to small plots, and for which they sometimes need to make a payment to the Bantu owners. Some Batwa families claim that their parents and grandparents were born in the area, but they have never had the opportunity to own land and have been told that this is because they are originally from elsewhere. Their land rights are limited to access and user rights.

'The Bantus say that it is their land. They just let us work for free. But we cannot own property here. Also, we lack the money to go and buy land elsewhere.'

All decision making on land and resources is managed by Bantus and there is little opportunity for indigenous peoples to be involved in land governance decisions.

'The leaders of the whole village are Bantus. So we comply with what they say. All the management is done by the Bantus. It is when we ask the village chief or go to take an area without permission that they let us work.'

A case was cited whereby an Indigenous Peoples family had plowed fields for their own cultivation only to then have the land seized by the wife of the Bantu village chief. Others have had their fields taken by Bantu refugees. Many Indigenous People interviewed confessed to feeling frustrated in this situation and have asked the project to intervene to help secure their tenure rights.

The land that is allocated (or will be allocated) for plantations under the project is designated either as government land (managed by PRONAR) or is owned by Bantu landowners (*propriétaires terriens*). Both Bantu and Indigenous Peoples villagers will be assigned 1-hectare plots to manage within these areas. PREFOREST will support mapping of the parcels to provide clarity and to avoid tenure conflicts. At the time of writing, a total of 79 ha is planned to be allocated to Indigenous Peoples populations in five targeted villages. User rights ("*droits d'usage*") to the land will be granted through contracts to be signed with landowners. Villagers will receive inputs and technical training on agroforestry so that they are able to successfully plant crops within the plantations. Attention will be paid to benefits for women, including indigenous women.

5 Social and environmental impact assessment

Both the potential positive impacts of PREFOREST on indigenous peoples as well as possible risks or adverse impacts have been identified. In the case of risks or adverse impacts, mitigation measures have been planned to prevent or minimize negative impacts.

5.1 Potential positive impacts and opportunities for indigenous peoples

PREFOREST presents some important opportunities to provide benefits to indigenous peoples and to overcome some of the hardships they face. Some key opportunities with relevance to the project mandate are listed below. To capitalize on these opportunities, specific recommendations and actions are outlined in the implementation plan in Sections 14.

Potential positive impacts:

- To implement a model process of FPIC and contribute to national processes and guidelines for FPIC.
- To improve the land tenure security of indigenous peoples by allocating usage rights to agroforestry parcels and providing documentation of these rights.
- To improve the economic situation of indigenous peoples through capacity development, agroforestry, financial literacy, and access to finance.
- To improve relations between the indigenous and Bantu population by encouraging collaboration and facilitating dispute resolution on project-related matters.
- To inform indigenous peoples on their rights under progressive laws and policies.
- To improve the situation of indigenous women through targeted awareness raising, capacity development, joint tenure rights recognition, financial literacy training, business training, and access to credit and savings.
- To improve the situation of indigenous children through awareness raising on child labor, prevention of child labor in project activities, and increased family income.

5.2 Potential risks or adverse impacts

In addition, the project activities are not without risks for indigenous peoples. The following risks have been noted and mitigation measures suggested.

Table 17. Potential risks

Risk	Likelihood	Mitigation Measure
1. Bantu landowners will not agree to give indigenous peoples the right to use their land	Low	Collaboration with Bantu landowners will be contingent on providing use rights to indigenous peoples
2. Literacy levels will be so low that it is difficult to engage indigenous peoples in some activities.	Low	Face to face meetings will not rely on written material but instead on oral communication, photos, and graphics. Radio broadcasts in local language will be used to reach a wider audience.
3. Indigenous peoples will find it difficult to market their products due to discrimination	High	Mixing of Bantu and indigenous products through a village platform with established buyer relationships. Radio broadcasts to change attitudes and overcome discrimination.
4. Indigenous people will not be selected for participation in project activities due to discriminatory practices favoring Bantu	High	Orientation of field staff on selection process and criteria; indigenous representative on the local committee responsible for selection; accessible grievance mechanism;
5. Indigenous peoples will not participate in agroforestry activities due to lack of equipment	High	Supply farming equipment for people who do not have their own (lending system).
6. Indigenous women will not be able to participate in agroforestry due to high household burdens, etc.	High	Radio broadcasts to raise awareness on gender and sharing of household burdens.
7. Indigenous women will suffer GBV on the way to and from the planting site	Low	Villagers are encouraged to travel in groups to and from the planting area.
8. Lack of sustainability of activities after the project due to lack of assistance.	High	Awareness raising sessions on the importance of autonomy, self- confidence, etc.

6 Free Prior Informed Consent

As outlined in Section 2, the Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples is required before the implementation of project activities that would affect them or their territories. This section provides an overview on the FPIC process developed and implemented for PREFOREST. In the case of this project, the UGP decided to implement FPIC with both Indigenous Peoples (as an obligation) and with majority Bantu villagers (as a best practice). The processes were very similar with the exception that in the case of FPIC with Indigenous Peoples, the Ministry of Justice Commission was involved to oversee the process.

The starting point for the project's FPIC process was the recruitment of experts practiced and knowledgeable on FPIC. A national expert on Safeguards and Gender (based in Brazzaville) and a specialist on issues related to Indigenous Peoples (based in Rome) were assigned to design the FPIC process for the projects. The design of the FPIC process involved research on guiding laws and policies (see Section 2), the development of an [FPIC Facilitation Guide \(see Annex 3\)](#), and consultation with several key stakeholders as well as management and FAO's Environment and Social Safeguards Unit in FAO's Office of Climate and Biodiversity (OCB). FAO's publication '[Free Prior and Informed Consent: An indigenous peoples' right and a good practice for local communities](#)' was used in the development of the Facilitation Guide. The project's FPIC Guide provides clear instructions to guide the FPIC sessions to ensure a consistent process that meets the various requirements. It includes an explanation of FPIC, an introduction and discussion on proposed activities (using photos); examination of potential benefits and risks; introduction of eligibility criteria; and introduction and exercises related to the project's grievance mechanism, among others. In preparation, village leadership is requested to encourage women to attend. The sessions are conducted in a participatory manner to encourage villagers to share their perspectives. Lingala is the language generally used for the sessions, but facilitators confirm comprehension among all before starting, and if needed, someone may be asked to translate to local language. In some cases, separate female-only groups are formed to ensure women's views are understood.

An FPIC facilitation team was formed with members of the project management team (PMU), the Commission at the Ministry of Justice, and the projects' implementing partner, GRET. The FPIC sessions, currently in progress at the time of writing, have proceeded smoothly. In the case of implementing FPIC with Indigenous Peoples, the Ministry of Justice Commission takes the leading role according to Decree 2019-215 (described in Section 2), while other members of the team play a supporting role. While the consultation processes and materials are similar, the FPIC process with Indigenous Peoples takes place independently from FPIC consultations with Bantu villagers. In the case of villages with both Bantu and Batwa/Babongo villagers, two separate FPIC consultation processes have been organized - one for Bantu and another for Batwa/Babongo – to allow Batwa people to express themselves freely. The representatives from the Ministry of Justice Commission are also present to ensure that the process is free from bias or discrimination. Please find a list of the FPIC team in the table below:

Table 18: FPIC facilitation team

Name	Title, Institution	Role in FPIC
Seth OUMBA BAZOLA	Safeguards and Gender Specialist, FAO	Lead Facilitator
Hermann BOUNGOU	M&E Specialist, FAO	Co-Facilitator
Amanda BRADLEY	Specialist on Tenure, Gender, and Indigenous Peoples, FAO	Advisor
Cyrille EKOUMOU	Specialist on safeguards	Advisor
Brel NGUEWOUYA	Field Facilitator, GRET	Co-Facilitator
Lyscht MASSAMBA	Field Facilitator, SNR	Co-Facilitator
Justin ASSOMOYI	Directeur Générale de la Promotion des Peuples Autochtones, Commission Nationale de Consultation	Validation of the process
Aubin DZONDO-KENDE	Commission nationale de consultation (ministère de la justice)	Co-Facilitator
Gildas KIMBATSA	Commission nationale de consultation (ministère des affaires foncières)	Co-Facilitator
Toli BEKABIHOULA	Commission nationale de consultation (ministère de l'environnement)	Co-Facilitator
David KOKOLO	Commission nationale de consultation (ministère de l'économie forestière)	Co-Facilitator

All the FPIC sessions are well documented with a detailed report recording the number of male and female participants; all the feedback, questions, and comments from participants related to each topic during the session; and any issues that require attention or follow up. In addition, the session is documented in a *procès verbale* which is signed by a representative of the project and the community at the end of the session. Given permission, the sessions are also documented with photos. If consent is granted at the end of the session, an agreement or *acte de consentement* is signed with the community to move forward with collaboration on the project. The community may also choose to take additional time to consider the decision to participate or not in the project. Two copies of the *procès verbale* and *acte de consentement* are signed so that one can be left with the community representative. Following the meeting, key data are logged in a database at the FAO office to keep track of results and any follow-up needed. FPIC is an ongoing process with both Indigenous and non-indigenous communities engaged with the process. The community is free to withdraw from the consent agreement; however, they are requested to first raise concerns or grievances for resolution and subsequently reconsider withdrawal. Please find details on each FPIC consultation session in Annex 2. Reports for village FPIC meetings are available upon request.

To date, FAO and its partners have consulted 20 villages on PREFOREST and received consent from 19 villages for implementing PREFOREST on or near their village and with their participation in activities. One village refused to participate in the project due to an ongoing land dispute. For the five indigenous villages, all gave their consent to the project. In total there were 245 indigenous peoples participating in the FPIC consultations including 162 men and 83 women.

7 Participation in project activities and Communications Plan

7.1 Participation of Indigenous Peoples in PREFOREST

Indigenous peoples have been invited to participate actively in the project activities which are explained during the FPIC sessions. Efforts have been made to identify villages of indigenous peoples or sub-groups of indigenous peoples within mixed Bantu-indigenous villages interested to participate in the project. All members of indigenous communities are welcomed including women, young people, and older members of the community. A Local Committee at the district level has been formed to select the beneficiaries for participation in the project activities and to monitor, and to participate in the resolution of grievances. Its members include the village chiefs, landowners (*propriétaires terriens*), representative of indigenous peoples (where they exist in the district), representative of the Sub-Prefecture.

The following indigenous groups are currently involved in the project activities, and others will be invited to participate in the future.

Table 19. Indigenous groups participating in the project (at the time of writing)

Village/Hamlets	District	Department	Batwa Households	Babongo Households
Ombima Batwa Hamlet	Ngo	Plateau	9	0
Onianva Batwa Hamlet	Ngo	Plateau	37	0
Oyonfoula Batwa Hamlet	Ngo	Plateau	12	0
Ngampion (Point d'Eau) Batwa Hamlet	Ngo	Plateau	26	0
Ndolo village	Loudima	Bouenza	0	62
SUBTOTAL			84	62
TOTAL			146	

Indigenous peoples are invited to participate in all project activities including the initial activities of land clearing, establishment of nurseries, and tree planting. In addition, representatives of indigenous peoples have been included in planning exercises and data collection, for example in data collection on tenure rights.

In some cases, feedback on barriers to participation have been raised by indigenous peoples, and the project has addressed these to the extent possible. For example, many indigenous people do not have their own farming equipment for land clearing and this issue was raised during the FPIC consultations. In this case, the project supplied materials to overcome this barrier. Furthermore, some members raised a concern about the long distance to the planting site, particularly for women. The solution for this issue was for villagers to travel in groups to and from the planting site.

7.2 Ongoing communication

Communication and consultation with the project's beneficiaries, including indigenous peoples, is an ongoing process for which there are several strategies and mechanisms.

Regular field visits – FAO's project partners (e.g. GRET, SNR, P_{RO}NAR) regularly conduct field visits to the project target villages where consent has been given. These visits are aimed at introducing, training, and following up on project activities. The field staff also have a role to discuss implementation and address any concerns as well as to inform villagers on monitoring results and upcoming plans. In addition, members of the FAO team visit the field to monitor the activities, including those conducted with indigenous peoples. These visits occur at least once per month in each project village. All field visits by members of the PMU are documented in Back-to-Office-Reports (BTOR).

Radio broadcasts – To communicate more broadly on project activities and to raise awareness on project-related topics across the landscape, PREFOREST is planning a series of radio broadcasts. Since many indigenous people are illiterate but generally have access to a radio, this form of communication is appropriate to reach these communities. Some of the planned topics include:

- Introduction to PREFOREST and its aims
- Climate change
- Value of forests
- Indigenous peoples – culture and identity, changing attitudes and behaviors
- Grievance mechanism
- Gender and gender-based violence
- Tenure rights
- Child labor

Feedback and grievance redress mechanism – The FGRM provides a communication channel for indigenous peoples in the project area to provide feedback, to file a grievance, or to ask questions about the project. The PMU is committed to providing prompt responses and resolutions to problems raised (See Section 8 for details).

8 Benefit Sharing and capacity building

8.1 Identification of project benefits for indigenous peoples

The project activities are expected to generate benefits for indigenous peoples, including both tangible and intangible benefits. The table below summarizes some of these benefits.

Table 20. Benefits of project activities for local communities and indigenous peoples

Activity	Benefits
1. Establishment of nurseries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved technical skills for nursery construction and maintenance. - Income source for seedlings that can be sold to farmers.
2. Agroforestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved skills and capacities in agroforestry techniques - Improved and more diversified production - Fewer pest problems - Protection of water and soil
3. Capacity building training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved skills and knowledge of women, men and indigenous people in agroforestry, management, gender-based violence. - Improved livelihoods
4. Coordination, consultation and problem-solving meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem and conflict resolution - Improved governance of land and resources, including for future generations
5. Delineation of plots towards securing land rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater clarity on land ownership - Reduced land conflicts
6. Assisted natural regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More forest products in the future - Better protection against fires - Protection of water sources and soil - Daily fees paid for work
7. Marketing plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better access to markets - Increased income - Financial independence for women
8. Access to micro-credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to invest in and develop small businesses

Benefits will be shared equitably and in a culturally appropriate manner, respecting also indigenous, particularly respect for the role of the chief and elders. The field teams have been orientated to the importance of inclusion of indigenous peoples in project activities. Furthermore, the project monitors and collects data on the participation of indigenous peoples in project activities, wherever appropriate.

PREFOREST seeks to overcome barriers to participation and benefit sharing by indigenous peoples, with attention also to gender. To ensure that both Bantu women and indigenous Batwa and Babongo women are not excluded from project activities, a minimum project-wide quota of 30% female participation has been set for all activities. All members of the team as well as partners, are responsible to collect gender disaggregated data for activities and to report to the M&E officer who compiles this data for regular reporting to senior management (See Section 10 for more details on

monitoring). Gender training has also been conducted for the project team to sensitize them to the advantages of gender responsive project design and implementation and to identify culturally appropriate entry points and gender actions for integration in their daily work. Any complaints or grievances related to benefit sharing may be raised through the project’s grievance mechanism (See Section 9). Following local traditions, grievances may be taken to the village chief or Indigenous elder in the hamlet for his intervention or mediation with the UGP. Furthermore, the Safeguards and Gender Specialist travels regularly to the field to ask Indigenous Peoples communities about the progress of the project and any concerns they may have.

8.2 Capacity building

PREFOREST plans a series of trainings that will enhance the capacity of indigenous peoples in the project area. These training courses will be organized either by FAO or its partners. Indigenous peoples will be encouraged to attend, with attention also to women’s participation. If appropriate, separate trainings for indigenous people will be organised.

Table 21. Capacity building topics

Topic	Objective(s)	Indicator
Agroforestry and forestry	Consolidate and introduce new methods in agroforestry and forestry to indigenous peoples	# Indigenous Peoples trained
Organisational capacities and business planning	Provide group members with services for marketing and sale of products	# Indigenous Peoples trained
Gender	Awareness raising on gender and importance in society	# Indigenous Peoples trained
Financial literacy and access to credit	Train on financial management and modalities for accessing credit	# Indigenous Peoples trained

9 Grievance redress

Consultations with local project stakeholders and beneficiaries, including Indigenous Peoples, has included the introduction of the project's Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM). This mechanism has been specifically developed for PREFOREST and is detailed in a policy document (available upon request). In addition, an information poster has been designed to disseminate information on the mechanism at the village and district level. The poster provides contact details for focal points in case of grievances or suggestions – including those of the GCF's Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) - and they have been posted in central locations in the participating villages.

To make local people more familiar and comfortable to use the FGRM, the mechanism was introduced through roleplay exercises during the FPIC consultations. Imaginary situations were presented to demonstrate how the mechanism could work to address concerns. Grievances can be submitted through various channels, including in person through the field staff or through a telephone call directly to the Specialist on Safeguards and Gender in the FAO Brazzaville office. To date, FAO has learned that in-person monitoring visits by the Safeguards and Gender Specialist are the most effective way to learn about concerns and grievances and to collect feedback. This face-to-face visit by a neutral, respectful, and interested project staff person is particularly appropriate for Indigenous Peoples since fewer individuals have telephones and may also be shyer to raise issues. This staff person also makes efforts to contact with indigenous women and youth to see if they have any feedback or grievances related to the project.

All grievances, including those received verbally, are logged in the FGRM database which is maintained by the Specialist on Safeguards and Gender. The treatment of grievances received during face-to-face meetings follows the same principles as those for written grievances (e.g. confidentiality, timely response)

Figure 13 A poster and handout were designed to communicate the MGPR



MECANISME DE GESTION DES PLAINTES

POUR LES PLAINTES LIÉES AUX ACTIVITÉS DES PROJETS PREFOREST ET PROREP

1^{ère} étape

Soumettez votre plainte

Qui contacter pour porter plainte?

A Les comités locaux de gestion des plaintes pour les projets PREFOREST/PROREP



Chef du village

Point focal plainte

Sous-préfet



B Contacter le bureau de la FAO au Congo

> Par courrier
14 Rue Béhagle-BP972-
Brazzaville

> Par téléphone
06 741 81 76
05 696 11 14

> Par Email
fao-cg@fao.org



C Mécanisme de recours indépendant du Fonds Vert pour le climat (Le bailleur)



Si c'est PREFOREST contacter GCF:

IRM@GCFUND.ORG
Bureau: (+82) 10-4296-1337 (kst)
Mobile: (+82) 32-458-6186 (kst)
Formulaire en ligne: <https://irm.Greenclimate.Fund/case-register/file-complaint>



Si c'est PROREP contacter (CAFI):

- Par la poste: CAFI Secretariat, Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement, Maison internationale de l'Environnement, 7^{ème} étage, 11-13 chemin des anémones, Châteline CH 1219, Suisse
- Par courriel à secretariatcafi@gmail.com

2^{ème} étape

Reconnaissance et examen de la plainte



Nous vous répondrons dans un délai de 5 jours. Votre demande sera ensuite examinée en vue d'une action ultérieure.



3^{ème} étape

Résolution du problème



Après avoir examiné votre plainte, nous vous contacterons dans un délai de 10 jours



4^{ème} étape

Clôture de la plainte/du cas

Vous recevrez une lettre de notification sur la résolution de la plainte.



Projets de "Réduction des émissions de gaz à effet de serre provenant des forêts" et de "Renforcement du potentiel en Bois énergie durable" en République du Congo

Source: FAO Congo

10 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

Systems are being put in place to monitor the project impacts on indigenous peoples. Indicators have been developed to measure and guide the project team, and these may be found in the Implementation Plan (See Section 14). The indicators in the Implementation Plan will be inserted in the overall project monitoring system. In addition, the role of indigenous people to participate in direct monitoring will also be considered in the monitoring strategy. Several mechanisms are already operational to facilitate monitoring:

Field visits – face-to-face monitoring visits are one of the most important strategies to ascertain the impacts of the project on indigenous peoples and to assess their satisfaction with activities and the roles of implementation partners. Field visits are conducted to each village at least once every two months. The Back-to-Office-Report serves as documentation of these visits. Photos from field visits are also stored for documentation.

Ad-hoc meetings with the Local Committees – the PMU organizes periodic meetings with the Local Committees to discuss project progress and challenges. These meetings are currently held on an adhoc basis. The Local Committees have an indigenous representative and topics of discussion include the participation of indigenous peoples in project activities.

Gender monitoring – A monitoring system has been put in place to keep track of the gender of participants in all activities, with an objective of achieving at least 35% women’s participation in all project activities. This tool serves to also monitor participation of indigenous women.

Grievance mechanism database – Grievances submitted to the project are tracked in a database that records all the details of the grievance as well as the resolution. If a grievance originates in an indigenous village, this fact will be noted.

FPIC database – A database has been set up to track the progress of the FPIC process in each village, including indigenous villages, and to register any concerns or issues raised.

Reports – FAO prepares reports to the GCF on a biannual basis (semester and annual). These reports provide updates on the progress towards implementing the project’s Indigenous People’s Plan.

Evaluations – a mid-term and final evaluation of the project will be conducted. These independent evaluations will include analysis on the project’s progress towards fully involving and benefiting indigenous peoples.

11 Budget

The budget for the activities has been included in the Implementation Plan. Please see Section 14.

12 Implementation Arrangements

The PMU holds the main responsibility for implementation of the IPP, with the Specialist on Safeguards and Gender taking a leading role. All members of the PMU are informed on the IPP and responsible to align their workplans to the IPP objectives.

Collaborating partners include: GRET, PRONAR, CACO RED

Table 22. Implementation arrangements

Entity	Role and Responsibility in Implementation of the IPP
PMU	-Ensure the inclusion of indigenous populations in activities -Support indigenous people in the implementation of the project through training
GRET	Support Indigenous Peoples in implementing activities
PRONAR	Provide indigenous people with secure land for planting trees
Ministry of Justice	Ensure respect for Indigenous Peoples' rights through inclusive consultations and taking their opinions into account
Selection Committee	Select beneficiaries and ensuring the presence of indigenous people as beneficiaries
Indigenous Communities	Represent Indigenous Peoples to facilitate their integration
CACO RED	Facilitate contacts with indigenous populations and providing support for consultations

In addition, the PMU liaises with civil society organizations that represent indigenous peoples including *Réseau Nationale des Peuples Autochtones du Congo* (RENAPAC). RENAPAC was involved in the initial project consultations and regular updates have been shared through the project bulletins.

Please see the Implementation Plan in Section 14 for a timeline of the key activities.

13 Cultural Heritage Protection Plan

13.1 Recognition of traditional knowledge

Indigenous peoples in the project districts typically do not have a strong written or oral history in the area. The elders who have been consulted claimed that families have lived in the villages for generations. Indigenous peoples have a deep knowledge of the forest, tree species and animal species. They also have their own traditional medicinal cures and traditional beekeeping. In addition, they have their dances and rituals (festivals, funerals).

Radio broadcasts will be developed to enhance respect for traditional knowledge and reduce prejudice.

13.2 Patrimony and cultural sites

During the FPIC consultation process, the project team requested information on important cultural sites that might overlap with the proposed project area. It was found that there are no cultural sites (e.g. sacred areas, burial grounds) in the areas of the project.

14 Implementation Plan

Components (from PRODOC)	Results (from PRODOC)	Activities	Target	Indicators	Timeline	Budget	Responsible Entity(s)
Component 1: Land-use and resources planning and strengthening of land access and security rights	New areas of land have a secured access and tenure rights	Participatory mapping with indigenous communities	5 indigenous villages engaged in participatory mapping	# of participatory maps	Q3 2025	\$ 18 000	Regional Coord., National Coord.
		Survey on tenure rights of indigenous peoples in the target area	5 villages surveyed	# of villages surveyed	Q4 2024	\$ 1 000	Safeguards & Gender Specialist, Int. Specialist in Tenure, Gender, and Indigenous Peoples
		Demarcation of land parcels for indigenous households using Open Tenure	5 villages with indigenous peoples participating	# of parcels # of beneficiary indigenous households	Q2 2025 – Q4 2026	\$ 20 000	Safeguards & Gender Specialist, Int. Specialist in Tenure, Gender, and Indigenous Peoples
		Radio broadcast on indigenous land rights	1 program broadcast throughout the project area	# of broadcasts # of listeners	Q2 2025	\$ 500	Safeguards & Gender Specialist, Int. Specialist in Tenure, Gender, and Indigenous Peoples + Comm. Expert
Component 2: Deployment of low emission climate resilient agroforestry and forestry systems	New area of low-emission and climate resilient agroforestry and forestry systems are established to reduce slash-and-burn agriculture and	Awareness raising with Bantu landowners to provide land to indigenous peoples	5-6 Bantu landowners are sensitized	# of meetings # of Bantu landowners contacted	Ongoing	\$ 3 000	Safeguards & Gender Specialist International Specialist in Tenure, Gender, and Indigenous Peoples
		Support indigenous people to establish agroforestry systems	79 hectares allocated to 50 indigenous families to establish	# of indigenous families # of hectares	Q4 2025	\$ 108 000	Agroforestry Expert

	provide a sustainable fuelwood supply source by farmers		agroforestry systems				
	New area of degraded forest/land are restored through assisted natural regeneration /ANR)	Encourage participation of indigenous peoples in the ANR activities through awareness raising	5 indigenous villages will have awareness raising activities on ANR	# of indigenous peoples participating # of indigenous villages with awareness raising	Q2 2025 – Q4 2027	\$ 9 000	Agroforestry Expert
		Implement ANR with indigenous people	5 villages will participate in ANR	# of indigenous people participating # of hectares with ANR by indigenous peoples	Q2 2025 – Q4 2027	\$ 13 000	Agroforestry Expert
		Conduct capacity building for indigenous peoples on new models of agroforestry	5 indigenous villages will have training on new agroforestry models	# of indigenous villages with agroforestry training	2025	\$ 4 800	Agroforestry Expert
Component 3: Strengthening national agricultural financing structures, business capacities	Improve access to markets	Form platforms to facilitate access to markets that include indigenous peoples	3 commercial platforms will be put in place to which indigenous have access	# of indigenous peoples in the platforms	2026	\$ 5 000	Agro-economist Expert
Overarching Actions		Organize workshops on national FPIC guidelines in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice.	Develop National FPIC Guidelines	# of national guidelines developed	Q1 – Q4 2024	\$ 0 (n/a) UN-REDD Co-finance	Safeguards & Gender Specialist
		Encourage the submission of complaints through the grievance mechanism. Publicize the project	Functional grievance mechanism	# of grievance mechanisms developed	Ongoing	\$ 4 000	Safeguards & Gender Specialist

		grievance mechanism. In addition, facilitate in-person discussions with Indigenous communities (and separately with indigenous women) to collect feedback and any complaints.	accessible to indigenous peoples	# of complaints received # of complaints resolved # of community meetings to introduce the mechanism			
		Coordinate and involve civil society organizations such as RENAPAC and COCA REDD in implementation.	RENAPAC will participate in radio program development	# of meetings with RENAPAC and COCA REDD # of radio broadcasts with RENAPAC/COCA REDD	Ongoing	\$ 1 000	Safeguards & Gender Specialist
		Ensure women's involvement through activities specifically targeted to indigenous women.	Trainings on financial literacy, agroforestry in all 5 indigenous villages	# of indigenous women participating in trainings on agroforestry and financial literacy	2025 TBD	See above (>35% of meeting budgets)	Agro-economist
		Raise awareness on the issues of child labor, gender, and GBV.	Radio program on GBV produced and broadcast in the project area	# of radio broadcasts on these topics	2025	\$2 000	Safeguards & Gender Specialist Comm. Expert

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Relevant Laws

[Loi n° 5 - 2011 du 25 février 2011 portant promotion et protection des droits des populations autochtones.](#)

Date of text: 25 February 2011

[Loi organique n° 31-2017 du 7 août 2017 déterminant l'organisation, la composition et le fonctionnement du Conseil consultatif des sages et des notabilités traditionnelles.](#)

Date of text: 07 August 2017

[Décret n° 2019-201 du 12 juillet 2019 fixant les procédures de consultation et de participation des populations autochtones aux projets et programmes de développement socio-économique.](#)

Date of text: 12 July 2019

[Décret n° 2019-202 du 12 juillet 2019 fixant les mesures spéciales visant à faciliter l'accès des populations autochtones aux services sociaux et de santé et à protéger leur pharmacopée.](#)

Date of text: 12 July 2019

[Décret n° 2019-203 du 12 juillet 2019 fixant la composition et les modalités de fonctionnement du comité interministériel de suivi et d'évaluation de la promotion et de la protection des droits des populations autochtones.](#)

Date of text: 12 July 2019

[Décret n° 2019-200 du 12 juillet 2019 déterminant les modalités de protection des biens culturels, des sites sacrés et des sites spirituels des populations autochtones.](#)

Date of text: 12 July 2019

[Décret n° 2019-204 du 12 juillet 2019 portant mesures spéciales facilitant l'accès des enfants autochtones à l'éducation et des adultes à l'alphabétisation.](#)

Date of text: 12 July 2019

[Décret n° 2019-199 du 12 juillet 2019 portant mesures spéciales d'octroi des pièces d'état civil aux populations autochtones.](#)

Date of text: 12 July 2019

Websites

<https://www.iwgia.org/en/republic-of-congo/4641-iw-2022-republic-of-the-congo.html>

ANNEX

Annex 1. Survey / Focus Group Discussion

- 1. General**
 - a. Name of village/hamlet
 - b. Location of the hamlet
 - c. Relationship and distance to Bantu village
 - d. Number of families

- 2. History**
 - e. Date of settlement
 - f. Reason for settlement

- 3. Local governance**
 - g. Indigenous chief
 - h. Issues/challenges
 - i. Dispute resolution

- 4. Tenure rights and access to land and resources**
 - j. Access to resources
 - k. Security of rights

- 5. Socio-economic situation / livelihoods**
 - l. Livelihood strategies
 - m. Income
 - n. Fuelwood
 - o. Access to finance

- 6. Health and Education**
 - p. Schools and attendance
 - q. Issues/challenges

- 7. Situation of Indigenous women and children**
 - r. Women's activities, special knowledge
 - s. Issues/challenges

Annex 2. FPIC Consultation Status Table

Village	Ethnic group	M/F	Observations	Follow up Actions	Consent status	Date of Consent / Refusal	Report Validated	Agreement signed	PV Signed	Photos
1. 2. District of MADINGOU (Department of Bouenza)										
Mpalou	Bantou		Give significant importance to the participation of women in the activities.	Submit a question to the local committee on the fence of the plot by the beneficiaries	Accepted	07/05/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nkieni	Bantou		Take into account the rural exodus and select some villagers living in Madingou and having activities in Nkiéni		Accepted	06/05/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kingoye Moudoko	Bantou		Participants expressed their concern regarding the responsibility of uprooting after the project and the possibility that acacia seeds grow elsewhere	Can we plan for stump removal at the end?	Accepted	03/05/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Moussenengue	Bantou		That the project make available to female land chiefs the inputs for the RNA of areas not selected by the project.	The proposal is submitted to the PMU for action	Accepted	06/05/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bitoto	Bantou		A request to the project to give cuttings	Is access to land an obstacle for some families?	Accepted	04/05/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kinsimba	Bantou		The employment of young people is a motivation to participate with the project.	Follow-up on the request for gloves	Accepted	03/05/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Village	Ethnic group	M/F	Observations	Follow up Actions	Consent status	Date of Consent / Refusal	Report Validated	Agreement signed	PV Signed	Photos
Moupepe	Bantou		Lack of experience with agricultural credit.		Accepted	05/05/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ndiba	Bantou		Possibility of people who will ask us for money to carry out the activities.	Request submitted to the PMU	Accepted	05/05/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mbaye Loango (nseke pembe)	Bantou		Sign good agreements with the landowners to avoid that the beneficiaries receive threats from the landowners	Follow-up of the supply of cuttings in the village	Accepted	04/05/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. 4. District of MPOUYA (Department Plateaux)										
Ngantsakie	Bantou		Requests for gloves to do the planting	Organize a meeting with the landowners of this village to better understand the situation and persuade them to accept the project	Refused	03/04/24	Yes	No	No	yes
Ndzoulako	Bantou		People want to quickly exploit the nurseries	They request the presence of landowners in the local committee	Accepted	04/05/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ntoto motani	Bantou		Ensure agreements with the product purchasing structures	Answer provided by the PMU	Accepted	05/05/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5. 6. District of HINDA (Department Kouilou)										
Tchivoula	Bantou		Potential for jealousy in the selection of beneficiaries		Accepted	17/06/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tchicanou	Bantou		Request to buy cassava cuttings in the village	Check if the community can make charcoal at the end of the project	Accepted	16/06/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Siala	Bantou		There are land conflicts in this village.	To investigate the problem of soil pollution by oil companies	Accepted	16/06/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Village	Ethnic group	M/F	Observations	Follow up Actions	Consent status	Date of Consent / Refusal	Report Validated	Agreement signed	PV Signed	Photos
Loeme	Bantou		They have been disappointed by other projects that have not achieved their objectives	Submit a question to the local committee on the fence of the plot by the beneficiaries	Accepted	15/06/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pondila	Bantou		Request for shoes, etc. to work	/	Accepted	17/06/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Diamant	Bantou		Request to include young people who have left for Brazzaville as beneficiaries	Plan for stump removal at the end?	Accepted	14/06/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nkumbi	Bantou		This village has bad experiences with land rights. Request for fruit trees	The proposal is submitted to the PMU for action	Accepted	14/06/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nkomi	Bantou		Asks if people who live in Brazza but who are originally from the village can be beneficiaries	Is access to land an obstacle for some families?	Accepted	15/06/24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7. 8. District of NGO (Department Plateaux)										
Onianva	Indigenous Peoples		Select indigenous people for desilting work; Facilitate indigenous people's access to larger areas.	Prioritize IP in all planting activities?	accepted	17-oct-23	Yes	yes	yes	yes
Onianva	Bantou		Is the transport of cuttings taken into account in the project? Given the distance separating the villages from the site	Make sure the transport of bouture is included in the Service Provider contract	accepted	08-nov-23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ombima	Indigenous Peoples		The site is too far from the village, so children can't accompany adults to the site. The village lacks the necessary equipment.	Providing the equipment to the beneficiaries	accepted	08-nov-23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ombima	Bantou		how will the micro-projects be financed?	The project will make sure that the beneficiaries are in relation with IMF (Microfinance Institutes)	accepted	17-oct-23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Village	Ethnic group	M/F	Observations	Follow up Actions	Consent status	Date of Consent / Refusal	Report Validated	Agreement signed	PV Signed	Photos
Oyonfoula (Focus groupe)	Indigenous Peoples		That the project provides us with tarpaulins for camping	To follow up with the coordination of the project	accepted	08-nov-23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oyonfoula	Bantou		Transport of "boutures" and personnel from the villages to the site	To follow up with the coordination of the project	accepted	09-nov-23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ngampion (Focus groupe)	Indigenous Peoples		It's a long way from the site to the village. There's also a river to cross. Can the project build a bridge?	To follow up with the coordination of the project	accepted	09-nov-23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ngampion	Bantou		Will people be selected to plant the trees?	Local and indigenous people are selected for planting activities through association/group in each village	accepted	09-nov-23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9.	10. District of IGNIE (Department Pool)									
Yié	Bantou		Will everyone on the lists be a beneficiary?	A selection process is conducted through Local Commitee, using criteria	accepted	11-nov-23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bambou mingali	Bantou		Will the project provide beneficiaries with clothing?	To follow up with the coordination of the project	accepted	10-nov-23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Imbimi	Bantou		Will the land be returned to the beneficiaries?	No. The land is the property of the State. Only the droit d'usage is provided for a specific time	accepted	11-nov-23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mbamba	Bantou		The project will have to provide us with tools, as ours are in danger of wearing out.	To follow up with the coordination of the project	accepted	10-nov-23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Annex 4: Chance Finds Procedure



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

PREFOREST CONGO

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

GCP /PRC/021/GCF

Chance Finds Procedure



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This document is intended to be used solely for the purpose of FAO projects disclosure

February 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and rationale

This Cultural Heritage Management Plan provides PREFOREST (Project for the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Forests in Five Departments of the Republic of the Congo) with a safeguarding instrument to ensure its proper implementation.

The Environmental and Social Management Framework that accompanies the implementation of the National REDD+ Strategy in the Republic of the Congo shows that, in addition to the presence of Indigenous Populations, the national territory contains an important rich and diverse heritage, natural sites and exceptional biodiversity, and probably unknown archaeological or historical remains. This argument justifies the development of this chance finds procedure.

The chance finds procedure has been prepared in accordance with the regulatory framework of the Republic of the Congo in the field and ESS 9 – **Cultural Heritage**, applicable to projects funded by FAO and the Green Climate Fund (GCF): **PS8 – Cultural Heritage**. It presents the general procedures and methods to be applied for the optimal management of cultural property that may be impacted by certain project activities during their implementation (see details in Chapter 6).

ESS 9 aims to facilitate the preservation, protection and promotion of cultural heritage in FAO programmes, taking into account the UNESCO Cultural Heritage Conventions, the International Treaty on Phylogenetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and any other national or international legal instruments that may have implications for the use of cultural heritage. FAO is at the forefront of international recognition of the concept of farmers' rights, which are linked to the traditional knowledge of farmers and indigenous and local communities.

According to Article 2 of LAW No. 8-2010 of 26 July 2010 on the protection of the national cultural and natural heritage in the Republic of the Congo, cultural heritage means all movable and immovable property which, whether religious or profane, is of interest for history, art, science and technology. The national natural heritage is understood to mean all physical, geological and biological formations that exist independently of human creation and are of interest from the point of view of natural beauty, science and conservation, such as forests, rivers, waterfalls (Article 3).

FAO and the GCF do not fund projects that would irreparably destroy unreproducible cultural property but rather support the protection and restoration of cultural property.

1.2 Objectives

The main objectives of the chance finds procedure at the project area level are:

- Assess the potential impacts of the project activities on cultural heritage;
- Identify the archaeological and sacred sites in the project's area of influence in order to assess their scientific and heritage interest, and to classify them according to their importance;
- Propose mitigation and enhancement measures to preserve heritage.

2. Review of the legal and institutional framework applicable to cultural heritage

This chapter presents the legal and institutional context related to cultural and natural heritage to be considered when implementing PREFOREST.

2.1. International conventions

Two main international texts related to cultural and natural heritage have been signed and ratified by the Republic of the Congo. These texts relate to:

- The Charter of the African Cultural Renaissance, Khartoum, Sudan 2006. This Charter replaces the Cultural Charter of Africa adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in 1978
- The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 1972, Paris, 16 November 1972, ratified by the Congo on 10/12/1987. The 1972 Convention deals with both the protection of the cultural and natural heritage in the same document.

2.2. National regulatory framework in relation to cultural and natural heritage

As soon as it became sovereign, the Congolese State expressed its intention to take charge of and protect its national cultural and natural heritage, and to develop a coherent cultural policy. In this respect, several initiatives have been taken in the regulatory and institutional framework. Congolese legislation does not distinguish between cultural and natural heritage in their protection.

- Article 28 of the Constitution of 25 October 2015 guarantees the right to culture and cultural identity.
- Law 32/65 of 12 August 1965/Decree No. 68/45 of 19 February 1968: This is the first text of the post-independent Congo to deal with the safeguarding of cultural heritage and its development.
- Law No. 003-91 of 3 April 1991, on the Protection of the Environment: The cultural, historical and architectural heritage is protected by this law (Article 9).
- Law No. 37-2008 of 28 November 2008 on wildlife and protected areas: Law No. 37-2008 of 28 November 2008 sets out the fundamental principles and general conditions for the conservation and sustainable management of wildlife, habitats and ecosystems, defines the different types of PAs in Congo (art. 6) and recalls the rules of its own management (arts. 12 to 16).
- Law No. 8-2010 of 26 July 2010 on the protection of the national cultural and natural heritage: This law establishes and protects the national cultural and natural heritage. It also regulates the protection of archaeological excavations and the circulation of cultural property.
- Law No. 9-2010 of 26 July 2010 on the orientation of cultural policy: This text reaffirms the State's desire to be the main promoter of cultural development.
- Law 5-2011 of 25 February 2011 on the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples, a law for which the Republic of the Congo has received much praise internationally.

2.3 Green Climate Fund Regulations

PS8 of the GCF safeguards applies to programmes and projects to which GCF contributes and which may have an impact on or threaten tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

2.4 FAO Regulations

ESS 9: Cultural Heritage aims to facilitate the preservation, protection and promotion of cultural heritage in FAO programmes, in line with the UNESCO Cultural Heritage Conventions, the International Treaty on Phylogenetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and any other national or international legal instrument that may have implications for the use of cultural heritage. The objectives of the NES 9 are to:

- 1) To protect cultural heritage, including food heritage, from deterioration, unjustified modification, disturbance, disappearance or misuse and to promote its conservation, safeguarding and protection.
- 2) Ensure equitable sharing of benefits arising from the integration and use of cultural heritage in FAO programmes.
- 3) Promote effective consultation with stakeholders, including women and youth, on the preservation, protection, enhancement and management of cultural heritage.

Key definitions:

- Tangible cultural heritage includes movable or immovable objects, sites, structures, groups of structures, human settlements, and natural features and landscapes that are archaeological, paleontological, historical, architectural, religious, aesthetic, cultural, etc.
- Intangible cultural heritage, also known as living heritage, includes uses, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills, as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated with them, that communities and groups consider to be part of their cultural heritage.

ESS 9 applies to programmes and projects to which FAO contributes and which may have an impact on or threaten tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The application of ESS 9 is determined during the environmental and social analysis.

3. Roles and responsibilities of individual projects and other interested parties

The mechanism set up for the ESMP will also be responsible for the implementation of the cultural heritage management plan. However, the implementation of a Heritage Protection Management Plan requires a strong involvement of the Ministry of Culture and the Arts.

PREFOREST has a team in charge of environmental and social issues, which is responsible for the implementation of environmental and social safeguard documents. This team, although multidisciplinary, does not have an expert in cultural heritage management. To this end, and only in the event of identification of a case of cultural heritage discovery in the project area, PREFOREST will rely (provision of financial and logistical means) on the General Directorate of Heritage and Archives, to carry out the mission assigned to it.

4.Chance finds procedure

4.1 Management and mitigation measures

Activities at risk to cultural heritage must be subject to a prior review. The PMU must take into account cultural heritage issues in the implementation of the project.

The Directorate of Archaeological Excavations, in charge of cataloguing and supervising archaeological excavations, will be involved in the search for measures to improve and mitigate the potential effects and impacts on cultural heritage, and will also involve consultants in the field of archaeology, cultural anthropology, etc.

The measures envisaged to mitigate the impact of the project on cultural heritage must cover a wide spectrum. The basic principle is to avoid any loss or damage, to mitigate or compensate for any damage caused. It is preferable to completely avoid negative effects, which may change the design of the project if possible. If not, a compromise can be found.

In case of incidental discovery of archaeological sites, historical sites, remains and objects, including graveyards and/or individual graves during project implementation, the project shall:

- Stop the activities in the area of the chance find to avoid any further damage; - Delineate the discovered site or area;
- Secure the site to prevent any damage or loss of removable objects: the partner shall take every precaution to prevent its workmen or any other person from removing or damaging such objects; He must also warn the project owner of this discovery and carry out his instructions as to how to dispose of it;
- Notify the supervisory Safeguards Specialist within the PMU who, in turn, will notify the responsible local and departmental authorities immediately (within 24 hours or less);
- make an immediate declaration to the competent administrative authority (the services in charge of cultural heritage) with regard to the procedures to be followed: a discovery of a movable or immovable nature must be kept and immediately declared to the administrative authority
- Responsible local and/or departmental authorities would oversee protecting and preserving the site before deciding on subsequent appropriate procedures. This would require a preliminary evaluation of the findings to be performed by government approved archaeologists. The significance and importance of the findings should be assessed according to the various criteria relevant to cultural heritage; those include the aesthetic, historic, scientific or research, social and economic values;
- Decisions on how to handle the finding shall be taken by the responsible local and departmental authorities. This could include changes in the layout (such as when finding an irremovable remain of cultural or archaeological importance) conservation, preservation, restoration and salvage;
- Implementation for the authority decision concerning the management of the finding shall be communicated in writing by relevant local authorities; and
- Project activities could resume only after permission is given from the responsible local or provincial authorities concerning safeguard of the heritage.

To be noted that it is for the State to decide on the measures to be taken with regard to discoveries of an immovable nature made by chance, in accordance with national legislation.

4.2 Recommendations / improvement measures

- 1) The project sites will have to be mapped.
- 2) Almost nothing is known about the area of impact of the project from an archaeological point of view. It is therefore important that the traces of ancient occupation of the area of influence must be marked if any identified during the project implementation.
- 3) For the Chance Find Procedure to be effective, the project manager must ensure that all personnel on the proposed project area site understand the Chance Find Procedure and the importance of adhering to it if cultural heritage resources are encountered

5. Implementation schedule and budget

The following table provides the costs of the CFP management plan implementation.

Table 1: CFP Cost

Proposed actions	Costs in US\$
Capacity building for the implementation of measures for the safeguarding of physical cultural heritage (material, human, technical and other)	PM
Inventory (project target areas) of all project sites, with mapping	PM
Establishment of rapid response mechanisms to manage incidental discoveries	PM

NB: This budget is already covered by the budget of the overall environmental and social management plan.

6. Monitoring and reporting

Reports are prepared every six months (biannual and annual reports) with a detailed section on the safeguards applicable to the project, including the implementation of the Chance Finds Procedure.

Annex 5: Pesticides Management Plan



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

PREFOREST CONGO

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

GCP /PRC/021/GCF

Pesticides Management Plan (PMP)



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This document is intended to be used solely for the purpose of FAO projects disclosure

November 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

The Pesticide Management Plan (PMP) is an instrument available to PREFOREST to minimize the potential negative effects of pesticides and other chemicals on human and animal health and on the environment by promoting the use of biological control and integrated pest management methods. During nursery and plantation development operations, agrochemicals such as pesticides, herbicides and other chemicals could be used in conjunction with project activities. The PMP has been prepared in accordance with the Republic of the Congo's regulatory framework in this field and the guidelines of the FAO Plant Production and Protection Division.

1.2 Objective of the Pesticide Management Plan

The PMP aims to reduce dependence on pesticides by promoting pest management, and to prevent pesticides purchased by, or on the advice of, FAO from harming people, animals, plants or the environment. It also serves to limit FAO's reputational risk and liability by providing advice on pest management and on the selection and use of pesticides in FAO projects. The rules and procedures described apply to all pesticide procurement and advice on pesticide procurement, within the framework of FAO field projects and activities implemented by subcontractors. It is expected that negative effects from the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers will be minor and localized and can be mitigated during project implementation.

SECTION I. POLICIES AND REGULATION

2. Relevant legal and institutional framework related to the management of pests and pesticides

The legal framework relating directly and/or indirectly to pest control and pesticide management involves several national laws and regulations, as well as international agreements, treaties and conventions ratified by the Republic of the Congo.

2.1. International conventions

The Republic of the Congo has ratified several international legal instruments concerning pesticide management, including the following:

- ✓ **the International Plant Protection Convention**, ratified on December 14, 2004: to ensure common and effective action to prevent the spread and introduction of organisms harmful to plants and plant products, and to promote the adoption of appropriate measures to control them, the contracting parties undertake to take the legislative, technical and regulatory measures specified in this Convention and in the supplementary agreements pursuant to Article XVI.

- ✓ **The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade**, ratified on October 25, 2005, is a binding legal instrument concerning the illegal trade of internationally banned or restricted chemicals.
- ✓ **The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)**, ratified on October 5, 2005, concerns the reduction and/or elimination of emissions and discharges and, where appropriate, the elimination of the production, use and illegal traffic of persistent organic pollutants.
- ✓ **The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal**, ratified on February 12, 2007, requires Parties to ensure the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes, including their disposal.
- ✓ **The Bamako Convention on the Import into Africa of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes from Non-Contracting Parties subjects** Controls movements within the African continent under a system similar to that of the Basel Convention; it requires Parties to ensure the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes, and in particular their disposal.
- ✓ **The FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides**, revised in 2002. The objectives of the Code are to establish voluntary rules of conduct for all public and private bodies dealing with, or involved in, the distribution and use of pesticides, particularly where national legislation regulating pesticides is non-existent or inadequate (articles 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; 10);
- ✓ **The Sanitary and Phytosanitary System (SPS) agreement**. As a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Congo undertook on March 27, 1997, to comply with the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, which commits the States concerned not to use sanitary and phytosanitary measures to hinder international trade, while recognizing the need to protect plants and plant products.
- ✓ **Common regulations on the registration of pesticides in the CEMAC zone in 2005**, as part of the creation of the Central African Pesticides Committee (CPAC), the main aim of these regulations is to pool the expertise of member states in the evaluation and registration of pesticides, in order to ensure their rational and judicious use, as well as the protection of people and the environment.
- ✓ **The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer** is managed by the Ministry of the Environment, but calls on the Ministry of Agriculture for the use of methyl bromide in the fumigation of plants and plant products (by which we mean crops and harvests).

NB: Regarding Pesticide Management, all the above-mentioned conventions have been ratified, but not all of them have been translated into national legislation.

FAO guidance and rules on pest and pesticide management are available in the following:
<https://www.fao.org/pest-and-pesticide-management/guidelines-standards/faowho-joint-meeting-on-pesticide-management-jmpm/guidelines-tools/en/>

2.2. National regulation

These are national regulatory texts whose provisions apply directly or indirectly to pest and pesticide management activities:

- Law n°003/91 of April 23, 1991 on environmental protection, in particular its provisions concerning the production, import, sale and use of agricultural, phytosanitary, industrial and consumer chemical products, which may be managed either jointly with other sectors, or specifically for them (cf. Articles 27, 34, 35, 36, 38, 57, 58, 84);
- Law no. 3-2007 of January 24, 2007 regulating imports, exports and re-exports, which covers aspects relating to phytosanitary control;
- Law n°52-1256 of November 26, 1952, relating to the organization of plant protection in

territories under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Overseas France¹;

- Decree no. 2010-694 of 4 November 2010, on the creation, remit, organisation and operation of the Pesticides Management Committee, in accordance with the common regulations on the approval of pesticides in the CEMAC zone.
 - Decree no. 2003-176 of 08 August 2003, on the organisation and responsibilities of the Directorate-General for Agriculture, which defines the tasks of the Directorate for Agricultural Production and Plant Protection, to which the Plant Protection Department belongs;
 - Decree no. 99-167 of 23 August 1999, amending decree no. 95-147 of 8 August 1995, introducing compulsory inspection of goods and chemical products destined for the Congo;
 - Decree no. 55-1219 of September 13, 1955, establishing the conditions for application of the law of November 26, 1952 on plant protection;
 - Order n°1974/MAEPPF/PRF/MEFB of May 23, 2003, setting inspection fees, zoo-sanitary and phytosanitary services and regulatory health documents;
 - Order no. 3401 of 24 June 1976, creating phytosanitary police stations to ensure the control of plants or plant products coming from within the country or from abroad;
 - Order no. 2448/MSAS/DGSP of 08/6/1991, on the creation and organisation of hygiene and sanitation centres and branches in the People's Republic of Congo (article 17);
 - Order no. 2866/MAE/MEFB of 3 July 2008, setting the fees for inspections, zoo health services, plant health services and regulatory health documents;
 - Circular n°156/MAE/DGA/DPAPV of November 11, 2014 concerning the ban on POP (persistent organic pollutant) pesticides;
 - Circular n°520/MEFE/CAB of April 9, 2003 on the import, storage, burial, immersion, dumping and spreading of chemicals, toxic waste, radioactive pollutants or any other similar hazardous product;
- Ordinance no. 04/89 of January 17, 1989, exempting from all import duties and taxes products such as insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, fertilizers of all types, veterinary medicines, etc. (Articles 1 and 2).

These laws, decrees and orders serve as a reference base for phytosanitary legislation in Congo. In addition, the FAO Guidelines, contained in the [Code of Good Practice for the Distribution and Use of Pesticides](#), constitute a supporting arsenal to all these texts. Due to insufficient dissemination, these regulatory texts remain poorly known to the public. This may explain, to a certain extent, the free circulation of certain products containing the incriminated active ingredients. In addition, although the country has the texts concerning the regulation of phytosanitary products, they need to be updated to bring them into line with the Republic of the Congo's international commitments.

The Republic of the Congo has not published a list of pesticides whose use is banned in the country. However, the [Pesticides Action Network International](#) publishes a consolidated list of banned pesticides which may be referred to in case of doubt.

2.2 Institutional framework for pest control and pesticide management

At sub-regional level, within the framework of common regulations in the CEMAC zone, pesticide approval has been entrusted to the *Comité Inter-Etats des Pesticides d'Afrique Centrale (CPAC)*. At national level, pest and pesticide management is the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, which oversees the Pesticide Management Committee, charged with implementing CPAC decisions in accordance with common regulations on pesticide registration in the CEMAC zone. Pesticide management also involves other public and private players, whose roles and modes of involvement may vary from an environmental and health point of view.

2.3.1 African Interstate Pesticides Committee (CPAC)

Pesticide registration is the responsibility of the *Comité Inter-Etats des Pesticides d'Afrique Centrale (CPAC)*, a specialized body of the Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale (CEMAC). The aim of the CPAC is to clean up agricultural production to protect the health of local consumers and the environment, as well as the competitiveness of this production on the international market.

2.3.2 Public sector players

- **Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAEP)**

This ministry plays a leading role in the management of pests and pesticides through the following structures: (i) The Plant Protection Directorate (DPV); (ii) The attached central services: *Center National des Semences Améliorées (CNSA)*; *Centre de Vulgarisation des Techniques Agricoles (CVTA)*; *Centre de Démonstration des Techniques Agricoles (CDTA)*; *Centre National de Lutte Contre les Maladies des Cultures (CNLMC)*; *Centre de Vulgarisation de Techniques d'Elevage (CVTE)*; *Center National d'Appui aux Cultures Pérennes (CNACP)*; *Centre de Recherche Zoo vétérinaire (CRVZ)*; (iii) *Directions Départementales de l'Agriculture (DDA)* through the departmental plant protection services and phytosanitary control posts. The MAEP has the human capacity to monitor and apply agricultural pesticide policies but will need to strengthen its control instruments. The *Comité National de Gestion des Pesticides* also needs support to enable it to be functional and operational.

The Plant Protection Division (*Direction de la Protection des Végétaux - DPV*) is responsible for controlling professional approvals and imported and distributed phytopharmaceutical products. Controls are carried out by phytosanitary inspectors at borders and within departments. The DPV is also responsible for training in product use, as well as managing out-of-date stocks and reusing packaging.

In the field, this structure encounters enormous difficulties in checking the conformity of products sold or used. Lacking sufficient human and material resources, as well as specialized laboratories, most of these controls are not carried out.

- **The Ministry of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation** in its role relating to genetic improvement (creation of resistant crop varieties) and conducting pesticide trials for their impact on agricultural production, the soil and the environment. This is achieved through its agronomic and forestry research institutions.
- **The Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF)** in its role of reforestation, afforestation through the National Reforestation Service (SNR) and the National Afforestation and Reforestation Program (ProNAR) which use pesticides during the treatment of seedlings in the nursery and as part of environmental protection.
- **The Ministry of Health and Population**, in its vector control role, makes use of pesticides, including those declared a “persistent organic pollutant” such as DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane).
- **The Ministry of Commerce and Consumption**, in its role of regulating trade, has a law regulating imports, exports and re-exports, and dealing with aspects linked to phytosanitary control.
- **The Ministry of Finance, Budget and Public Portfolio** (through the General Directorate of Customs) is also involved in pesticide management.
- **The Ministry of Industry**, through the Congolese Agency for Standardization and Quality, is responsible for standardization, certification and quality promotion in the socio-economic

sectors.

- **Comité de Gestion des Pesticides (CNGP):** Under the authority of the Minister for Agriculture, the CNGP was created in 2010, with overall responsibility for pre- and post-registration control of pesticides:
 - ✓ Monitor the toxicovigilance of registered pesticides or those that have received provisional authorization for sale from the CPAC
 - ✓ Implement pesticide quality control procedures and standards
 - ✓ Carry out pre- and post-registration checks on pesticides
 - ✓ Control the maximum residue limits of products intended for import-export and local consumption
 - ✓ Ensure the smooth running of the national branch of the CEMAC/CPAC pesticide analysis and quality laboratory
 - ✓ Issue an opinion on the appropriateness of modifying or withdrawing registration or provisional sales authorization
 - ✓ Promote the creation of a national laboratory for pesticide analysis and food quality control

2.3.3 Private sector players

- Pointe-Noire-based Chimagro and Chimie Afrique Congo, in their role as importers of chemicals, including pesticides.
- Approved distributors such as Main Verte, Ets Matondo, Agrostock and others act as importers and distributors.
- Unlicensed and itinerant distributors in their role of selling pesticides through various (formal and informal) distribution channels. We are increasingly witnessing a proliferation of non-specialized players which are difficult to monitor
- Veterinarians, in their role as service providers and sellers of pesticides.
- Zoo and phytosanitary service companies, in their role of disinfecting, de-insecticizing and de-ratting warehouses and farms, and treating wood for export, use pesticides.
- Users in pest and pesticide management, including: i) farmers, whether members of cooperatives or not (market gardeners, horticulturists, producers of food/industrial crops, arboriculturists), for the protection of their produce, make use of pesticides; ii) livestock farmers (poultry farmers, sheep, goat, pig, etc.), for prophylactic measures against pests.) use pesticides for prophylactic measures and to protect their livestock; iii) logging, forestry and wood impregnation companies use pesticides to treat wood.
- Producer organizations in agroforestry: for both agriculture and agroforestry, these organizations play a specific role as grassroots relays for state and private technical services (agricultural advice, distribution of veterinary medicines, etc.).
- Local communities and indigenous peoples: Pesticides are virtually unknown to most of the local communities and indigenous peoples consulted in the project's potential area of intervention, who do not use pesticides in their activities (agroforestry, agriculture, animal husbandry, etc.).

SECTION II. KEY ISSUES AND MITIGATION MEASURES

3. Main problems linked to pesticide use and mitigation measures

To be noted that the quantities of chemical fertilizers used are expected to be very modest.

3.1 Problems linked to pesticide use

According to the local communities and indigenous populations consulted in preparation for this project, the use of pesticides is virtually non-existent, and the rare attacks recorded on crops can be summed up as rotting of banana roots, cocoa and manioc pods, drying of cocoa plants, attacks by rodents, etc.

Some constraints are listed below:

- Insufficient staff at the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries to ensure the dissemination and application of regulatory texts and best practices in pest and pesticide management.
- No poison control center or toxicovigilance service.
- Weak support for multi-faceted capacity-building needs of producers.
- Inadequate promotion of integrated pest management and the use of bio-pesticides.
- Insufficient knowledge and ongoing training of stakeholders in pesticide management.
- A qualitative and quantitative lack of information for institutional and professional players, and for local communities and indigenous populations, on the various stages in the pesticide use process (choice, dosage, application techniques, types of toxicity, storage, management of out-of-date products and packaging, etc.).
- Poor practices such as improper handling of pesticides, failure to wear personal protective equipment, use of empty packaging, etc.
- Lack of control and monitoring of the quantity and quality of pesticides used.
- Producers' lack of mastery of pesticide use and management techniques.
- Low availability of suitable application equipment and materials.
- Inadequate training of those involved and interested in pest and pesticide management. Difficulties in renewing phytosanitary treatment equipment.

3.2 Pesticide risk mitigation measures

As mentioned above, the use of pesticides in rural areas, particularly among local communities and indigenous peoples in the project area, has not yet become part of farming practices. However, with PREFOREST's activities, in particular income-generating activities (IGA), agriculture and agroforestry, it is foreseeable that pesticides may be introduced in the project area, depending on needs and only if necessary. In this respect, PREFOREST will have to provide for pesticide management measures as part of pest control.

To this end, the proposed measures will focus on the following:

- Promote the practice of integrated pest management (multi-faceted support, awareness-raising, training, school fields, etc.) to limit the use of pesticides.

- Reduce any potential dependence on pesticides
- Plan capacity-building and retraining programs for personnel involved in pesticide management.
- Organize training and awareness-raising sessions for various users on the dangers of pesticides and good practice in handling these products.
- Minimize the negative impact of pesticide use
- Ensure regular monitoring of pest and pesticide management, involving all stakeholders.

The following elements to be taken into account when selecting pesticides are:

- 1) their selectivity;
- 2) the risks to non-target species;
- 3) their persistence in the environment;
- 4) their efficacy; and
- 5) the probability of resistance development.

At a minimum, an environmental and social analysis is necessary before selecting pesticides for approval. The following criteria must be met before a pesticide is approved for use in a FAO project:

- 1) The pesticide must be registered in the country, or it must be specifically permitted by the competent authority. All conditions specified for registered products must be followed;
- 2) Users must be capable of managing the product within acceptable risk margins;
- 3) Preference is given to less dangerous, more selective, less persistent pesticides with less dangerous methods of application that are the best targeted and that require the least pesticide;
- 4) Any procurement of pesticides on the international market must meet the conditions specified by the site <http://www.pic.int/Implementation/Pesticides>.
- 5) Some production systems will also require the use of moderate quantities of chemical fertilizers. Climate-resilient agroforestry techniques minimize the need to use fertilizers / soil conditioners but they do not eliminate it.

More specifically, the pesticide management plan recommends the following measures, which are required and must be properly planned to reduce the risks associated with pest control and pesticide use.

Prohibition

To avoid adverse impacts due to pesticides, procurements of pesticides will not be promoted. The practices using integrated pest management will be largely promoted by the project.

Pesticide safety

If sufficient precautions are taken, pesticides should pose no threat either to the general public or to non-target animal species.

Special precautions must be taken when transporting, storing, handling and applying pesticides. Spraying equipment must be regularly cleaned and properly maintained to prevent leaks. People who use pesticides must learn how to use them safely.

Purchase

When considering the purchase of pesticides for vector control, it is recommended to follow the guidelines set out by the WHO, and to comply with the FAO rules for such purchases. Details are in the following: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/5c71dc09-4904-4815-a634-3cc49831bf44/content>

Precautions

Labeling

Pesticides must be packaged and labeled in accordance with WHO standards. The label must be written in French and in the local language; it must indicate the contents, safety instructions (warnings) and any measures to be taken in the event of ingestion or accidental contamination. Ensure that operators can read, understand and follow product label instructions for mixing, safety, application and disposal (use trained personnel for critical operations: e.g. mixing, transfers, tank filling and application). Always leave the product in its original container. Take appropriate precautions and wear protective clothing as recommended.

Storage and transport

Store pesticides in a place where the entrance can be locked, and which is not accessible to unauthorized persons or children. Under no circumstances should pesticides be stored in a place where they could be mistaken for food or drink. They should be kept dry and out of direct sunlight. Avoid transporting them in a vehicle that is also used to transport foodstuffs.

Pesticide warehouses must be located at a distance from human dwellings or animal shelters, water sources, wells and canals. They should be located on high ground and secured by fences, with access restricted to authorized persons. Pesticides should not be stored in places where they are likely to be exposed to sunlight, water or humidity, which would impair their stability. Warehouses must be secure and well-ventilated and equipped with spill kits.

Pesticide containers must be loaded into vehicles in such a way that they are not damaged during transport, that their labels are not torn off, and that they do not slip and fall on roads with uneven surfaces. Vehicles carrying pesticides must bear a clearly visible warning sign indicating the nature of the load.

Distribution

Pesticide distribution should be based on the following guidelines:

- Packaging (original or new) must ensure safety during distribution and prevent unauthorized sale or distribution of vector control products
- The distributor must be informed and aware of the dangerous nature of his load
- The distribution system for insecticides and impregnated carriers must reduce the risks associated with multiple handling and transport
- Tenders must stipulate that the supplier must transport the insecticides and impregnated carriers to the warehouse
- All distributors of insecticides and spraying equipment must be in possession of an operating license in accordance with the regulations in force in their country

Disposal

After operations, the remaining insecticide suspension can be safely disposed of by pouring it into a specially dug hole or pit latrine. Pesticides should not be disposed of in such a way as to contaminate water used for drinking or washing, or to reach a pond or watercourse.

Bury all containers, cans, bottles, etc. that have contained pesticides. Cleaned cardboard, paper or plastic packaging or containers can be burned, if permitted, at a safe distance from houses and sources of drinking water. Reusing containers after use is simply forbidden.

Cleaning empty pesticide packaging and containers

Under certain conditions, only pesticide containers classified as low-risk, or not normally expected to present a hazard in normal use, may be reused, provided they are not used to contain food, drink or animal feed. Containers made of materials such as polyethylene, which preferentially absorb pesticides, must not be reused if they have contained pesticides whose active ingredient is classified

as moderately, very or extremely hazardous, whatever the formulation. As soon as a container is empty, it must be rinsed, then filled with water and left to stand for 24 hours. Then empty it and repeat the operation twice.

General hygiene

Do not eat, drink or smoke when handling insecticides. Insecticides must be measured, diluted and decanted using suitable equipment. Do not shake or pick up liquids with bare hands. If the nozzle is blocked, operate the pump valve or clear the orifice with a flexible rod. After each filling, wash hands and face with soap and water. Take a shower or bath at the end of the day.

Personal protection

- Suitable overalls covering the whole hand and foot
- Anti-dust, anti-vapour or respiratory masks depending on the type of treatment and product used
- Gloves
- Goggles
- Hoods (face shield)

Protecting people

- Minimize exposure of local populations and livestock
- Cover wells and other water reserves
- Raise awareness of risks

Protective clothing

Indoor treatments

Operators should wear coveralls or a long-sleeved shirt over pants, a wide-brimmed hat, turban or other head covering, and boots or heavy shoes. Protect your mouth and nose with a simple device, such as a disposable paper mask, a disposable or washable surgical mask or a clean cotton cloth. Clothes should also be made of cotton for easy washing and drying. They should cover the body and have no openings.

Care and maintenance

Protective clothing must always be impeccably maintained, and periodical checks must be carried out to ensure that there are no tears or wear in the fabric that could lead to contamination of the epidermis. Protective clothing and equipment must be washed daily with soap and water, separately from other items of clothing. Gloves require special care, and should be replaced as soon as they are torn or show signs of wear. After use, they should be rinsed with plenty of water before being removed. At the end of each working day, they should be washed inside and out.

Table 1 : Measures to reduce risks related to transport, storage, handling and use

Step	Issue	Risks			Mitigation measures
		Health	Environment	Personnel	
transportation	Lack of training		Accidental spillage, groundwater pollution by leaching	Inhalation of product: vapour, dust, risk of skin contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough training and awareness-raising of pesticide management personnel on all aspects of the pesticide chain, as well as on emergency response. • Equip staff with protective equipment and encourage their full use
storage	Lack of resources Lack of training in pesticide management pesticides	Accidental contamination Nuisance to nearby populations	Soil contamination	Skin contact due to spillage caused by cramped conditions premises	

Handling	Lack of training and awareness	Contamination of water sources by container washing	soil contamination from accidental or deliberate spills, groundwater pollution groundwater	Inhalation vapor, dermal contact by splashing during preparation or decanting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide adequate storage equipment, rehabilitate existing sites • Raise public awareness of the use of pesticides and their containers • Training on the management of empty containers for safe disposal • Avoid large-volume containers to prevent decanting • Reduce the quantity of pesticides used through the effective use of alternatives
Packaging disposal	Lack of training information awareness-raising	Ingestion of products through reuse of containers		Dermal and respiratory contact	
Container washing	Lack of training information awareness	Dermal contact, well contamination	Acute poisoning of fish and other crustaceans, pollution of wells and ponds, groundwater	Dermal contact	

Table 2: Signs of poisoning and appropriate care

Signs or poisoning	Appropriate care
Eye contamination (pain or irritation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rinse with plenty of tap water • If it worsens, consult a doctor
Skin irritation (tingling and burning sensations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash the contaminated area with water, never with oil. • Apply a soothing cream • If this doesn't help, consult a doctor
Feeling tired, headaches or dizziness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resting • Do not start again until you feel completely rested • If this doesn't help, consult a doctor
Lung contamination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in the shade • Place under medical supervision

3.2 Action plan

Objective 1: Strengthen pest and pesticide management capacities

Activities:

- 1) Strengthen the capacities of institutional and non-state actors involved in pesticide management in project departments.
- 2) Organize training/awareness-raising activities for producers in the project area on manuals of good pest management practices in agriculture and agroforestry.
- 3) Encourage local community producers and indigenous peoples to equip themselves with personal protective equipment appropriate to the activities to be carried out in the field, including the handling of pesticides.

Objective 2: Raise awareness of pesticide-related risks in the project area

Activities:

- 1) Organize information sessions for populations (in local languages in the area) in the project area on the dangers of pesticides and the prevention of pesticide poisoning. These sessions will also mention the risks to wildlife posed by the use of pesticides (Please refer to the project's Biodiversity Management Plan for more details on managing risks to flora and fauna).
- 2) Involve local communities and indigenous peoples in the implementation of awareness-raising activities (talks, forum theater, radio theater, sports, etc.) and in the implementation of the risks mitigation precautions and measures ..

Objective 3: Control, monitor and evaluate pest and pesticide management in the area

Activities:

- 1) Carry out regular monitoring and supervision of pesticide management under PREFOREST.

2) Carry out the mid-term and final evaluation of the PREFOREST PMP.

B. Training players involved in the pesticide management plan

To ensure the effective integration of environmental concerns into project implementation, it is suggested that a capacity-building program (training and awareness-raising) be implemented for all players, focusing on the following points:

- Information on risks and health and safety advice
- Pest recognition
- Pesticide packaging and storage
- Pesticide hazards to humans and the environment
- Technical prerequisites for pesticide application
- Information on risks and health and safety advice
- Basic knowledge of handling procedures and risk management
- Wearing of personal protective and safety equipment
- Emergency and rescue procedures

3. Institutional arrangements for implementing and monitoring the PMP

The PMP will be implemented by the UGP/PREFOREST, in close collaboration with the DPV and the DGE.

- The PMU/PREFOREST will: coordinate the implementation of the PMP and act as an interface with other stakeholders. It will coordinate capacity building and training for agents, agricultural producers and other technical structures involved in implementing the PMP.
- DPV and DGE: will oversee implementation of the PMP and support capacity-building for agents in the field.
- Farmers' organizations: they must have and apply procedures and good environmental practices for the safe and ecological use and management of pesticides.
- Local communities and Indigenous Peoples: they will be involved in awareness-raising and social mobilization activities. They will also be involved in the supervision and external monitoring of the implementation of the measures recommended under the PMP.
- Local partners: Environmental NGOs amongst others will also be able to support activities to inform, educate and raise awareness among farmers and the general public about the environmental and social aspects of implementing the PMP, as well as participating in implementation monitoring and environmental surveillance.

4. Implementation schedule and budget

The following table provides the costs of the PMP.

Tableau 3: Cost of pesticide management plan

Objectives	Proposed Activities	Cost (FCFA)	Calendar
Objective 1: Strengthen pest and pesticide management capabilities	Promote integrated pest management methods in project areas (multifaceted support, awareness-raising, training, school fields, etc.).	For record PM	Yr 2 – Yr 7
	Organize training/awareness-raising activities for producers in the project area on manuals of good pest management practices in agriculture and agroforestry.	PM	Yr 2 – Yr 6
	Encourage local community producers and indigenous populations to acquire personal protective equipment (PPE).	PM	Yr 2 – Yr 7

Objective 2: Raise awareness of pesticide-related risks in the project area	Organize information sessions for the local population (in local languages) in the project area on the dangers of pesticides and how to prevent pesticide poisoning.	PM	Yr 2
	Involve local communities and indigenous peoples in the implementation of awareness-raising activities (talks, forum theater, radio crochet, sports, etc.) and in the implementation of the risks mitigation measures .	PM	Yr 2
	Organize radio broadcasts (community radios) in local languages to raise awareness of pesticides.	PM	Yr 2 – Yr 5
Objective 3 : Control, monitor and evaluate pest and pesticide management plan in the area	Carry out regular monitoring of pesticide management as part of PREFOREST.	PM	Yr 2 - Yr 8
	Carry out regular supervision of pesticide management within the PREFOREST framework.	PM	Yr 2 - Yr 8
	Mid-term and Final evaluation of the PMP/PREFOREST	PM	Yr 5 and Yr 8

NB: the budget for implementing this plan is already included in the overall budget for the ESMP.

5. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Monitoring will be organized through periodic field visits and will be carried out at two levels:

At national level, by:

- UGP/PREFOREST (overall supervision);
- DPV (support);
- DGE.

At departmental level (in the project zones), with the support of: Plant protection officers from the *Directions Départementales de l'Agriculture* (DDA) and *Directions Départementales de l'Environnement* (DDE), for local monitoring.

Reports are prepared every six months (biannual and annual reports) with a detailed section on the safeguards applicable to the project, including the implementation of the pesticide management plan.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Crop pests

Scientific Name	Common Name	Nature	Plant host
<i>East african cassava mosaïc virus (EACMV)</i>	Mosaïque	Virus	Manioc (<i>Manihot esculenta</i>)
<i>Phenacoccus manihotis</i>	Cassava mealybug	Homopteran insect	--''-
<i>Bemisia tabaci</i>	White/aleurodian fly	Homopteran insect	--''--
<i>Phytophthora palmivora</i>	Brown pod rot cocoa	Mushroom	Cocoa (<i>Theobroma cacao</i>)
<i>Sahlbergella singularis</i>	Speckled bug	Heteropteran insect	--''--
<i>Pseudococcus njalansis</i>	Cochineal	Homopteran insect	--''--
<i>Cardia cautella</i>	Stock insect	Insect beetle	--''--
<i>Stephanoderes hampei</i>	coffee berry borer	Insect beetle	Caféier (<i>Coffea</i> sp)
<i>Aracerus fasciculatus</i>	Stock insect	Insect beetle	--''--
<i>Hemilea vastatrix</i>	coffee rust	Mushroom	--''--
<i>Rynchophorus sp.</i>	oil palm stipe borer oil palm	Insect beetle	Oil palm (<i>Elaeis guineensis</i>)
<i>Ceratitis capitata/Bactrocera invadens</i>	fruit fly	Diptera insect	Most fruit and vegetable species and vegetable species with berries and drupes
<i>Xanthomonas citri</i>	Bacteriosis on mango	Bacteria	Manguier (<i>Mangifera indica</i>)
<i>Tuta absoluta</i>	Leaf defoliating caterpillar and fruit perforator	Lepidopteran insect	Tomato (<i>Lycopersicon esculentum</i>)
<i>Metatetranychus ulmi</i>	Red tomato spider	Mite	---''---
<i>Paracoccus marginatus</i>	Pawpaw mealybug		
<i>Cosmopolites sordidus</i>	Banana weevil	Insect beetle	Banana and plantain (<i>Musa</i> sp)
<i>Eldana saccharina</i>	borer (stem-boring insect)	Lepidopteran insect	Sugar cane (<i>Saccharum officinarum</i>)
<i>Caryedon fuscus</i>	Peanut leaf beetle (stock insect)	Insect beetle	Peanut (<i>Arachis hypogaea</i>)
<i>Pseudomonas solanacearum</i>	Bacteriosis on tomato	Bacteria	Tomato (<i>Lycopersicon esculentum</i>)
<i>Acanthos-celides obtectus</i>	Bean leaf beetle	---''--	Bean (<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>)
<i>Banana Bunchy Top virus (BBTV)</i>	Bunchy Top	Virus	Banana and plantain (<i>Musa</i> sp.)

Sources: Direction Départementale de l'Agriculture de Brazzaville/ Projet appui à la promotion de la filière manioc à travers l'approche champs école paysans / Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Agronomie et de Forêt/ Projet de Développement de la Production du Bananier et Plantain.

Annex 2: List of pesticides used in forestry and agroforestry in Congo

N°	Type	Nom commercial	Active Ingredient	Homologation
1	FONGICIDES	BOUILLIE BORDELAISE	Cuivre de sulfate ou sulfate de cuivre	?
		CAPTAN	Captane	?
		CUPPROCAFFARO	Oxychlorure de cuivre	?
		PHYTOCAP 83	Captane	?
		PROMARSOL	Thirame	?
		PRIMA	Prochlorase, Xylène	?
		PROPLANT	Propamocarbe HCl	?
		RHODIASAN	Thirame	?
		ROVRAL AQUAFLO	Iprodione	?
		ROVRAL POUDRE	Iprodione	?
		SANUGEC	Captane	?
		SIGMA DG	Captane	?
		TOPSIN	Thiophanate-methyl	?
		UGECAP 83	Captane	?
		IVORY 80 wp	Mancozèbe	?
		CALLOMIL PLUS 72 wp	Métalaxil et oxide de cuivre	?
2	BACTERICIDES	AGRO-BAC	-	?
		CHORE-CHOC	Hypochlorite de calcium	?
		JAVEL	-	?
		SPOREKILL	Chlorure de didécyl-diméthyl- ammonium	?
		TH 4+	Didecyl Dimethyl Ammonium HCl, Dioctyl Dimethyl Ammonium HC, Alkyl Dimethyl Benzyl Ammonium	?
3	INSECTICIDES	ACARIUS	Abamectine	?
		IMIDA 30 EC	Imidaclopride	?
		PYRICAL	-	?
		KARATE 5EC	-	?
4	HERBICIDES	FINISH 68 SG	Glyphosate	?
		ROUND UP	Glyphosate	?

Sources : PPMPP PADAC – 2017

Légende : ? Homologué ;

Non homologué

Annex 3: Some plants or products used in preventive or curative treatments

Treatment product	Insect and disease control	Preparation and use
wood ash	Hunts many insects away from crops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Burning dead wood - Collect the ash and pass it through a sieve to obtain a powder - Apply this powder to leaves or soil surface
Lime	Controls slugs, insect larvae and many soil-borne diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spread lime over the soil. A small tomato can is enough for 2m², 50 boxes for 100 m²
tobacco leaves	Aphids, weevils, caterpillars, thrips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soak a few tobacco leaves in boiling water for a few hours, or in cold water for a week. - Spread the product over the affected plants

Garlic bulbs	Aphids, caterpillars, bacteria, fungi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place 5 bottles of water in a pan and heat. Add a piece of soap the size of a palm nut, and two crushed garlic bulbs. Filter the mixture through a piece of loincloth and spread it over the affected plants
Fruits and leaves of hot pepper	Ants, aphids, weevils, tobacco viruses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crush one glass of chilli pepper Mix with 20 glasses of water and filter through a piece of loincloth Spread the product on attacked plants
Pawpaw leaves	Fungi (rust, powdery mildew)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crush a few papaya leaves in the water Add a piece of soap the size of a palm nut Filter the mixture through a piece of loincloth Treat plants with the product

Source : This brochure has been produced in French and local languages by ACTED (Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement).

Annex 5: Negative impacts of uncontrolled pesticide use

Environment	Type of impact
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced fertility Acidification Pollution
Water - - Surface water - - Well water - Ground water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pollution Altered pH
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chemoresistance of pests Wildlife poisoning Poisoning and mortality Reduction in numbers and/or biomass Disappearance of species or groups of species Break in the food chain Loss of biodiversity
Human health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intoxication / Alteration : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> embryonic development growth of individuals reproduction Poisoning Deaths Decrease in cholinesterase levels

Annex 6: Pesticide management methods

Steps	Determining factors	Risks		
		to health	to the environment	for employees
Transportation	Lack of training	Intoxication by inhalation or skin contact of nearby populations	Accidental spillage, groundwater pollution by leaching	Inhalation of product: vapour, dust, risk of skin contact
Storage	Lack of resources, Lack of training in pesticide management pesticides	Accidental contamination, Disturbance, nuisance to nearby populations	Soil contamination	Skin contact due to spillage caused by cramped conditions
Handling handling	Lack of training and awareness	Contamination of water sources by container washing	Soil contamination from accidental or deliberate spills, groundwater pollution	Inhalation vapour, dermal contact by splashing during preparation or decanting
Packaging disposal	Lack of training, information and awareness-raising	Ingestion of products through reuse of containers	Animal poisoning and water pollution	Dermal and respiratory contact
Container washing	Lack of training, information and awareness	Dermal contact, well contamination	Acute poisoning of fish and other crustaceans, pollution of wells and ponds, groundwater	Dermal contact

Annex 7: Pesticide mitigation measures

Environmental component	Type of impact	Mitigation measures
Air	Air pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As far as possible, avoid open burning for soil preparation and weed control. - Prohibit the burning of pesticide-treated agricultural wastes and residues (e.g. containers) to avoid unintentional emissions of persistent organic pollutants (POPs). - Modify field operations where possible (e.g. reduce the number of machine passes, reduced tillage operations or improved logistics to minimize travel distances). - Modify the timing of operations, where possible, to coincide with favorable weather conditions and reduced risk of air pollution - Establish natural wind barriers - such as vegetative field margins, hedges, herbaceous wind barriers and tree/shrub establishment - to intercept airborne particles and droplets - Establish natural wind barriers - such as vegetative field margins, hedges, herbaceous wind barriers and tree/shrub establishment - to intercept airborne particles and droplets, which may also include contaminants
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect soils from loss of organic matter by implementing good soil conservation management practices (addition of organic matter). • Popularize the use of manure or compost, better use of mineral manure and natural control techniques (fallowing, crop rotation, etc.). • Combat deforestation and erosion • Maintain and rehabilitate degraded areas
Soil	Reduced fertility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimiser l'utilisation d'engrais azotés • Vulgariser les techniques de lutte naturelle (jachère, rotation des cultures, etc.)
	Acidification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimiser l'utilisation d'engrais azotés • Vulgariser les techniques de lutte naturelle (jachère, rotation des cultures, etc.)

	Pollution by phosphates, heavy metals (Pb ⁺⁺ , ZN ⁺⁺ , Mn ⁺⁺)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pesticide control • Dispose of obsolete pesticides according to regulations • Use pesticides rationally (dose, control of application periods, etc.) • Promote integrated pest management • Ensure better management of containers (packaging)
Surface and ground water	Nitrate and heavy metal pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize the use of nitrogen fertilizers • Better management of containers (packaging)
Flore	Deforestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combating deforestation and erosion
Biodiversity	Pest chemoresistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure proper identification of pests and their specific pesticides • Ensure rational application of pesticides • Promote diversification of pesticides used
	Intoxication of aquatic and terrestrial fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise user awareness of poisoning risks • Raise farmers' awareness of safe watering practices
	Loss of terrestrial biodiversity at individual and community level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the application of integrated pest management (biological control, genetics, use of attractants, repellents, hormones, etc.).
Health	Intoxication Poisoning	Proactively monitor and manage all stages: purchasing, storage, mixing of pesticides and chemicals, use and disposal

Environmental component	Type of impact	Mitigation measures
	Death Decreased cholinesterase levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise public awareness of the risks of pesticide poisoning. • Ensure the strict application of rational measures for pesticide use. • Wear appropriate protective clothing, such as long-sleeved shirts, long pants, hats, gloves and boots (PPE should never be taken home and should be cleaned in an appropriate facility). • Inspect and shake out all clothing, footwear or equipment (including PPE) before use • Remove or reduce tall grass, debris and rubble around outdoor work areas • Train growers in the management and storage of hazardous products, including label reading to understand the risks associated with pesticides, fertilizers and crop processing products. • Have first-aid equipment on site (including, for example, venom serum) and trained personnel should be available, as well as emergency evacuation procedures • Do not store or transport pesticides and fertilizers with food (feed or livestock) or drink (including drinking water). • Respect pre-harvest intervals and post-harvest holding periods for agricultural products that have been treated with pesticides to avoid unacceptable residue levels • Ensure that animals, children and unauthorized persons are not present in areas where pesticides or other potentially hazardous products are handled, stored or applied.

Annex 6: Labor, Health and Safety Management Plan



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

PREFOREST CONGO

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

GCP /PRC/021/GCF

Labor, Health and Safety Management Plan (LH&SMP)



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December 2024

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and rationale

The Labour, Health and Safety Management Plan (LHSMP) is developed to identify and address potential and unintended negative impacts on the people engaged in the ***Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments in the Republic of the Congo (PREFOREST)*** particularly with regards to labour-related and health and safety concerns. This project is implemented under a collaboration between FAO and the Ministry of Economics and Forestry (MEF). The project aims to reduce carbon emissions by reducing pressures on natural forests primarily due to wood energy demand, while providing important co-benefits of adaptation to rural communities. PREFOREST is co-financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Central African Forestry Initiative (CAFI) and runs from 2021 – 2029.

The LHSMP has been prepared to ensure the project's compliance with FAO's commitment to both decent work and health and safety as outlined in the FAO Environmental and Social Standard on Decent Work (ESS 4) and on Community Health, Safety and Security (ESS 5). This document is an Annex to the project's Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP).

In addition, the LHSMP aligns with the legislation and regulations of the Republic of the Congo where the project is implemented, based on an analysis of the legal framework covering these issues.

The project covers an area located in five departments and 13 districts of the country; it aims to engage a range of stakeholders with an emphasis on ensuring significant benefits to smallholders in local communities and Indigenous Peoples. The three major components of PREFOREST are:

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

The project's key outcomes/results include:

- Enhanced rights of beneficiaries to access land and tenure security.
- Quick-start forest systems for energy
- Low-emission and climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems
- Rehabilitated tree nurseries
- Scaled up of climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry models
- Development and implementation of strong and bankable business models for agroforestry/forestry products.
- Increased supply of relevant financial instruments and credit for agroforestry/forestry
- Purchasing contracts and sales platforms to facilitate market access.

There are some labour and health and safety risks related to achieving these results (ESS 4 and ESS 5). For example, there are risks of child labour¹⁶, discrimination in recruitment

¹⁶ Child labour is defined as work that is unsuitable for the child's age, that affects the child's education or that is likely to harm the child's health, safety or morals. Child labour refers to children who work below the nationally defined minimum age for admission to employment, or children of any age who engage in hazardous work. Hazardous work is work that is likely to harm a child's health, safety, or morals. This work is dangerous or is carried out in unsanitary conditions that can lead to the death, injury and/or illness of a child due to inadequate health and safety standards and working conditions. Some injuries or illnesses can lead to permanent disability. Countries that have ratified ILO Convention No. 182 are required to draw up national lists of hazardous work for children, in accordance with Article 4.

Forced labour is any work or service that is not voluntarily performed and is required of an individual under threat of force or punishment.

(including risk of social conflict), and abusive working conditions. Additionally, there may be health and safety risks related to accidents and the use of pesticides. The full range of risks and mitigation measures are outlined in Section 3 of this document.

2. Labour use overview

In the Republic of the Congo, the types of employment contracts include fixed-term contracts and permanent contracts, as well as temporary and apprenticeship contracts. The table below shows the use of labour in the PREFOREST project. There is no housing provided for any of the workers associated with the project, including for those involved in the establishment of agroforestry plantations and with assisted natural regeneration (ANR) activities. These individuals are villagers living in the vicinity of the field sites. Other employees commute to work from their homes.

Table 23. Labour use overview for PREFOREST

Types of Workforce	Responsible	Number of workers	Timeline (for engagement)	(for the)	Contract Type
Direct workers (employed or hired directly by FAO)	Project Management Unit (PMU) (number of current staff and empty positions)	14 but recruitment underway	Throughout project	the	Full-time workers
Direct workers (employed or engaged directly with implementing partners)	GRET: number of staff (under PROREP)	12	Throughout project (5 years)	the	Full-time workers
	Planting group (stump removal at planting):	8	Frequency of planting activities		Seasonal
	Service Providers (Land Preparation with Tractors: Ploughing and Spraying): Names and Number	15	Frequency of planting activities		Seasonal
Primary procurement workers (employed or hired by primary suppliers).	MEF (<i>Ministère d'Économie Forestière</i>)	6 (2 National Coordinators), 4 facilitators	Throughout project	the	Full-time
	SNR (<i>Service National de Reforestation</i>)	25	Throughout project	the	Seasonal
	PRONAR (<i>Programme Nationale d'Afforestation et de Reforestation</i>)	3			2 part-time and 1 seasonal
Primary procurement workers (employed or hired by primary suppliers).	Vendors	Several depending on the needs	Throughout project	the	TBD

3. Description of key potential risks and mitigation measures

This section describes the potential risks that triggered the application of ESS4 and/or ESS5, as well as the respective mitigation measures. Risks related to labour and to health and safety are associated with field activities which primarily include: 1) the establishment of quick-start tree plantations for energy purposes (Activity 2.2.1), the rehabilitation of nurseries (Activity 2.3.1) and the deployment

It includes men, women and children in debt bondage, in slave-like conditions or trafficked. "In many countries, agricultural work is largely informal and legal protection for workers is weak. (ILO, Profits and poverty: the economy of forced labour / International Labour Office. - Geneva: ILO, 2014)

of assisted natural regeneration (Activity 2.3.2). Due to limited health facilities in the project area, the health and safety measures focus on preventative measures. Please find details on the risks, mitigation measures, and monitoring in the table below.

Table 24. Potential risks and mitigation measures

Key Risks/ Impacts	Associated with Activity	Type of worker affected	Mitigation measures	Budget	Responsible Party	Calendar & Frequency
LABOUR RISKS			LABOUR MITIGATION MEASURES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discrimination during recruitment especially against Indigenous Peoples and women 	<p>Quick-start tree plantations</p> <p>Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems</p> <p>Rehabilitation of nurseries</p> <p>Assisted natural regeneration</p>	Direct workers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a Selection Committee with representatives of Indigenous Peoples and women. The Selection Committee will favor local workers over external applicants and will avoid hiring children (under 16). Awareness raising on the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances 	All costs included in core project budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> PMU Safeguards Specialist Safeguards Specialist 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project initiation Project initiation (during FPIC) with reinforcement every monitoring visit Bi-annual visits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child labour 	<p>Quick-start tree plantations</p> <p>Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems</p> <p>Rehabilitation of nurseries</p> <p>Assisted natural regeneration</p>	Children	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a Selection Committee with representatives of Indigenous Peoples and women. The Selection Committee will favor local workers over external applicants and will avoid hiring children (under 16). Awareness raising on child labour issues for PMU members, implementing partners, and local stakeholders Awareness raising on the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances 	All costs included in core project budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> PMU Safeguards Specialist (TOT approach) Same as above Safeguards Specialist 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project initiation Project initiation with reinforcement every monitoring visit Project initiation with reinforcement every monitoring visit Bi-annual visits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual harassment 	<p>Quick-start tree plantations</p> <p>Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems</p> <p>Rehabilitation of nurseries</p> <p>Assisted natural regeneration</p>	Direct workers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising on GBV and sexual harassment for PMU members, implementing partners, and local stakeholders Awareness raising on the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances 	All costs included in core project budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguards Specialist with support of external consultant or specialized NGO Safeguards Specialist Safeguards Specialist 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project initiation with regular reinforcement Project initiation with reinforcement every monitoring visit Bi-annual visits

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender based violence 	<p>Quick-start tree plantations</p> <p>Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems</p> <p>Rehabilitation of nurseries</p> <p>Assisted natural regeneration</p>	Direct workers & others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising on issues of GBV Awareness raising on the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances 	All costs included in core project budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguards Specialist with support of external consultant or specialized NGO Safeguards Specialist Safeguards Specialist 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2025 Project initiation with reinforcement every monitoring visit Bi-annual visits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payment issues (late payment) and conflicts over payments 	<p>Quick-start tree plantations</p> <p>Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems</p> <p>Rehabilitation of nurseries</p> <p>Assisted natural regeneration</p>	Direct workers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising on the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances 	All costs included in core project budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguards Specialist Safeguards Specialist & PMU 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project initiation with reinforcement every monitoring visit Bi-annual visits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influx of external labour 	<p>Quick-start tree plantations</p> <p>Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems</p> <p>Rehabilitation of nurseries</p> <p>Assisted natural regeneration</p>	Direct workers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Set priority for local hires 	All costs included in core project budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> PMU & Selection Committee 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forced labour by Indigenous Peoples to substitute for Bantu workers 	<p>Quick-start tree plantations</p> <p>Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems</p> <p>Rehabilitation of nurseries</p> <p>Assisted natural regeneration</p>	Direct workers and Indigenous Peoples (not selected)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising on the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances 	All costs included in core project budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguards Specialist Safeguards Specialist 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project initiation with reinforcement every monitoring visit Bi-annual visits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abusive working conditions 	<p>Quick-start tree plantations</p> <p>Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems</p> <p>Rehabilitation of nurseries</p> <p>Assisted natural regeneration</p>	Direct workers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising on decent work conditions and the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances 	All costs included in core project budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguards Specialist Safeguards Specialist 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project initiation with reinforcement every monitoring visit Bi-annual visits

H&S RISKS			H&S MITIGATION MEASURES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poisoning by pesticides 	<p>Quick-start tree plantations</p> <p>Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems</p> <p>Rehabilitation of nurseries</p> <p>Assisted natural regeneration</p>	Direct workers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> See 'Pests and Pesticides Management Plan' for full set of measures Equip workers with personal protective equipment (PPE) and require it to be worn 	All costs included in core project budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> n/a PMU & Implementing partners 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> n/a Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pollution of soil and water by pesticides and fertilizers 	<p>Quick-start tree plantations</p> <p>Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems</p> <p>Rehabilitation of nurseries</p> <p>Assisted natural regeneration</p>	<p>Farmers</p> <p>General public</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> See 'Pests and Pesticides Management Plan' for full set of measures 	All costs included in core project budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> PMU & Implementing partners 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accidents 	<p>Quick-start tree plantations</p> <p>Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems</p> <p>Rehabilitation of nurseries</p> <p>Assisted natural regeneration</p>	<p>Direct workers</p> <p>Bystanders</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Equip workers with personal protective equipment (PPE) and require it to be worn Vehicle safety (according to FAO Office Policy) First Aid Training and Certification requirement for Field Site Coordinators First Aid Kit available 	All costs included in core project budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> PMU & Implementing partners Driver PMU Driver 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Ongoing TBD Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spread of communicable diseases 	<p>Quick-start tree plantations</p> <p>Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems</p> <p>Rehabilitation of nurseries</p> <p>Assisted natural regeneration</p>	<p>Direct workers</p> <p>Family and contacts of direct workers</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising on communicable diseases among PMU and implementing partners 	All costs included in core project budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguards Specialist & PMU 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project initiation

4. Legal and institutional framework for labour, health and safety management

4.1. International conventions and commitments

The Republic of the Congo has been a pioneer of [Alliance 8.7](#)¹⁷ since November 2022 and has applied to join the [United Nations Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection for a Just Transition](#). The country signed a [Decent Work Country Programme](#) (DWCP 2023-2026) with the ILO in November 2021.

The country has ratified the following international legal instruments concerned with the issues of decent work and workers' health and safety:

⇒ LABOUR

Freedom of association, collective bargaining and industrial relations

- C011 - Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No. 11)
- C087 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)
- C098 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)
- C151 - Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151)
- C154 - Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154)
- C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)
- C105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)

Elimination of child labour and protection of children and adolescents

- C005 - Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 5)
- C006 - Night Work of Children (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 6)
- C033 - Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Occupations) Convention, 1932 (No. 33)
- C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) Minimum age specified: 14 years
- C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)

Equality of opportunity and treatment

- C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
- C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)

Tripartite consultations

- C144 - Convention on Tripartite Consultations on Standards (No. 144)
International Labour Studies, 1976

Labour administration and inspection

- C081 - Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81)

¹⁷ Alliance 8.7 is a global partnership committed to achieving Target 8.7 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Target 8.7 calls for the eradication of forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking, and child labour in all its forms, including its worst forms, by 2025. The alliance brings together governments, businesses, civil society organizations, trade unions, and other partners to accelerate action, share knowledge, and implement measures to achieve these objectives.

- C129 - Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129)
- C150 - Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150)

Wages

- C026 - Minimum Wage Fixing Methods Convention, 1928 (No. 26)
- C095 - Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95)

Working hours

- C004 - Night Work (Women) Convention, 1919 (No. 4)
- C014 - Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921 (No. 14)
- C041 - Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1934 (No. 41)
- C089 - Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948 (No. 89)

⇒ **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY**

- C155 - Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)

Social security

- C157 - Conservation of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982 (No. 157)

Migrant workers

- C097 - Migrant Workers Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)
- C143 - Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention (No. 143)

4.2 National regulatory framework

These are national regulatory instruments whose provisions apply directly or indirectly to activities related to decent work and the health and safety of workers. *The National Employment Policy (NEP)* promotes the creation of decent jobs for the greatest number of people while respecting fundamental human rights.

The Congolese Labour Code or "Labour Code Law no. 45-75" was adopted in March 1975 and amended in 1996 (Act 6-96). This law contains many standard labour provisions, including contracts, workers' health and safety, working conditions, maternity and trade unions. The law also stipulates that children under the age of 16 are prohibited from working unless special permission is given by the Minister of National Education. The protection of children is also supported by the *Law on the Elimination of Child Labour, Protection of Children and Young People (Law No. 4-2010 of 14 June 2010)*.

4.3 FAO requirements for ESS 4 and ESS 5

ESS 4 – Decent Work

ESS 4 recognizes that the promotion of decent work and full and productive employment is essential to achieving food security and reducing poverty. It defines "decent work" as defined by the ILO as "productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity". FAO is committed to supporting the implementation of internationally agreed labour standards. Its vision for sustainable food and agriculture explicitly prioritizes decent work. This standard (ESS 4) considers that the promotion of decent work and the prevention of child labour, exploitation, including sexual exploitation, and forced labour are essential for ensuring food security and reducing poverty. Several international conventions and instruments are in line with the conditions to be put in place indicated in ESS 4.

ESS 5. Health, protection and safety of the population

The conditions to be put in place of ESS 5 respond to the need to avoid health and safety risks and their impacts, which may arise from FAO's activities under its programmes and projects. When it is not possible to avoid them, they will have to be reduced and mitigated. Particular attention is paid to marginalized, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. ESS 5 aims to: (i) Anticipate and prevent adverse effects on the health, safety and livelihoods of participating communities that would be affected by activities throughout the programme or project cycle, both in routine situations and in extraordinary circumstances; (ii) To ensure quality and safety in the design and construction of infrastructure associated with the activities of FAO's programmes and projects, in order to prevent or reduce safety risks and possible accidents (NB. Under PREFOREST, no physical infrastructure will be built); (iii) To avoid or minimize the exposure of communities to the risks of disasters, diseases and hazardous materials associated with FAO's programmes and projects; and (iv) To ensure that the protection of personnel and property minimizes the risk to communities, and that it is guaranteed, in accordance with international human rights standards and principles.

4.4 Institutional framework

Several institutions are relevant to the labor and health and safety standards to be followed by PREFOREST. These include:

- The Ministry of Health and Population
- Two separate ministries are respectively responsible for (i) labour and social security, and (ii) for employment and skills training. The Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Security is entrusted to a Deputy Prime Minister, who is also responsible for the civil service.
- The "National Committee for Social Dialogue" was created by Decree No. 2010-810 of 31 December 2010 and is composed of delegates from the Government, employers and workers.
- The National Consultative Labour Commission (CNCT) was created by Decree No. 85-1021 of 21 August 1985, setting the conditions for the organisation and operation of the National Labour Consultative Commission.
- Employers' organizations, including UNICONGO,
- Trade unions, more than a dozen to date.

4.5 Summary of the analysis of the policy, institutional and legal framework

It has been noted that there is a certain weakness in the application of the regulatory texts on health and safety at work. In the absence of a national policy in this area, companies organize themselves individually or in groups. These types of organisations are not yet sufficient to guarantee better protection for workers. The latter are confronted with health effects due to physical and mental, biological and ergonomic constraints, exposure to or handling of toxic products, etc. Occupational medicine, which should help reduce occupational risks (accidents at work and occupational diseases), is not organized. It is also necessary to identify occupational risks, update the list of occupational diseases, put in place adequate prevention and protection mechanisms and procedures and a system of compensation and care for injured workers. At the international level, to comply with the requirements of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Congo needs to ratify several conventions in the fields of occupational health and safety. These include, among others, conventions related to agriculture, chemicals and labour statistics.

5. Workplace grievance management

The PREFOREST Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) will be used to address all complaints or grievances related to labor or health and safety issues. Additional information on the FGRM is available in the ESMP or in the stand-alone version of the FGRM. Confidentiality is guaranteed for anyone submitting a grievance. With regard to the protection of whistleblowers, FAO has a specific whistleblower protection policy. It will be applied as part of the implementation of the project.

6. Roles and responsibilities / Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

The roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the LHSMP lie with several key project personnel, as defined below:

Staff	Role & Responsibility
FAO Representative	Overall responsibility for the implementation of the LHSMP
Project Director	Management responsibility for implementation of the LHSMP, including oversight on Safeguards Specialist and all PMU.
FAO Safeguards Specialist	Regular field monitoring of the mitigation measures. Operationalization of the Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism and prompt resolution of grievances. Awareness raising activities among stakeholders.
PMU Field Staff (Regional Coordinators)	Awareness raising activities among stakeholders Transmission of grievances to the Safeguards Specialist Field activity monitoring
Staff of implementing partners	Awareness raising activities among stakeholders Transmission of grievances to the Safeguards Specialist
Staff of the Directorate of Labour Regulation and International Relations	General oversight, accompaniment on monitoring visits (ad hoc)
Staff of the Directorate of Occupational Safety and Health	General oversight, accompaniment on monitoring visits (ad hoc)
Staff of the Ministry of the Civil Service, Labour and Social Security	General oversight, accompaniment on monitoring visits (ad hoc)

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

The monitoring of the implementation of the LHSMP will be organized through regular monitoring by the Field Coordinators in collaboration with Implementing partner personnel. In addition, the Safeguards Specialist will make regular (bi-annual) visits to the field sites to interview stakeholders and gather information on potential risks and mitigation efforts.

The information gathered during field activities will be reported in Back-to-Office-Reports and transmitted to the Project Director and FAO Representative. Grievances will be filed in the database by the Safeguards Specialist. A periodic review of the LHSMP will take place on an annual basis and adjustments will be made as needed. Data on grievances and mitigation measures will be compiled for the semi-annual and annual reports.

Annex 7: Stakeholder Engagement Plan



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

PREFOREST CONGO

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

GCP /PRC/021/GCF

Stakeholder Engagement (SEP)



The designations employed and the presentation of material in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

This document is intended to be used solely for the purpose of FAO projects disclosure

August 2023

Acronyms

ACMEA	Congolese Association of Indigenous Ethnic Minorities (<i>Association congolaise des minorités ethniques Autochtones</i>)
APAPM	Association of Indigenous Peoples of the Mpangala Countries (<i>Association des peuples autochtones des pays Mpangala</i>)
ARPA2DH	Association for the Respect of Indigenous Peoples' Rights, Sustainable Development and Human Rights (<i>Association pour le respect du Droit des populations autochtones, développement durable et du Droit de l'Homme</i>)
CAFI	Central African Forestry Initiative
CAPPED	Caisse de participation à la promotion des entreprises et à leur développement
CDHD	Human Rights and Development Circle (<i>Cercle des droits de l'Homme et de développement</i>)
CERPAC	Exchange and Resource Center for the Promotion of Community Actions (<i>Centre d'Échanges et de ressources pour la Promotion des actions communautaires</i>)
CODEC	Credit union (<i>Coopérative d'épargne et de credit</i>)
CSA	Agricultural sector managers (<i>Chef de secteur agricole</i>)
FPIC	Free, informed and prior consent
Cofina	Compagnie financière africaine
EPPAVPA	Production, purchasing protection and sales of agricultural products (<i>Entreprise de production, protection d'achat et ventes des produits agricoles</i>)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCECM	Federation of Savings and Mutual Credit Cooperatives (<i>Fédération des coopératives d'Épargne et de crédit mutuel</i>)
FGDH	Forum for Governance and Human Rights (<i>Forum pour la gouvernance et les droits de l'Homme</i>)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
GCF	Green Climate Fund
ID	Initiative Développement
IRF	National Forest Research Institute (<i>Institut nationale de recherche forestière</i>)
IRA	Agricultural Research Institute (<i>Institut de recherche agronomique</i>)
GRM	Grievance redress mechanism (<i>Mécanisme de gestion de plaintes et recours</i>)
MUCODEC	Mutuelle congolaise d'épargne et de crédit
MEF	Ministry of Forest Economy (<i>Ministère de l'économie forestière</i>)
MAFDPRP	Ministry of Land Affairs and Public Domain in charge of relations with Parliament (<i>Ministère des affaires foncières et du domaine public chargé de relations avec le Parlement</i>)

MJDHPPA	Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and the Promotion of Indigenous Peoples (<i>Ministère de la justice, des droits humains et de la promotion des peuples autochtones</i>)
MPFIFDEI	Ministry for the Promotion of Women, the Integration of Women in Development and the Informal Economy (<i>Ministère de la promotion de la femme, de l'intégration de la femme au développement et de l'économie informelle</i>)
MAEP	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (<i>Ministère de l'agriculture, de l'élevage et de la pêche</i>)
MEDDBC	Ministry of the Environment, Sustainable Development and the Congo Basin (<i>Ministère de l'environnement, du développement durable et du bassin du Congo</i>)
OCDH	Congolese Observatory for Human Rights (<i>Observatoire congolais des droits de l'Homme</i>)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PREFOREST	Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments of the Republic of the Congo
RENAPAC	Congo National Network of Indigenous Peoples (<i>Réseau national des populations autochtones du Congo</i>)
SCDIE	Société continentale de développement des initiatives économiques
SNR	National Reforestation Service (<i>Service National de Reboisement</i>)
PMU	Project Management Unit

1. Introduction

Co-financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Central African Forestry Initiative (CAFI) through the FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) through the Ministry of Agriculture and the Government of the Republic of the Congo through the Ministry of Forest Economy, PREFOREST (Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments in the Republic of the Congo) is a project which, by setting up an agroforestry and forestry system, will contribute directly to reducing greenhouse gas emissions over an 8-year period during implementation and well beyond. The project will also have adaptation benefits, helping to bring about transformational change. Present in five departments of southern Congo (i.e. Niari, Bouendza, Pool, Kouilou, Plateau) and covering 13 districts, this project will not only provide part of the solution to deforestation and forest degradation in Congo, but will also work for the development of local communities and indigenous peoples.

Consultations began when the project was being drawn up, with multiple exchanges held at various levels with several categories of stakeholders in the various target localities, as well as at national level. These initial consultations enabled FAO to tailor the project's content more closely to the local context and the needs of the local communities and indigenous peoples who will be the project's main beneficiaries. From the outset, PREFOREST provided for a system of consultation with stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the project throughout its implementation.

Stakeholder engagement is not limited to the formulation phase. An ongoing process of communication, consultation, and exchange on the project with various stakeholders is planned, as well as the establishment and operationalization of a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM). A series of specific consultations with Bantu and indigenous communities is also planned, through a process of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), in order to obtain their consent to the proposed activities on their territories.

This document describes and guides the ongoing engagement of stakeholders in the implementation of PREFOREST.

2. Regulations and requirements

2.1 Republic of Congo regulations

Congolese law on the participation of stakeholders in various consultations or land use by a project focuses on minorities, in particular indigenous peoples. Indeed, [law n° 5-2011 of February 25, 2011 on the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples in Congo](#) requires any project working with and impacting on the indigenous communities or their way of life to use the FPIC mechanism before the start of the project, enabling the community to be involved and formally participate in the project by explicitly giving their opinion.

2.2 Green Climate Fund requirements

Stakeholder engagement is a crucial aspect of GCF's operations to ensure the inclusiveness, transparency and effectiveness of its decision-making and project implementation processes. GCF has established specific requirements and guidelines for stakeholder engagement (See: [Designing and ensuring meaningful stakeholder engagement on GCF-financed projects](#)) to foster meaningful participation by different stakeholders, including governments, civil society organizations, private sector entities and indigenous peoples. Below are some key aspects of GCF's stakeholder engagement requirements:

Country ownership: GCF emphasizes the importance of country ownership, which means that projects and programs must be designed and implemented in line with the priorities and strategies of the recipient country. Meaningful engagement with national and local stakeholders is essential to ensure that climate actions are relevant and responsive to the country's needs and circumstances.

Consultation and participation: GCF encourages direct consultation with relevant stakeholders during the design, development and implementation of projects and programs. Stakeholders must be given the opportunity to provide information, comments, and suggestions on climate-related initiatives to ensure that they reflect the interests and perspectives of affected communities.

Gender and social inclusion: GCF places a strong emphasis on gender equality and social inclusion in all aspects of its work. Stakeholder engagement processes must be designed to actively involve women, marginalized groups, and vulnerable populations, ensuring that their needs and priorities are taken into account.

Information sharing and transparency: GCF aims to maintain transparency in its processes by providing timely and accessible information on its projects, funding decisions and operational guidelines. This includes making relevant documents and project information available to the public and stakeholders.

Recourse mechanism: GCF has set up a recourse mechanism to address concerns or grievances raised by affected stakeholders during project implementation. This mechanism enables complaints to be submitted, investigated and dealt with in a fair and transparent manner.

Responsibilities of accredited entities: Entities accredited to access GCF funding, such as national

institutions and international organizations (in this case, FAO), are responsible for stakeholder engagement throughout the project lifecycle. They must demonstrate how they have consulted relevant stakeholders and taken their comments into account.

2.3 FAO obligations

For FAO, stakeholder engagement is an essential component of sustainable development, particularly in the context of agriculture, food security and rural development. FAO's approach to stakeholder engagement focuses on inclusion, participation and collaboration (See: Stakeholder [Engagement](#)). Below are some of the general principles and approaches promoted by FAO:

Inclusivity: FAO stresses the importance of involving a wide range of stakeholders, including small-scale farmers, indigenous communities, women, youth, local governments, civil society organizations, universities, and the private sector. Inclusiveness ensures that different perspectives and knowledge are considered, leading to more informed and effective decision-making.

Participatory approach: FAO encourages the adoption of participatory methods that enable stakeholders to actively contribute their ideas, knowledge, and experience. This approach recognizes that local communities and individuals possess valuable expertise on their own contexts and challenges.

Empowerment: FAO aims to empower stakeholders by providing them with the information, resources, and tools they need to become actively involved in decision-making processes. This empowerment strengthens ownership and accountability for the results of initiatives.

Transparency and accountability: Clear communication and transparency are essential for building trust between stakeholders. FAO stresses the need for transparent information sharing, accountability mechanisms and feedback loops to ensure that stakeholders are kept informed of project progress and results.

Capacity building: FAO supports capacity building efforts that improve stakeholders' ability to engage effectively in decision-making processes. This includes training, technical assistance and resources to enable meaningful participation.

Conflict resolution: Stakeholder engagement processes can involve conflicting interests and viewpoints. FAO encourages the development of mechanisms to address conflicts and find solutions that consider the needs and concerns of all parties.

Adaptive management: FAO recognizes that stakeholder engagement is an ongoing process that requires flexibility and adaptability. As circumstances change, stakeholders must continue to be involved to ensure that initiatives remain relevant and responsive.

Local context: Effective stakeholder engagement requires an understanding of the local context, cultural norms, and historical dynamics. Solutions must be adapted to the context and respect the traditions and values of the communities concerned.

Long-term commitment: Stakeholder engagement should not be a one-off event, but rather an ongoing

3. Summary of previous stakeholder engagement activities

During the formulation of the project, several stakeholders were consulted at government level, within the private sector, civil society and among the various partners. Consultations were held at national and departmental level, in the 13 target districts, in collaboration with the non-governmental organization *Initiative Développement* (ID). The aim of these consultations was to identify the practices of local communities and indigenous peoples and the difficulties they encounter, to identify the activities that are appropriate to the needs of these potential beneficiaries, and to present the project's objectives and main activities in order to gather their orientations and recommendations in relation to the context and specificities of their districts (see Text box below) for a better adaptation of the project's content. In terms of methodology, plenary meetings were generally organized in each district capital. These meetings brought together local authorities, including heads of the agricultural sector (*Chef de Service Agricole - CSA*), heads of forestry divisions, representatives of the National Reforestation Service (*Service national de reboisement - SNR*) and agricultural machinery centers, representatives of producer groups, including women's groups, and representatives of landowners.

Location of project areas

The consultations were held in 13 districts of five agricultural and forestry departments targeted by the project:

- Department of Kouilou: districts of (1) Madingo-Kayes, (2) Mvouti and (3) Hinda
- Niari Department: Louvakou district (4)
- Bouenza department: districts of (5) Loudima, (6) Kayes and (7) Madingo
- Department of Pool: districts of (8) Goma TséTsé, (9) Igné, (10) Ngabé, and (11) Kinkala (FAO direct)
- Plateaux department: districts of (12) Ngo and (13) Mpouya

Specific arrangements were made to ensure the effective participation of women and indigenous peoples in these meetings. These consultations, carried out during the project development phase, led to the drafting of a consultation report that identified the main stakeholders, their interests, and relevant interventions to maximize their participation during project implementation. The elements gathered during these consultations, reflecting the needs of local communities and indigenous peoples, have been considered in the project document. The main points raised, and the responses given are detailed in Table 1.

The consultations carried out with other groups, including the private sector, both the companies that have to provide outlets for products from agroforestry systems and microfinance companies, were also sealed through letters of commitment signed by them. These letters of commitment were supplied with the project document and form an integral part of it. The private sector's commitments to support the various value chains affected are essential elements of the project's exit strategy. These commitments will be closely monitored during project implementation.

Communication and consultation with stakeholders continued throughout the project launch phase. During this phase, ongoing exchanges were held with stakeholders, particularly governmental ones, to

reinforce their ownership of the project. This led to the drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Forest Economy (*Ministère de l'Économie forestière* - MEF) and the FAO, setting out the roles and responsibilities of each institution and, above all, the ultimate objective of strengthening the MEF and ensuring its full and effective ownership of the project's implementation. This action thus reinforces the exit strategy developed by the project, and which is gradually being implemented.

The project inception workshop was attended by 132 people from various stakeholder categories. This session, which was widely publicized, enabled participants not only to become better acquainted with the project's objectives, but also to identify the various activities to which they could subsequently commit during the implementation phase.

More recently, further consultations were held in June and July 2023 to inform local authorities in Kissende, Bilala, and Loandijili (villages), Dolisie (department) Loudima and Malolo (districts) of the start of project activities, and more specifically of the implementation of participatory mapping, which will include the mobilization and awareness-raising of project stakeholders¹⁸.

¹⁸ It should be noted that during these sessions, members of the project implementation team also take the opportunity to inform stakeholders about the various safeguard management systems and the complaints management mechanism that have been put in place and need to be popularized.

Table 1. Stakeholder concerns and recommendations from consultations during the formulation phase

Main concerns	Recommendations	Response and/or measures implemented as part of PREFOREST
<p>Access to land remains a major concern for growers: difficulty in obtaining long-term access; difficulty in increasing yields; prohibition on planting trees; conflicts between "landowners" in terms of validity of ownership (= insecurity for growers).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dialogue is needed between landowners and producers to promote the development of agroforestry, involving the families of landowners. - Clarifying land ownership by supporting official land titling procedures - Development of long-term access contracts (emphyteutic leases?) - Developing women's access to agroforestry 	<p>The project includes a specific activity to secure land tenure. This activity is an important prerequisite for setting up and deploying agroforestry systems.</p>
<p>In savannah zones, despite the possibility of increasing yields, access to mechanization is uncertain, and slash-and-burn cultivation in forest zones remains the preferred method.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make producers aware of the role they can play in mitigating climate change. - Set up pilot experiments in savannah areas. - Promote real access to mechanization in savannah areas, when conditions are right (no risk of erosion, sufficient plant cover), with the corollary of banning slash-and-burn farming. - Encourage agroforestry in savannah areas (orchards, fast-growing plantations, timber, windbreaks). - Disseminate best practices in crop rotation and the use of organic fertilizers. - Build on existing experience and knowledge, encourage exchange of experience 	<p>The actions identified by the project help to combat the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, including slash-and-burn agriculture. The technical itineraries for agroforestry activities have been discussed in advance with members of local communities and are better adapted to the local context. However, the project reserves the right to further adjust them in line with requests from local communities and indigenous peoples as the project rolls out. Mechanization is an aspect that has been considered in the project.</p>
<p>Farm sizes vary but making project support conditional on a minimum of 10 ha will end up excluding the majority of growers in most districts, especially where mechanization is weak or non-existent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review these data and adapt them to the context of each district, with a lower limit (2 ha to start with when there is no mechanization, which can be extended later). 	<p>The size of the farms that will benefit from the project's support will depend on the local context and the results of the participatory mapping that will be carried out at the start of project implementation. The project will not only target large-scale</p>

		farms, but also small-scale farms belonging to local communities and, above all, indigenous peoples.
Most groups are not registered, especially most women's groups: the obligation to belong to a formal group deprives most producers of access to the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presenting a project as a group can be a rule, but formalizing the group should not be a prerequisite, but rather a logical consequence of the project to be supported. Particular attention should be paid to the integration of women, who are all too often overlooked in development projects, and application approval mechanisms should be adapted to actual situations on the ground. 	Emphasis has been placed on supporting women and women's groups in accessing resources. The project's gender action plan was developed with this in mind.
Fuelwood is a widely used resource, with use increasing with the level of need in towns: in savannah areas, this leads to even fruit trees being felled, and in forest areas, precious trees are used to make charcoal and bake bricks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensitize landowners, charcoal and brick manufacturers to the use of "sustainable" firewood, i.e. from forests planted for their activities. - Revitalize plantations of fast-growing forest species AND knowledge of planted forest management. - Require replanting for every tree felled, so promote existing nurseries (or their creation) and the dissemination of planting and maintenance techniques. 	Raising awareness among community members is an essential activity that the project intends to carry out. Recommendations concerning the choice of species have been considered: the Mampu system to be set up mainly responds to local concerns.
Farm management, budget planning and operating accounts are almost non-existent practices, and even the concepts are rarely understood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management training is a priority and a prerequisite for the project, for all producers. - Provide a long-term vision of the potential gains from planting forest species and fruit trees - Ensure close, long-term monitoring of beneficiaries' initiatives 	These types of training are planned as part of capacity building for project beneficiaries.
Even the terms "agroforestry" and "agroforestry techniques" are unfamiliar.	Basic training is essential, but not enough; what's needed is support for implementation, as well as the organization of experience sharing, which would reassure producers living in insecurity	The project's support ranges from raising awareness, to setting up and maintaining agroforestry systems, right through to promoting the products of these systems.

	about the new techniques and motivate them to get involved too. There should be a reference to the SNR in each department, whose implementation of these agroforestry techniques could be better known and disseminated.	The SNR is a strategic partner for the implementation of actions in the field.
Growers complain of difficulties accessing the site and transporting crops	This problem is a serious reality in ALL districts - refer to the priorities and investments planned by the government. Regarding marketing issues, we should also discuss increasing yields, as markets and exchanges between wholesalers and producers are currently poorly organized.	The project will support the entire value chain for agricultural products.
The use of and access to microcredit are very rare, due to the lack of agencies and the non-existence of a microcredit offer adapted to agricultural producers. Added to this is the absence of operating accounts and even of day-to-day farm management.	Discussions are needed at the highest level to create a credit offer adapted to the agricultural world, but also at the local level, with the possibility for producers and their groups to access a local branch, open accounts and take out loans, repay loans, save... All this needs to be created at the local level.	Collaboration with microfinance institutions will be strengthened, so that they can offer locally adapted mechanisms for the agricultural and forestry sectors. The institutions targeted by the project are those with local representation.
"A 20% contribution is too high"; 10%, depending on the area of the project supported, can be a handicap. Adaptations must be found in terms of payment	In general, the idea of a contribution is accepted and even considered normal. It's even seen as a deterrent to opportunists. The 10% level is acceptable. However, for most women and indigenous peoples, arrangements will have to be found (zero-interest advance and repayment at farm or harvest, for example).	The contributions considered by the project as contributions from potential beneficiaries are not necessarily budgetary contributions in cash. Following discussions with community members, and particularly after negotiations with indigenous peoples and women, these contributions may be in kind, such as labor power, the use of small cultivation tools, and so on.

4. Project stakeholders

The stakeholders defined in this section are those mainly identified during the project formulation phase. They include community members in the project areas, government authorities, civil society organizations, technical and financial partners and the private sector.

Table 2. PREFORST Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Direct / Indirect	Profile (Beneficiary / Observer / Potential partner)	Interest/relevance to PREFOREST and role in implementation
Community players			
Indigenous communities in target departments (Niari, Bouendza, Pool, Kouilou, Plateaux)	Direct	Beneficiary	The project will help improve access to land for indigenous peoples, enabling them to become fully involved in agroforestry. In addition, the project will build the capacity of these groups on agroforestry and cross-cutting issues (e.g. gender, discrimination), and facilitate access to credit.
Bantu communities in target departments (Niari, Bouendza, Pool, Kouilou, Plateaux)	Direct	Beneficiary	The project will help improve access to land for the Bantus, enabling them to become fully involved in agroforestry. In addition, the project will build the capacity of these groups on agroforestry and cross-cutting issues (e.g., gender, discrimination), and facilitate access to credit. Bantu landowners will potentially be able to lease their land to those who do not have it, and possibly to indigenous peoples, for the implementation of agroforestry activities.
Rural women in target districts	Direct	Beneficiary	Rural women will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial spin-offs from agroforestry-related activities - Secure their land rights - And to strengthen their technical capabilities through the various training courses planned
Young people in target districts	Direct	Beneficiary	Young people may be considered as project beneficiaries if they are eligible and meet the beneficiary selection criteria.
Village associations (<i>to be identified</i>)	Direct	Beneficiary	These are groups of farmers who come together to participate in agricultural and forestry activities. They will be able to benefit from

			project activities (e.g., capacity building, recognition of their association by the Ministry).
Village groups (Niari, Bouendza, Kouilou, Pool, Plateaux) (to be identified)	Direct	Beneficiary	These are groups of farmers who come together to participate in agricultural and forestry activities. Some may benefit from the project (e.g., capacity-building, recognition by the Ministry).
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) - indicative list			
Consultation frameworks for civil society organizations and indigenous peoples on REDD+ (<i>Cadres de concertation des organisations de la société civile et des peuples autochtones sur la REDD+ - CACOREDD</i>)	Indirect	Partner	CACOREDD could share its community experience on indigenous peoples and will support the project in mobilizing these populations within the framework of REDD+. CACOREDD will be a member of the project steering committee.
National Network of Indigenous Peoples of Congo (<i>Réseau national des populations autochtones du Congo - RENAPAC</i>)	Direct	Partner	RENAPAC, with its experience of indigenous peoples and its knowledge of the target departments, will help the project to set up FPIC to obtain the consent of indigenous peoples and their involvement in the project.
Technological Research and Exchange Group (<i>Groupe de Recherches et d'Échanges Technologiques - GRET</i>)	Direct	Partner	Identified by CAFI and the FAO as a necessary partner for the deployment of actions in the field, GRET implements several field activities as a technical partner (awareness-raising, consultations, training, setting up local committees, supporting beneficiaries in setting up and monitoring plantations, etc.).
Initiative Développement (ID)	Indirect	Potential partner	Involved in community awareness-raising and consultation during project development, ID's presence and experience in the various areas targeted by the project are assets for potential future collaboration with this NGO.
Client Earth	Indirect	Potential partner	With a strong presence in the Congo and in-depth knowledge of the national context, Client Earth could be considered as a project partner for actions concerning respect for the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples.
Human rights NGOs: - National Network of Indigenous Peoples of Congo (<i>Réseau national des populations autochtones du Congo - RENAPAC</i>)	Indirect	Observer	These NGOs are active in the field of human rights promotion, some with a particular focus on indigenous peoples. Certain groups, such as CDHD and ARA2H, will be consulted for their experience in the Plateaux and Pool zones, in view of their experience in implementing FPIC. Other NGOs will be an integral

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Cercle des droits de l'Homme et de développement (CDHD) (Bakassi au Plateau project)</i> - <i>Association for the Respect of Indigenous Peoples' Rights, Sustainable Development and Human Rights (Association pour le respect du Droit des populations autochtones, développement durable et du Droit de l'Homme - ARPA2DH)</i> - <i>Forum for Governance and Human Rights (Forum pour la gouvernance et les droits de l'Homme - FGDH)</i> - <i>Congolese Observatory for Human Rights (Observatoire congolais des droits de l'Homme - OCDH)</i> - <i>Association congolaise des minorités ethniques Autochtones (ACMEA)</i> - <i>Association des peuples autochtones des pays Mpangala (APAPM)</i> - <i>Centre d'Échanges et de Ressources pour la Promotion des Actions Communautaires (CERPAC)</i> 			<p>part of the local consultations, as they have been working with local communities and indigenous peoples in the project areas for several years.</p>
<p>NGOs working with women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Femmes Énergies association - Other (to be identified) 	Indirect	Potential partner	<p>This association supports local women in their empowerment. In this way, it could support the women's awareness campaign planned as part of the implementation of the project on gender and development.</p>
<p>NGOs working in the forestry sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support circle for sustainable forest management (<i>Cercle d'Appui à la Gestion Durable des Forêts -CAGDF</i>) - Other (to be identified) 	Indirect	Potential partner	<p>Once the forests have been formed, CAGDF will step in to help the local population manage them.</p>
<p>Administration [national and sub-national]</p>			

Ministry of Forest Economy (<i>Ministère de l'économie forestière</i> - MEF)	Direct	Partner	<p>First of all, the MEF is an implementing partner through the co-financing it contributes to the project.</p> <p>In addition to this, as the project leader and coordinator on behalf of the Government of the Republic of the Congo, MEF is considered the main partner for project implementation. MEF chairs the project steering committee.</p> <p>And finally, the MEF is involved in the implementation of certain project activities through its technical agencies (mainly PRONAR and SNR) and the mandates and expertise available to these agencies. For example, PRONAR, which acts as a facilitation platform for the implementation of reforestation projects throughout the country, will contribute to the development of communication tools and strongly support the project's awareness-raising activities. Local nurseries managed by SNR will be made available to produce the seedlings needed for the various plantations to be set up.</p>
Ministry of Land Affairs and Public Domain in charge of relations with Parliament (<i>Ministère des affaires foncières et du domaine public chargé de relations avec le Parlement</i> - MAFDPRP)	Direct	Partner	<p>Through its decentralized departments, this ministry will support the project's land security activities for agroforestry interventions on the selected sites. The land affairs department of each department will be responsible for examining and processing requests for land security from the various categories of stakeholders involved.</p>
Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Promotion of Indigenous Peoples (<i>Ministère de la justice, des droits humains et de la promotion des peuples autochtones</i> - MJDHPPA)	Direct	Partner	<p>The MJDHPPA will be involved and consulted in the consent process for FPIC implementation with indigenous peoples and local communities. It could also be informed and mobilized if necessary for the implementation of the project's GRM.</p>
Ministry for the Promotion of Women, the Integration of Women in Development and the Informal Economy (<i>Ministère de la promotion de la femme, de l'intégration de la femme au développement et de l'économie informelle</i> - MPFIFDEI)	Direct	Partner	<p>The Ministry could support awareness-raising, training and other activities to ensure women's effective participation in project activities.</p>

Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (<i>Ministère de l'agriculture, de l'élevage et de la pêche - MAEP</i>)	Direct	Partner	The agricultural activities planned under the project will be monitored by the MAEP, which the project will consult frequently to improve activities. MAEP will also support the PMU in obtaining legal recognition for the farming cooperatives. MAEP is a member of the project steering committee.
Ministry of the Environment, Sustainable Development and the Congo Basin (<i>Ministère de l'environnement, du développement durable et du bassin du Congo - MEDDBC</i>)	Indirect	Partner	As the Republic of the Congo's DNA to the GCF, the Ministry has been involved in the project since its inception. It also acts as a link between the project's activities and other existing initiatives in the country.
Prefects of Niari, Bouendza, Pool, Kouilou, Plateau	Indirect	Partner	Responsible in the departments, they are the first local authorities to liaise with the project management team in the field. They may be called upon to provide administrative approval for certain technical documents developed by the project.
Departmental managers (Niari, Bouendza, Kouilou, Pool, Plateau)	Direct/Indirect	Partner	The departmental directors represent the ministries in the field. As representatives of the government's deconcentrated services, they will act as a direct liaison between the project implementation team and the minister at local level.
Village chiefs and elders (Niari, Bouendza, Kouilou, Pool, Plateau) <i>(to be identified)</i>	Direct	Partner/ Beneficiary	Village chiefs are local authorities who represent the prefect in each village. They are village inhabitants and, in some cases, project beneficiaries. Normally, the wise men are consulted together with the village chiefs.
Research center			
National Forest Research Institute	Indirect	Partner	The IRF will be asked by the project to carry out research into the evolution of the forests on the sites where the acacias will be planted. It will also monitor the impact of tree planting.
Agricultural Research Institute	Indirect	Partner	As a research institute, IRA will help guide farmers and support the project in training communities in cultivation practices.
Bilateral and multilateral donors			
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	Direct	Partner	IFAD has provided co-financing through the implementation of the PAJE project (Projet Agriculture, Jeunes et Entreprenariat - Agriculture, Youth and Entrepreneurship Project), the main aim of which is to strengthen local financing structures (microfinance

			institutions), the commercial capacities of producer groups or associations, and the reinforcement of value chains for agricultural and forestry products. Their actions within the framework of this co-financing are recorded in PREFOREST component 3.
Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI)	Direct	Partner	CAFI has provided co-financing for the project, through funds implemented by the FAO to reinforce the impact of PREFOREST. The activities covered by this co-financing concern the deployment of agroforestry systems, mainly in the Plateau. The actions covered by this co-financing are mainly recorded in component 2 of the project.
French Development Agency (AFD)	Indirect	Potential partner	Through the projects that AFD is implementing with its own funds, as well as those stemming from CAFI, the project will collaborate in strengthening regional planning, following the more localized planning actions that will be undertaken by the project.
The World Bank (WB) (<i>Programme d'Appui pour l'Agriculture Commercial - PDAC</i>)	Indirect	Partner	The WB, which financed the PDAC on agriculture in the Ngo district, will be consulted to capitalize on their experience in setting up business plans, land tenure and the deployment of agricultural activities in mainly savannah areas.
World Food Program (WFP)	Indirect	Partner	The WFP, as mentioned in its letter of intent, is interested in purchasing certain agricultural products produced in agroforestry systems to supply the school canteens it supports.
FAO - internal	Indirect	n/a	<p>PREFOREST will benefit from internal coordination and information sharing with other relevant FAO projects in the Republic of the Congo:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Measurement, Reporting and Verification System (<i>Système National de Mesure, de Notification et de Vérification - SYNA MNV</i>) - funded by CAFI. - Project: "Estimation of deforestation and forest degradation and of current and historical direct factors associated with these processes using SEPAL" - funded by CAFI - UN-REDD Programme - Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) - funded by the European Union - EU Forest Governance and Value Chain Program (FGVP)

Private sector			
COFCAO	Direct	Potential partner	Supporting cocoa farmers in savannahs and fallow lands, with an emphasis on compliance with environmental standards
Microfinance institutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caisse feminine - MUCODEC - CAPED - CODEC - Thistle Farell - Cofina - HOPE Congo S.A - FCECM - CEMEC 	Direct	Beneficiaries and Partners	<p>These institutions have already shown their interest in participating and developing partnerships with producers during the project's development. They have signed letters of commitment to this effect.</p> <p>Firstly, these institutions will be strengthened technically so that they can develop credit lines tailored to the agricultural and forestry sectors. Subsequently, these institutions will be able to liaise with beneficiaries to carry out training activities on access to credit. They will also be able to facilitate the conditions for granting credit for agroforestry and other smallholder rural development initiatives and participate in capacity building for project staff.</p> <p>These institutions are an integral part of the partners who will be mobilized to reinforce the project's exit strategy.</p>
Agricultural trade partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Union for competitive agriculture - AGRIDECK - EP2AVPA - Hani Transformation - SCDIE - TOLONA - Zando Market 	Direct	Partners	<p>These institutions have already shown their interest in participating and developing partnerships with producers during the project's development. They have signed letters of commitment to this effect.</p> <p>These institutions will purchase the agricultural products produced by PREFOREST beneficiaries. These partners will support the project's efforts to better structure the said retained value chains, as well as contribute to the specifications that will be drawn up on good production practices for agricultural and/or agri-food products.</p>

5. Stakeholder engagement plan

As part of the implementation of PREFOREST, stakeholder engagement aims to:

- Facilitate the smooth implementation of activities and improve the sustainability of project results.
- Guarantee respect for human rights through proper implementation of the FPIC process and rapid resolution of complaints through the GRM.
- Ensure a gender-sensitive and socially inclusive approach, in which women and indigenous peoples are fully involved and enjoy equitable benefits.
- Increase stakeholder awareness and capacity on key development themes and rights issues, such as land rights, gender-based violence and indigenous peoples' rights.
- Over time, use stakeholder feedback to adapt project management and design to better meet beneficiaries' needs.

The stakeholder engagement plan is guided by several key elements and approaches described below.

Clear and transparent information sharing on project activities

FAO and its partners must be able to clearly explain the project's short- and medium-term objectives and the details of project activities. It is also necessary to explain the positive and negative impacts of the project on the community. Activities relating to land ownership will be treated with particular care, as these issues can be very sensitive.

Maintaining a functional complaints management mechanism

Emphasis will also be placed on the GRM, where FAO will explain to the community the purpose of this mechanism and the channels through which to send a complaint, with details of how complaints are handled and resolved. Local authorities will take part in the complaints management committee as observers.

Close collaboration with government partners

FAO will ensure that the government and local authorities understand the objectives of the project and their own roles and responsibilities within it. In general, government authorities facilitate and authorize project implementation.

FPIC process for collaboration with local communities and indigenous peoples

In the case of local communities and indigenous peoples, the project will conduct a FPIC process to ensure that these groups have a clear understanding of - and consent to - project activities that impact on them or their territories/lands prior to implementation. All community sub-groups, including women and youth, will also be consulted (if necessary, through separate focus groups). The project will require written consent signed by the village chief, as village representative.

Communication methodologies, media and channels adapted to different stakeholders

Communications experts will support the project by developing relevant documents in appropriate formats for different stakeholder groups. This could include leaflets, newsletters, radio programs, etc.

Table33. Stakeholder engagement plan (for the next 12 months and beyond where possible)

Themes	Stakeholders involved / targets	Methodologies	Responsible / implementing partners	Calendar
Sharing introductory information on the project	All stakeholders (authorities, NGOs, local communities and indigenous groups, journalists and media, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kick-off workshop and various meetings - Project brochure (on project content) - FAO press release and website - Plays (community level) - Radio program - Communication by e-mail to a list of stakeholders - sending quarterly newsletters and other key information about the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National coordinators - Departmental coordinators - Communication specialist 	2023 for the first phase and throughout the project's implementation
FPIC	Indigenous and local communities in target departments (Niari, Bouendza, Pool, Kouilou, Plateau), including individual smallholders	<p>Following the methodology defined in the FPIC guide for PREFOREST/FAO, local consultations will be held in the villages. Consent for project activities will be sought at village level, as well as from individual farmers who will be able to participate. Village chiefs (administrative and traditional) will be invited to take part in coordinating the FPIC process. Regular consultation and communication will continue throughout the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safeguards and gender specialist with support from FAO headquarters. - Communication specialist - Departmental coordinator 	Sep 2023 - Feb 2024 for the first phase and throughout project implementation
GRM	All stakeholders	<p>For those based in Brazzaville:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FAO website - Email communication to a list of stakeholders - Poster distribution - Radio programs <p>For authorities, NGOs and associations based in the target departments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poster distribution - Radio programs <p>For the Community level:</p>	Backup and gender specialist	Sep 2023 - throughout implementation.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution of posters and comic strips - Radio programs - Meetings (part of the FPIC process) 		
<p>Capacity building on cross-cutting themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender and social inclusion - GBV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rural women in target districts - Young people in target districts - Native communities - Local authorities - NGO partners (with memorandums of understanding) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness-raising sessions - Radio broadcasts (with recording and sharing of radio equipment in the village) - Beneficiary stories - Advocacy articles/blog 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Backup and gender specialist - Communication specialist 	throughout implementation
Direct involvement in project activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Farmers (Bantu, indigenous, women, youth) 2. Government 3. Local NGOs 4. Bilateral and multilateral donors 5. Microfinance institutions 6. Agricultural trade partners 	<p><i>Only main activities are listed</i></p> <p>(Farmers)</p> <p>1a. Support for land tenure security through participatory mapping, demarcation and documentation, and facilitation for recognition of rights with government authorities (with emphasis on women and marginalized groups).</p> <p>1b. Training in low-emission agroforestry and forestry practices resilient to climate change</p> <p>1c. Training and material and technical support for setting up agroforestry and forestry systems</p> <p>1d. Training and material and technical support for forest restoration and assisted natural regeneration</p> <p>1e. Training and coaching to develop and implement bankable business plans</p> <p>(Government)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical specialists, depending on the theme (agro-economist, microfinance, land tenure, value chain, etc.) 	<i>According to project schedule</i>

		<p>2a. Participation in steering committee meeting for overall supervision of project activities (MEF)</p> <p>2b. Implementation of planting activities on public land (PRONAR)</p> <p>2c. Close collaboration on project activities of mutual interest (e.g. MAFDPRP for land rights activities, MPFIFDEI for gender awareness sessions).</p> <p>(local NGOs)</p> <p>3. Through competitive and transparent processes, committed to in the memoranda of understanding for the implementation of project activities.</p> <p>(Bilateral and multilateral donors)</p> <p>4. Dialogue and consultation to obtain advice and lessons learned on specific project activities.</p> <p>(Microfinance institutions)</p> <p>5. Commitment by granting credit to smallholders and producers targeted by the project.</p> <p>(Agricultural trade partners)</p> <p>6. Commitment through purchase contracts for agricultural produce produced with the help of the project.</p>		
Project updates	All stakeholders	<p>For those based in Brazzaville:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FAO website (articles) - GCF website (half-year and annual reports) - Quarterly newsletter e-mailed to a list of stakeholders <p>For authorities, NGOs and associations based in the target departments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution of quarterly newsletters by email - Radio programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Departmental coordinators - Communication specialist - Monitoring and evaluation specialist - Backup and gender specialist 	Regularly (quarterly, half-yearly, annually)

		<p>For the Community level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Radio programs - Half-yearly feedback meetings - Meetings with village and group representatives, representatives of youth, women, the elderly and indigenous peoples 		
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It should be noted that this stakeholder engagement plan will be progressively updated as project activities are rolled out, particularly those targeting the various districts covered.

6. Resources and responsibilities

FAO has allocated human and financial resources to support the implementation of this stakeholder engagement plan. Below you will find tables that better describe these resources.

Table 4. Human resources

Team member	Role and responsibility in PREFOREST	Qualifications
National coordinators (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinate PMU activities, - Ensure ongoing dialogue between the various partners involved in the successful completion of the project, - Manage communication initiatives at national level, - Ensure the proper execution and monitoring of the implementation of services provided by technical partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training in forestry, agronomy and other environment-related options, - At least 5 years' experience in the field -
Chief Technical Advisor (CTA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for overall supervision of stakeholder engagement and supervision of key personnel. Plays an important role in liaising with government agencies at national level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management experience - Diplomatic skills
Backup and gender specialist (national)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and manage the implementation of this stakeholder engagement plan - Organize training and implementation of the FPIC process - Conduct regular field visits to ensure adequate stakeholder engagement and build team capacity on these issues. - Managing GRM - Coordinate with the M&E expert to ensure the collection of stakeholder engagement data. 	Higher education (Master's degree) in the relevant field and at least 10 years' experience in safeguarding and gender mainstreaming
Monitoring and evaluation specialist (national)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and inform the project's general monitoring-evaluation framework, in line with the project's logical framework and the donor's expectations - Develop monitoring-evaluation tools for data collection, data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience of monitoring and evaluation procedures and methodological frameworks applied by international donors to cooperation projects - Experience in conducting evaluations integrating

	<p>analysis, information management and reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In collaboration with the safeguards and gender expert, develop, inform and monitor the implementation of the project's environmental and social risk monitoring framework - With the support of the project team members, draft the project reports, which must include the monitoring of environmental and social safeguards 	<p>gender and indigenous issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience in writing evaluation reports and monitoring logical frameworks - Experience in forestry and the environment - Knowledge of environmental and social safeguards
Communication Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement communication and advocacy activities for PREFOREST - Ensure visibility of projects and the office at events organized or supported by FAO - Design communication products and coordinate communication campaigns - Produce quarterly project newsletters - Write articles and press releases related to project activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 5 years' professional experience in communications, particularly in leading public consultations - Good knowledge of forestry, agroforestry, agriculture and climate change in Congo and/or the Congo Basin. -
Departmental coordinators (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor activities in the field to ensure adherence to schedule and quality of deliverables. - Coordinate and monitor all technical project activities at departmental level - Gather the documentation needed to define priority requirements for relevant statistical data and indicators - Ensure that local authorities and community members, as well as other stakeholders, are aware of the Project's activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevant experience in forestry, agroforestry, agriculture and/or rural development and the environment - Good knowledge of the forestry, agricultural and agro-forestry sector and climate change in the Republic of the Congo and/or the Congo Basin.
Gender and safeguards specialist (international)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the national team in safeguarding and gender issues 	<p>Higher education (Master's degree) in the relevant field and at least 10 years' experience in safeguarding and gender mainstreaming</p>

Financial resources for implementing the stakeholder engagement plan are included in the overall project budget, and mainly comprise the costs of human resources, meetings, missions and communication materials.

7. Monitoring and reporting

Reports are drawn up every six months (half-yearly and annual reports), detailing the involvement of stakeholders in the activities organized by the project. The project team then organizes meetings with the various parties to inform them of the progress of activities. These meetings can take the form of major awareness-raising events or meetings with the authorities.

Data on all stakeholder engagement activities will be regularly collected and compiled in collaboration with the M&E Specialist. He/she will maintain a database. All data will be disaggregated and, where appropriate, the participation of indigenous peoples will be duly noted.

The results of monitoring and evaluation will be communicated to project stakeholders using several methods:

- Half-yearly progress reports;
- Annual reports;
- Mid-term and final evaluation reports;
- The quarterly newsletter;
- Information and communication sessions with local populations in target areas four-month period.

Information on the operation of the GRM, including the number of complaints received and resolved, will be included in half-yearly and annual reports. Information on complaints concerning particular groups or stakeholders will be communicated where appropriate.

Annex 8: Gender Assessment and Gender Action Plan

Annex 8

Gender Assessment Report & Action Plan

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



December 2020

Abbreviations

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

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

1. Introduction

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

In Congo, women represent 70% of the labor force and are responsible for 60 to 80% of the country's subsistence crop production. According to the National Development Plan, they predominate (making up nearly 70%) throughout subsistence crop production, as well as in the processing and marketing cycle of agricultural and fishery products. Women are particularly involved in the social life of the family (basic education, health, childhood assistance, etc.) and play an essential part in maintaining food security, in rural as well as urban areas. They invest a major part of their income in food security for children and the family. However, unlike men, women unfortunately face several difficulties in their activities. More than ever, they are confronted with insecurity and vulnerability due to several factors. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), adequate inclusion of women's needs in agricultural production would improve their output by 22%, particularly in terms of maize production (FAO, 1999).

Furthermore, women are the main users of natural resources through different activities, such as fuelwood supply, traditional medicine, mushroom and caterpillar harvesting, gathering of wild leaves and fruit, as well as fishing in water bodies. As a result, they are key stakeholders in human interactions with ecosystems. More than men, women are directly and immediately affected by the use and conservation of natural resources, because they are involved on a daily basis in ensuring household food security, firewood collection, water supplies, etc.

1.1 Context and justification

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

The project revolves around three components:

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

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

1.2 Objective of the Assessment

Main Objective

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

Specific Objectives

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

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

1.3 Methodology

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

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

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

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

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

Desk review

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

Individual interviews

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

The list of interviewed participants is attached to this report.

Focus Groups

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

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

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

1.4 Organization of the report

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

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

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

2. GCF Appendix 8 Form:

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

2.1 Presentation of the context of the country of intervention

Maternal mortality rate	In the Republic of the Congo, the maternal mortality rate is 436 deaths per 100,000 live births. The most affected are young women between the ages of 20 to 24 years (32%), as well as adolescents under the age of 20 years (or 25%) ¹⁹
Infant mortality	The infant-child mortality rate is 33.81 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2019. This rate is substantially higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Mortality in children under the age of five years was 45.41 per 1,000 in 2019 (World Data Atlas).
Educational status of girls and boys	The net school enrollment rate is 81.3%, which consists of 82.7% for boys and 80.0% for girls. The gross intake rate increased from 78% in 2005. Out of 100 pupils entering primary school, a total of only 69 (boys and girls) complete their primary education - 77.39% boys versus 67.65% girls in 2005. From the point of view of access as well as completion, the gender parity index is still in favor of boys. ²⁰
Adult literacy rate (disaggregated by gender)	In terms of literacy, women are less literate than men with a rate of 72.1% for women between the ages of 15 and 24 years, versus 83.2% for men in the same age bracket. The disparity is particularly due to the time women and girls spend on household chores, as well as their vulnerability. ²¹ Another study indicates that the French language literacy rate of persons between 15 to 24 years of age is 87.5%, consisting of 89.1% for men and 86.0% for women and that the illiteracy rate, all languages combined, for the same age group is 6.8%, 5.7% for men and 7.8% for women. ²²
Poverty rate	A household survey ²³ revealed that, in Congo, there is more poverty in women-headed households, with a rate of 58.2% compared with 48.8% of households headed by men, and this discrepancy is even greater in urban settings. According to the abovementioned survey, this situation is partially explained by the fact that women are often victims of employment and credit discrimination.
Workforce participation rate (disaggregated by gender)	At least 192,776 women are engaged in formal work compared with 417,643 men. ²⁴

¹⁹ UNDP Congo: National Human Development Report 2015.

²⁰ Idem

²¹ Idem

²² General Population and Housing Census (GPHC 2014)

²³ Congolese Household Survey (ECOM, 2009)

²⁴ UNDP Congo, National Human Development Report 2015.

<p>Land system</p>	<p>Law no. 21/2018 of June 13, 2018 sets the rules for land use and acquisition in the Republic of the Congo. There is also a customary land system based on traditional ancestral rules and practices.</p> <p>Regarding land ownership, Congolese women face cultural obstacles that prevent them from owning and controlling land. According to customary law, women may own land either through matrilineal or patrilineal descent (the family head is generally a man and decides on land allocation), through marriage ties (the family head allocates land to the wife at the request of the husband), lease agreements (by means of a land rent that varies by department and land type) or through purchase (this is a relatively recent procedure and an increasing number of women are using this form of acquisition). If the woman is not the family head, she must refer to a man for land access as, unfortunately, women are disadvantaged in most cases. Various limitations to the ability of women to own land seriously hinder their effective participation in economic activities.</p> <p>In summary, women, particularly in rural areas, face serious obstacles, such as illiteracy, economic weakness, lack of education and others that prevent them from directly exercising control over the land concessions available to them.</p>
<p>Access to inputs, agricultural equipment, training or technical support</p>	<p>In Congo, farmers in general and women in particular face several challenges. The vast majority of rural women use basic and archaic methods of production (hoe, machete), increasing the drudgery of their work. A lack of appropriate technologies that could reduce the time spent on domestic chores, production, processing and storage of agricultural products considerably worsens their state of health, depriving them of rest, leading to early aging, loss of production and increased morbidity and mortality.</p> <p>Small tools are the basic equipment of 71.2% of agricultural households headed by men versus 28% of women-headed households.²⁵</p>
<p>Life expectancy (disaggregated by gender)</p>	<p>65.7 years for women; 62.8 years for men (2018)²⁶</p>

2.2 Responses to GCF Annex 8 questions

➤ What is the status of women?

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

International law

At the international level, Congo signed (1980) and ratified (1982) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Congo is also a signatory to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) (or Banjul Charter, adopted in Nairobi in 1981) which promotes the

²⁵ PROJECT UTF/PRC/014/PRC GENERAL AGRICULTURAL CENSUS AND CountrySTAT

²⁶ UN Human Development Report: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/120606>

rights of women. This Charter calls for states to “ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of women and the child as stipulated in international declarations and conventions.”

National law

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

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

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

Institutional framework

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

National Policy / Action Plan on Gender

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

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

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

Violence against girls and women is a recurrent phenomenon despite the existence of the legal framework aligned to international standards. Regarding marital violence, bodily harm constitutes the most common form of violence perpetrated against women²⁷. Such violence is even more widespread in that it is committed under the seal of intimacy.

In terms of the inclusion of gender-specific needs in politics and public life, power-sharing is unequal at legislative, executive and judiciary levels. There are 8.6% women in Parliament, 13% in Government, 12% in decision-making positions within ministries, 17.3% in departmental councils and 26% in town councils. The proportions are similar in political parties, professional NGOs and unions²⁸.

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

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

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

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

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

In terms of forest use, women²⁹ gather non-timber forest products for their food needs (e.g. *Gnétum africanun*, currently called “coco” in Lingala, “fumbua” in Kituba, mushrooms, caterpillars, wild fruit, vegetables), medicinal plants, leaves from different trees, particularly those of the arrowroot family, which are used to cook cassava. However, men mainly use the forest for commercial gain (i.e. hunting, charcoal making).

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

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

We also note that arboriculture is mainly dominated by men, with 70.5% men versus 29.5% women participating.³⁰ This low level of involvement by women may be explained by their fairly limited access to land in certain departments.

➤ **What is the level of participation by women and men in the formal and informal economy?**

²⁷Ministry for Women’s Empowerment and Integration in Development, NATIONAL GENDER POLICY Nov 2015

²⁹ Ministry of Sustainable Development, Forest Economy and the Environment: Report on the involvement of Congolese women in the effective implementation of the convention on biological diversity.

³⁰ FAO, National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods: Country Gender Assessment Series.

The economy of the Republic of the Congo is mainly based on oil production. Wood, services and an embryonic agriculture make up the rest of the activity. Regarding the participation of women in the formal economy, they represent approximately 53% of the agricultural labor force.³¹ They are involved throughout the cycle of subsistence crop production (68%), harvesting, storage, and nearly 100% in the processing and marketing of agricultural and fishing products.

The study on the participation of women in development shows that 38.8% of employed women living in semi-urban areas and 21.1% of those living in urban areas practice secondary activities. It is noted that less than 28% of farms belong to women today.³²

➤ **What is the situation between men and women with regards to access to land, practice of agriculture, agroforestry and forestry?**

In Congo, land is governed both by modern and customary law. Concerning modern law, Law no. 21/2018 of June 13, 2018, sets the rules for land use and acquisition in the Republic of the Congo, and is implicitly and explicitly non-discriminatory to women. It contains no legal obstacles based on gender. However, customary law recognizes four methods of access to land, which are:

1. Allocation by descent (matrilineal or patrilineal), where the family head, generally, a man, decides on land allocation;
2. Through marriage, where the family head allocates lands to the wife at the request of the husband;
3. Through lease arrangements; and finally,
4. Through purchase.

In all cases, irrespective of a person's family line, the four methods of land allocation are in the hands of men. Land-related decisions are made by the family during family meetings, generally chaired by men. As a result, the various limitations to the ability of women to own land seriously hinder their effective participation in economic activities. For women, this creates chronic land insecurity which also limits their opportunities to plant perennial crops on land, which may be taken away at any time.

In terms of agriculture, the districts covered by the Project are mainly characterized by subsistence food crop production (mainly practiced by women) dominated by polyculture, as well as market gardening (essentially a man activity). In this system, producers combine various crops, which may include cassava, maize, bananas, yams, market gardens and peanuts. A slash-and-burn agricultural system is practiced mainly by women in forest or savanna areas (supported by male labor, particularly in forests).

A lack of appropriate technologies means a lower production for women. The equipment in village machinery centers is not only aging, but also insufficient.³³ Services for individuals are expensive.

Unlike men, who are spared from paid labor for certain activities (which considerably reduces production costs), women must rely on paid labor for agricultural activities, such as stump removal, transplanting for market gardening, and transportation of harvests from the fields to major roads.

Whether married or single, women farmers reinject nearly all their revenue from the harvest into the overall operations of the family.

The fact of being solely or primarily responsible for family expenses makes it difficult for women to save any money to expand agricultural activities or build economic capital to develop activities. This insecure means of operation is unfortunately widespread and common to all women in the interviewed groups.

³¹ European Union, Gender Profile, Republic of Congo: Situational analysis of girls and women in the Republic of the Congo. January 2017.

³² Ministry for Women's Empowerment and Integration in Development, NATIONAL GENDER POLICY Nov 2015

³³ See section 1.1.3. on modern agricultural techniques and equipment P.32

Compared with men, women rarely receive training (on agricultural or agroforestry techniques or financial management of their operation). In addition to reasons related to literacy, family constraints are barriers, which were also mentioned by some women to justify their lack of training within agricultural groups.

Agroforestry is a new practice for women farmers in the Project departments. They stated that they have never practiced or been trained in agroforestry. However, men already seem to be more familiar with this practice (Ignie and Kayes where some have already experienced agroforestry, particularly land owners within the context of agricultural development projects).

Women and men have free access to forests. The National Gender Profile Report on the agricultural sector shows that women's associations involved in forestry activities are concentrated in the departments of Pool (53.4 %), Plateaux (30.7%), Likouala (11.4 %) and Niari (3.4 %).³⁴

Women are involved in and contribute significantly towards forest management. They have different roles and needs in forest resource management.

➤ **Would differences in vulnerability be expected between men and women and their capacity to adapt to climate change? If yes, which ones?**

As men and women are not affected in the same way by climate change, there are naturally differences in terms of the level and type of vulnerability.

In rural areas, women are the first victims of deforestation, which forces them to spend more time looking for firewood and non-timber forest products to meet family food and energy needs.

Greenhouse gas emitting fuelwoods are thus far the main energy sources used by Congolese women to cook (firewood, charcoal, biomass waste are an integral part of the consumption habits of most households in the Republic of the Congo).

Fetching water for drinking and for household needs is the responsibility of women and girls and requires a lot of time and physical effort, more from women than men.

It is often women who bear the burden of collecting water, fuelwood and food supplies.

Women have a key role in providing a balanced diet for their families, because they are generally in charge of producing subsistence crops, legumes and vegetables that are a direct part of household consumption. As a result, a shortage of food caused by drought and destruction of flora and fauna, risks aggravating the situation of women and girls, particularly in areas that are already weakened.

However, there is a low degree of involvement by women in climate change adaptation policies and programmes.³⁵

➤ **What inequalities exist between the different social groups?**

In Congo, minority groups are made up of indigenous peoples (previously called Pygmies). These indigenous peoples, barely integrated into the national economy, live in a situation of extreme poverty and marginalization with increasingly limited access to natural resources owing to overexploitation of these resources by the Bantu. Their lifestyle is essentially based on hunting and gathering.

Interviews with indigenous peoples in the village of Onyamva in the Department of Plateaux highlighted the social disparities and stigmatization experienced by this population daily. In fact, in terms of health, indigenous women practically live on the margin of the healthcare system. They no longer go to national healthcare facilities due to the stigmatization and discrimination experienced. They are practically forgotten.

They practice subsistence farming and have access to forests to gather NTFP. However, they find it difficult to sell off processed products (such as cassava). The Bantu with whom they cohabit do not buy their products due to assumed dirtiness.

Data from the 2007 census indicates that the net primary school enrollment rate of indigenous children between the ages of six and 11 years is 44%, which is half that of all children in this age group. Furthermore, less than 4% of indigenous pupils receive secondary education.

³⁴FAO, National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods: Country Gender Assessment Series.

³⁵The REDD+ national strategy is not gender-sensitive

➤ **What roles are women and men supposed to play within the context of the project?**

There is no distinction between women or men within the context of Project implementation. However, the gender assessment detected the disparities faced by women, not only in the agricultural sector but also in agroforestry and forestry. For this reason, strategies have been developed to take these disparities into account and to counteract the observed inequalities.

To this end, emphasis is placed on incorporation of the practical needs and strategic interests of each of the Project's target groups, in line with the gender action plan. The objective being that, in time, women and men will be able to share equally and equitably the benefits of the Project. By way of these strategies, one of the Project's objectives is to ensure that 35% of beneficiaries are women.

The Project also intends to build the capacities of the Project team on the gender concept and effective gender mainstreaming in development projects. This is to guarantee achievement of the gender equality objectives throughout Project implementation. The Project also intends to promote women's empowerment by building their leadership and citizenship capacities. The objective here is to develop their power of negotiation with men from the community, within their families and in their working environment (within groups).

Furthermore, a participatory approach will be applied for technical training related to climate resistant agroforestry and forestry extension. Before training, there will be discussions with women to align training sessions with their availability to ensure that the timetable and scheduling of the training fits in with their family constraints and status as mothers.

In addition, within the context of mixed groups, and to avoid abuse related to domination by certain members of the male sex over other members of the female sex (as criticized), emphasis will be placed on equal representation in decision-making bodies. This is to avoid the management board been totally male.

➤ **Do women and men from vulnerable communities have equal access to information, and should they take part in the project and benefit fully from the anticipated project results?**

One of the Project's objectives is to ensure that all Project targets (men, women, and young people) have equal access to opportunities resulting from the Project, particularly in terms of information. For this reason, there is a plan to organize awareness raising sessions with community leaders and men in the districts covered by the Project, on the role of women in the development process through their representation in grassroots community organizations. Their awareness will also be raised on the benefits the community can derive from the involvement of women in these development processes.

Furthermore, the assessment revealed that access to information by women at village level largely depends on the channel by which this information arrives. To account for this, the Project will monitor the channels used to relay information at community level. This is to ensure that women not only have timely access to information, but also that they can participate effectively in meetings and public consultations. Agricultural sector chiefs will be involved in relaying information in the villages.

In addition, capacity building programmes on the abovementioned issues related to personal development (female leadership) will allow women to make their voices heard during these public consultations as rights holders and full citizens.

➤ **Do women have equal access to education, technical knowledge and/or improvement of skills?**

The assessment revealed a real need for training of women from groups in various domains related to their activity, as deficiencies are negatively impacting their productivity.

In fact, most of the women interviewed, unlike the men, had rarely received training (on agricultural techniques, financial management of their operation...) although the need is real and urgent in view of the deficiencies observed. The chief of Mvouti sector confirmed that, he does not remember a training session organized for women producers for the past six years.

The technical capacity building programmes planned as part of the Project are open to all Project targets (men, women, and young people). However, in terms of the barriers (family constraints for women, illiteracy rate noted in women in rural areas) observed during the assessment and which limit the participation of women at the same level as men, the Project will ensure the training is adapted to meet the profile of the producers and their social constraints.

➤ **Will the services and technologies provided by the project be available and accessible to women and men?**

Yes. In fact, the gender assessment showed that a lack of modern technologies increases not only the drudgery of agricultural work for women, but also their overload. They must complete domestic tasks, their agricultural work, processing/storage of agricultural products and provide food for the family all at the same time. Strategies have been defined to ensure access by all Project targets (women/men/young people) to services and technologies, particularly mechanization.

Concretely, the Project plans to provide mechanization through the donation of modern agricultural equipment to male and female producers.

For Component 2 (Deployment of climate-resilient agroforestry and forestry systems), one of the Project's objectives it is to have at least 35% women in all capacity building and support activities that will be conducted.

Moreover, gender-specific indicators will be defined at the level of each objective of the Project's logical framework, with particular regard to access to services and technologies. These indicators will enable monitoring not only of effective access by all target beneficiaries during the implementation of the Project, but also the evaluation of the number of women, men and young people who got access to services and technologies during the reporting.

➤ **Are there opportunities to promote female leadership in local governance/political systems and formal/informal institutions? If not, what obstacles are preventing women from taking on leadership roles?**

Sociocultural barriers, as well as other factors (illiteracy, non-respect of progress already made at legal and institutional level, weak economic power...) are major obstacles encountered by women producers in assuming their leadership role.

In fact, the driving principle of Congolese society is that of men being the source and holder of all authority. Determination of status within the community, as well as role distribution therefore revolves around this principle. With minor variations, women are almost excluded from the domain of power (public and private sphere) or are only involved in the margins (domestic domain).

As an opportunity, the Project could, if necessary, screen beneficiaries by ensuring positive discrimination towards women's groups, with particular reference to the PRONAR lands that will be made available by the State. Indicatively, the anticipated objective is 35% women beneficiaries.

The Project may also rely on the Departmental Directorates for Women's Empowerment and Integration in Development, present in all departments that will host the Project, through implementation of the Congolese national gender policy.

The Project will also rely on national programmes that promote women and gender equality by other technical and financial partners, particularly United Nations agencies (UNDP, UNFPA).

Finally, NGOs that support women's rights at national level are also an opportunity that the Project will use to develop women's power in terms of leadership and decision-making.

➤ **What are the different needs/priorities of women and men within the context of the project/programme? Will the project/programme be able to meet their respective needs and priorities? If yes, how?**

The assessment helped develop a baseline situation for the Project targets, differentiated by gender. The following information will be collected during the inception phase:

- Number or percent of women with secure tenure rights in the project area.

- Percentage of people (gender disaggregated) aware of legal mechanisms and procedures for land tenure security.

The different products of the logical framework, building on the gender action plan, will faithfully reflect the needs and priorities of the targets, taking into consideration not only gender, but also vulnerabilities observed. These needs include building the technical capacities of men, women and young people; the promotion of new, climate-resilient agricultural techniques among women and young people, and access to credit.

Practically, the Project plans to:

- Provide a sustainable source of fuelwood supply through climate resistant agroforestry practices, taking into consideration the fact that women are the ones primarily concerned;
- Support small enterprise development through training on business planning for producers (men/women/young people);
- Support micro-finance institutions in developing financial products and services relevant to beneficiary and women's needs (low interest rate, longer maturity periods and alignment with production cycles, etc.)

The Project document, specifically the logical framework, contains clear strategies such as indicators disaggregated by gender, which will allow for the participation of men and women in all actions planned by the Project to be verified or measured. Sub-activities are also planned as precursors to certain activities by way of corrective measures.

Specifically, the gender assessment identified priority needs specific to women, which are translated into action and integrated in the gender action plan in order to become an integral part of the logical framework of the Project document for their implementation.

➤ **Were the specific needs of vulnerable people taken into consideration by the project/programme?**

Youth and the elderly (particularly elderly women) living in the project area face particular challenges that will be taken into account in the project implementation.

Youth

For global programming purposes, FAO defines the priority age range for rural youth development from 10 to 25 years. In Congo, it is noted that due to high population growth rates, youth make up a large segment of the total population of approximately 5.2 million. The median age is 19.2 years. In rural areas the fertility rate was estimated at 6.5 children born per woman (2011-2012). Many children, particularly girls, are not able to complete their schooling. According to the UNDP Human Development Report, mean years of schooling for boys are 7.5 while for girls only 6.1 years. Girls may also be married or in a 'pre-marriage' union at a very early age. Some 27% of women aged 20 – 24 are already in such a union or marriage according to UNDP. Under customary practices, many girls may be forced into pre-marriage unions before the age of 18. For youth in general, employment remains a challenge. While the national unemployment rate stands at 10.4 percent, youth unemployment is as high as 22.8 percent (UNDP, See [link](#)). More opportunities for employment for youth in the agriculture and forest sectors could reduce rural-urban migration.

In order to ensure that youth (including boys and girls) have opportunities to participate in and benefit from project activities, the following measures will be adopted:

- Project opportunities will be communicated through youth-friendly channels, for example through youth associations and social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp)
- The project will target young leaders in the community for engagement and wider impact. When needed, the project will facilitate/support the emergence of young leaders in target communities.

- Facilitators will be trained to seek the youth perspective in all events and trainings. They will be encouraged to adapt activities to address the particular concerns of youth.

Particular attention will be paid to the needs of indigenous youth.

Elderly

While family and community relations tend to provide some social and economic stability, the elderly (defined as 65 years or older) are a particularly vulnerable segment of the population in the Republic of the Congo. Approximately 100,000 people fall in this 'old age' bracket. The elderly tend to suffer more health ailments, and these may be more acute in rural areas where health services are insufficient.

By customary practice, traditional leaders tend to be elderly men, and they may use their influence to access resources and to solve disputes and other problems arising at the local level. By contrast, elderly women generally lack such opportunities for status and leadership in the community. Elderly women are particularly vulnerable in the event of the death of their husband since customary inheritance rules and practice favor men. Furthermore, access to pensions is limited to 22.1% of the elderly population (UNDP Human Development Report).

The elderly often hold a wealth of information on local history, plants, animals, and traditional cultural practices. Indigenous elders in forested areas may be particularly knowledgeable on biodiversity.

To ensure that the elderly have equitable opportunities to participate in and benefit from project activities, the following measures will be adopted:

- Facilitators will be trained to seek the perspective of elderly participants in all events and training courses. They will be encouraged to adapt activities to address the concerns of the elderly.
- In the agroforestry activities, the project team will seek the advice of elderly members of the community to learn about experience, traditional varieties, natural pest control methods, etc.
- Input from elderly men and women will be sought in the mid-term and final evaluation.

Particular attention will be paid to the needs of indigenous elderly, particularly women.

➤ **Did the project recognize the distinct vulnerabilities of women and men in the development of specific response strategies for each target group?**

Overall, Project interventions cover men, women and young people. However, as the gender assessment revealed specific vulnerabilities, particularly for women, elderly, and youth, the Gender Action Plan identifies and proposes specific actions which, within the context of the Project's activities, would allow adequate and targeted responses to these specific vulnerabilities.

➤ **Are the specific knowledge and skills of women and men, in particular vulnerable groups, used to contribute to the results and solutions of the project/programme?**

Methodologically, the Project favors the participatory approach, through public consultations, as well as focus groups with different target groups, the objective being to rely on pre-existing mechanisms and skills to guarantee achievement of the anticipated results.

➤ **Is it possible for the project/programme to question gender stereotypes and increase positive relationships between men and women by equitable actions? If yes, what are these opportunities and actions?**

Within the context of the gender assessment, the Project identified stereotypes which negatively impact the daily output of women. These are:

- According to some beliefs, fruits from trees planted by women are never of good quality. Moreover, until the recent past, women did not have the right to climb avocado or butter fruit trees because of these beliefs.
- According to customary beliefs, women do not inherit land. This contributes to limiting women's rights and impacting their productivity.

- According to beliefs and social constructs, the place of a woman is exclusively at home. This tends to exclude women from public affairs, considerably limiting their decision-making power and their chance to benefit from the training opportunities that are sometimes offered.

In order to overcome stereotypes within the context of the Project, awareness raising sessions on unfavorable sociocultural attitudes will be organized on site for women and men in order to deconstruct these stereotypes. Awareness raising sessions will also be organized with community leaders in respect to behavioral changes (mindsets) related to women's access to land within the customary framework;

In terms of the logical framework:

The Project's logical framework will integrate objectives and indicators disaggregated by gender. These indicators will help monitor progress over time, and changes resulting from the Project.

The gender dimension will be crosscutting throughout all areas of interventions and not just through actions in favor of and for the visibility of women.

In addition to indicators, gender-sensitive activities and expected results will be defined in the logical framework. This will force the Project implementation team to formulate actions in annual operational plans.

The Project will ensure that the institutional provisions planned take the gender issue into account and enable strategies to be implemented and gender integration to be measured in the proposed actions.

At implementation level:

- The Project team will rely on the situational analysis (the assessment) and other qualitative and quantitative data (disaggregated by gender) in due course to evaluate the gender impact of the Project's interventions on the target beneficiaries;
- In addition to the Project's flagship activities, the logical framework will incorporate specific activities in response to certain practical gender-specific needs identified during the assessment;
- The capacities of the Project team's agents will be strengthened on gender and development, to ensure real and effective gender mainstreaming during implementation of the GCF Project;
- Gender expertise will be recruited to strengthen the Project team in order to guarantee the expected gender-sensitive results; and
- The data from the various activity reports and/or other Project documents, will be routinely disaggregated in order to see the differentiated impact on each of the targets (men/women/young people).

In terms of monitoring and evaluation:

The gender dimension will be integrated into the performance and impact assessment missions of the GCF through:

- The incorporation of gender objectives into the terms of reference for the assessment (elements to be considered in all assessments);
- The recruitment of a gender consultant in assessment missions (final and/or mid-term);
- Disaggregation by gender of all data in the different reports, specifying data in the "young people" category;
- Availability of reports on successes or failures of initiatives or the achievement of gender objectives.

3. Gender assessment within the context of the project

This section presents a more in-depth gender analysis that goes beyond the points requested by the GCF in order to better understand the condition of women within the context of the Project.



3.1 Gender analysis in the agricultural, forestry, and agroforestry value chains

The project aims to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation caused by slash-and-burn agriculture and fuelwood extraction. Given that it will be based on the implementation of agroforestry and forestry systems, it is judicious to analyze gender mainstreaming in the different value chains of these three agricultural practices.

As indicated by the study entitled “*Gender in value chains*” by AgriproFocus, gender-sensitive value chains are important in many respects. From an economic point of view, they will ensure women and men have the same conditions and opportunities; they will increase their productivity and will then make use of the full potential of all segments of the population.

3.2 Agriculture

In all the target communities in the different departments considered for field interviews, women are heavily involved in agricultural production. Since the situation of Congolese women farmers varies slightly from one zone to another (savanna/forest), from one community to another and even from family to family depending on social and economic factors, it is important to recognize the existence of a real analogy of their working conditions and their status. The gender-based division of work, still very present in agricultural activity, particularly in rural areas, means that women bear the burden of most tasks related to agricultural production. However, stump removal and tree felling are essentially the responsibility of men.

In the districts targeted by the Project, agriculture is mainly characterized by subsistence food crop production dominated by polyculture. In this system, producers in general and women in particular combine various crops, which are most often cassava, maize, bananas, yams, and peanuts.

Cropping practices use traditional methods, namely slash-and-burn agriculture. Such cultivation is mainly practiced by women in the forest, as well as in savanna areas, but particularly in forest settings. In Mvouti for example, the interviewed women explained that agricultural land is developed through clearing followed by tree felling and burning.

Within the context of their agricultural activities, the interviewed women farmers generally use basic and archaic means of production (hoe, machete). As a result, a lack of modern technologies, particularly mechanization (especially in savanna areas where women work on large areas, as is the case with certain groups in Madingou), increases not only the drudgery of agricultural work for these women, but also the work burden, especially as they also need to complete domestic tasks, production, processing and storage of agricultural products.

3.3 Access, use and control of resources

Access to resources means the capacity to use a resource, and control represents the capacity to make decisions concerning the use of the resource. The distinction between access to certain resources and their control is important, because the capacity to use a resource does not necessarily involve the possibility of defining the use of that resource. In this section we discuss the access, use, and control over various resources.

3.3.1 Land

As indicated in the national land policy document, land is primarily for farmers, a factor of production irrespective of their economic orientation.

On the legal level, Congo recognizes two main land acquisition methods.

- Acquisition resulting from legal provisions on private property as governed by the Civil Code: succession, donation, obligation (contractual), accession, ordinance;
- Acquisition through recognition of customary land rights (land registration rules, specifically stipulated by Law No. 10-2004, amended by Law 21/2018 of June 13, 2018, setting the rules for the occupation and acquisition of land in the Republic of the Congo).

However, customary law recognizes four methods of land acquisition:

1. Allocation by descent (matrilineal or patrilineal): the family head, generally, a man, decides on land allocation;
2. Through marriage: the family head allocates lands to the wife at the request of the husband;

3. Purchase: This is related to the ability of each woman to pay for one or more areas from a landowner who sets the price for his land;
4. Lease agreement: This consists of an agreement with a landowner, who in return receives money or a part of the annual production. Lease agreements are made for specific periods of time (in Ignie, the maximum lease is 2 years, until harvesting of the planted crop). Payment and amounts vary by district. Payment in Goma Tsé-Tsé, for example, ranges from 10% to 20% of the harvest, while in Louvakou it is 10% of the harvest and 59/76 USD for 1 hectare; 50 USD/ha in Mpoya). In Ngo in Plateaux, a hectare is leased at 42 USD, only to persons not native to the village and who wish to plant fields of subsistence crops, while village inhabitants use the land freely.

In all cases, these four methods of land allocation in the different departments targeted by the Project are handled by men. The field mission allowed observation of the fact that sociocultural considerations have serious impacts on access to land by Congolese women. In fact, if women are not the family head, the chance of accessing land is left to the goodwill of family heads or the men of the family, who may be a brother (older or younger), an uncle or, when these are no longer alive, a son. In all cases, in the presence of a man (brother/husband/son), his voice is the predominant one.

Some testimonies collected in the district of Madingou³⁶ revealed that when a husband or brother is absent or not interested in agricultural activities, women may “control” large areas. However, once such women want to seriously invest within the context of certain calls for projects, they must discuss this with their male relatives to receive their authorization. This situation creates chronic land insecurity for women, which limits their opportunity to plant perennial crops on land, due to the risk that the land may be taken away at any time.

Women’s groups interviewed in the Department of Niari stated that lease agreements gave them rights when the rules were well-established and respected, particularly the right to plant trees; although they were obliged to make a financial contribution or “*countercharge*” to the owner worth 10% of the harvest and also 10% from 20 trees upwards.

However, in Ngo in the Plateaux, women from land lease groups have no right to plant trees on landowners’ land because, according to these landowners, that would make these groups “*owners*” of this land.

The women interviewed in Mvouti, native to or married in Mvouti, generally stated that until now they were working “freely” on their families’ land on their individual plantations. For women coming from other towns, and residing in Mvouti, they agreed on a lease with landowners at 84 USD/ha. Unfortunately, as land lease holders, they do not have the right to plant fruit trees and can only grow food.

Marginalization of women by customary law in terms of access to land may explain the scarce presence of women observed within most of the landowner associations interviewed. In Nyari, for example, the landowners’ association has **128 members, including 29 women and 98 men**. In Ngo, the landowners’ association has **six members, including one woman and five men**.

“Previously, women could control the land on an exceptional basis only when there was no adult man in the family line. This control was until the boy children reached maturity”. (Mr. MBOUMY AGNAN SG of NYARI landowners. Statement collected during focus groups held in Louvakou on May 23, 2019).

These limitations imposed by customary law on the ability of women to own land seriously hinders their effective participation in economic activities. In fact, land control rights play a central role in guaranteeing

³⁶ Women members of a group testified that they were expelled from family land by the brothers of their president because they believed that, as women, they had no right to settle people on land without their authorization. This was not only violent but the group’s harvests were destroyed.

a decent life for women, particularly in rural areas. This is even truer as the land constitutes the main source of income and livelihoods.

From all conversations, it emerged that married women with access to land through marriage were in the end reduced to the role of beneficial owner only, as decision-making power reverts to the family head, husband or son although she is the main user.

“When I got married, I left my village and I went to live in my husband’s village. I worked on my mother-in-law’s plantations, but these were the plantations that her husband had left. My mother-in-law is no longer alive, and my husband is also dead, but I cannot sell and I cannot even give to anyone because these lands belong to my sons and their paternal uncles”. A participant in the Madingou focus group, May 25, 2019.

Concerning widows, Article 484 of the Family Code stipulates that women may not inherit properties from their husbands, except as beneficial users, denying them a right to ownership. This means that although they are the spouse of the deceased person, they cannot control his land heritage.

Most of the interviewed single women or heads of households state that they have access to family land but are aware that this land does not belong to them, but rather to the family. Therefore, they have no decision-making power on this land.

It appears that, under customary law, gender, matrimonial status and socioeconomic condition are very important in determining the ability of an individual to acquire land.

Although the legal reforms of 2018 clearly mention the place of women for land management in Congo, it should be recognized that this reference itself is not sufficient to regulate gender-based social relations in terms of land rights under customary law.

This Law 21 on land should be disseminated as a matter of urgency, with particular emphasis on the place of women; strategies and provisions for land administration should be implemented that take these cultural and customary realities into account; and platforms should be created for discussion and awareness raising at local and community levels.

Within the context of the Project, particularly its Component 1, three land options are planned. Apart from the PRONAR land option, the Project will need to contract with individuals (purchase and/or lease). The Project will need to ensure that it does not support the above-mentioned disparities in its land contracts. Moreover, the Project’s gender objective of involving 35% women must be implemented within the context of the support it provides to landowners in terms of securing their land rights. Women’s groups must also take priority in cases of land allocation by the Project.

3.3.2 Credit

Financial resources are an instrument to develop agricultural activities in rural, as well as urban areas. Unfortunately, access to credit remains a major challenge for farmers in general and women farmers in particular (1.5% for women and 4.1% for men)³⁷.

Because Congolese banks are commercial and not agricultural banks, it is difficult for them to support agricultural activities as they have no understanding of the specificities.

“This is a barrier, because our banks here know nothing about agriculture, not the harvest cycle and not the seasons, and this creates a major problem in terms of repaying any loans they grant as they do not take all that into account”.

Most women farmers interviewed in the Project sites have very little familiarity with banking procedures. Furthermore, they have very few interactions with financial institutions.

The physical location of the farms and the distance to the source of credit is one of the disadvantages for these women. As an illustration, there are no microfinance institutions in certain districts, everything needs to be done in Brazzaville. This is the case for Ignie, 45 km from Brazzaville. In Louvakou, some members of groups stated that they have an account at MUCODEC (*Mutuelles Congolaises d’Epargne et de Crédit*

³⁷ European Union, Gender Profile, Republic of Congo: Situation analysis of girls and women in the Republic of the Congo. Jan 2017.

[Congolese Savings and Credit Unions] based in Dolisie. However, they have never received microcredit as this is conditional on a certain savings requirements.

Some women interviewed in Hinda benefited from awareness raising campaigns on agricultural microfinance and access to bank credit. They also stated that they had undertaken some awareness raising modules on financial education through the NGO CERPAC.

For the record, these women are developing in an insecure environment. With the exception of some who are landowners, most work on small farms that only provide for subsistence livelihoods. This excludes them from the possibility of guaranteeing the required loans. Furthermore, the lack of diversification of their activities means that no additional income can be expected apart from that coming in from their farming. In order to mitigate this difficulty, other forms of savings and credit have been created for increased accessibility to the most disadvantaged women. These are Women's Savings and Credit Unions (*Caisses féminines d'épargne et de crédit mutuel* - CFECM), supported by the Ministry for Women's Empowerment and Integration in Development.

These local organizations have been established to facilitate access to credit by women, especially in rural areas. These unions are oriented towards the collection and securing of savings, and the credit beneficiaries are simply the women who have made deposits.

3.3.3 Training

The assessment revealed a real need for training of women from groups in various domains related to their activities, as the deficiencies are negatively impacting their productivity. In Goma Tsé-Tsé (during public consultations led by *Initiative Développement*), the (female) president of the market gardening group expressed the wish to become involved in agroforestry, while continuing market gardening activities, but would like to receive training beforehand.

In fact, most of the women interviewed, unlike the men, have hardly been trained (in agricultural techniques, financial management of their operation...) while the need is real and urgent in view of the deficiencies observed.

"I have been agricultural sector chief here in Mvouti for six years. I do not remember a training session being organized here for women farmers." Daniel IBATA, ASC in Mvouti, interview conducted on 05/24/2019.

The only training Programme attended by some women in Mvouti is the one organized by an NGO coordinator on agroforestry using moringa.

Group interviews revealed that most women from agricultural groups are less able than men to assimilate the knowledge offered by agricultural extension services. There are far higher levels of illiteracy in women from the groups than men. This is one of the reasons motivating most of them to join with men within the context of groups, despite the male domination that they will experience.

It should be noted that, unlike the men, most of the women interviewed in the different districts do not speak French, but rather the local language (some focus groups in the south essentially were conducted in the Kituba language). In addition to reasons related to literacy, family constraints are obstacles which were also mentioned by some women to justify their lack of training within agricultural groups.

In fact, during conversations, women stated that within the context of previous agricultural projects conducted in their districts, training programmes did not always take into consideration their status as mothers and wives. Furthermore, the training was sometimes organized far from their villages (Madingou). This was obviously not possible for them, due to a lack of time and means to attend.

Also, some married or cohabiting women who were questioned stated that sometimes their husbands or partners preferred to go alone to the training and come back and train them afterwards. This forced them to be happy with secondhand training. This is the case for one of the members from a women's group in Hinda who confided in us that, as part of an agricultural project by the Ministry of Agriculture, she and her husband had been eligible to attend training offered by the agricultural technique demonstration center. Only her husband believed that it was useful for him to attend the training.

This type of behavior by husbands may have repercussions on the achievement of the gender objective set by the Project.

During the field research, it was also revealed that some husbands or partners objected to their partners to participate as the training was offered by men.

This situation calls into question the best approach for training offered within the context of Project implementation. This was also specified by women from Madingou Kayes who requested training on cassava varieties and their cultivation but drew attention to the fact that this training must be scheduled during periods when they would be able to attend. In other words, they needed to be consulted to agree on the timing.

3.3.4 Modern agricultural techniques and equipment.

Field investigations showed that most rural women use basic and archaic methods of production (hoe, machete), making their work arduous.

A lack of appropriate technologies that could reduce the time spent on domestic chores, production, processing and storage of agricultural products considerably worsens their state of health, depriving them of rest, leading to early aging, loss of production and increased morbidity and mortality. Field investigations revealed that, in the department of Plateaux, specifically at the Etsouali village machinery center in the district of Ngo, services cost 67 USD (plowing). Furthermore, this machine center has an insufficient number of tractors (2) to meet the demand. Most of the tractors are aging or broken down. Producers need to contact private companies at a higher cost: 84 USD.

As indicated in the report of the General Agricultural Census conducted in September 2016, and supported by our field research, small tools are the basic equipment of 71.2% of male-headed agricultural households, compared with 28% of households headed by women. These small tools essentially consist of hoes, axes, machetes, saws, chainsaws etc. Fixed installations consisting of dryers, drying areas, workbenches, granaries and silos exist in 29.3% of women-headed households. Pulled and processing equipment are respectively used by 29.7% and 30% of women-headed households.

Field investigations also revealed that, in areas where private service providers offer modern equipment services, these services are often not delivered on time to the women requesting them. This is specifically the case for women's groups in the district of Louvakou who state that they paid enormous amounts of money together with drums of diesel to service providers who never performed the work for which they were paid. It should also be noted that some equipment service providers require large areas in order to make the trip. To a certain extent, this disqualifies some women for whom access to large areas is almost impossible in rural settings.

This is also the case in Madingou in Bouenza, where women from the different interviewed groups mentioned that they find it difficult to bring in a tractor, even after paying months in advance (for example: a tractor paid for in October 2018 still had not come in June 2019...); "they do not respect agricultural calendars", "the equipment is often broken down and takes long to repair"; costs are still high: 185 USD for plowing and spraying.

With regards to small tools, some women's groups, particularly in the district of Hinda, stated during interviews that they received an agricultural equipment donation from the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Women's Integration in Development, as a one-off action. This is also the case for certain groups from Mpouya who have no problems with mechanization, because they received tractors from Minister Mboulou, so plowing is almost free, and the price is purely symbolic³⁸. He also made donations to villages along the rivers. This is unfortunately not the case for women in groups from other target districts. In terms of access to inputs, there is a generalized lack of access to plant protection products and seeds for market gardening. In fact, whether in Bouenza, Niari or Plateaux, the women's groups and individuals interviewed noted enormous difficulties in obtaining improved seed and inputs (fertilizers). Their financial vulnerability due, amongst other things, to the fact that they hold primary responsibility for household

³⁸ See ID consultation reports.

chores, makes it difficult for these women (a little more than men who are mobile and less economically vulnerable) to access inputs.

The poor state of the road network also definitely affects all agricultural producers, but the findings and statements of participants in the discussions showed that women are affected a little more. In some districts, particularly Louvakou, women stated that they recruit young people to do piecework in order to transport their harvests from the plantations to the road; they also order trucks to come close to the water's edge to transport bags of retted cassava to Dolisie at 3.5 USD per bag and 2.5 USD for the bag owner.

The lack of agricultural tracks makes it difficult to transport field produce to urban centers. Farms are approximately 10 km from the village, as in the case of Mpouya. Women travel by foot and often have to stay in camps during maintenance and weeding operations. For women who do not have the means to pay young people, they carry their products on their heads from the plantations to the village.

"Mama We carry everything on our heads or on our backs then we travel for kilometers and kilometers... How much can you carry? An old woman like me?" Ms. Joséphine Mboumba, Lumière group from Mumbazi Louvakou.

3.3.5 Forest resources

Law 16-2000 of November 20, 2000 relating to the Forest Code in the Republic of the Congo, Law 14-2009 of December 30, 2009, amending certain provisions of Law 16-2000 of November 20, 2000, and its enforcement texts, including Decree 2002-47 of December 31, 2002, define the conditions for forest management and use. The Forest Code, undergoing revision (see 2016, still not officially adopted), acknowledges the rights of communities to all "forest products" derived from the community's forest (Article 32, see 2016).

The National Gender Profile Report on the agricultural sector shows that women's associations involved in forest activities are concentrated in the departments of Pool (53.4 %), Plateaux (30.7%), Likouala (11.4 %) and Niari (3.4 %) ³⁹. They specifically devote themselves to hunting for non-timber forest products (NTFPs). Of course, women are essential in the management of forest resources. Field research revealed that they play an important role in using and processing forest resources, in order to meet their families' needs. Women and men have different roles and responsibilities in terms of forest use. Management of timber and fauna is the responsibility of men, while women manage products taken from the forest for commercial and food purposes.

However, it should be specified that the field work revealed no discrimination against women in terms of forest access. In Louvakou, the interviewed women stated that they had the right to go into the forest even when they were not landowners. *"We have the right to go into the forest and take what we want... We just need to ask"*.

Access is totally egalitarian. Women are involved in and contribute significantly towards forest management. They have different roles and needs in the management of forest resources, and they do not look for the same resources as men. Women's forest activities include traditional arboriculture, harvesting of non-timber forest products, harvesting and management of fuelwood to prepare food.

Non-Timber Forest Products

In the different target districts, women are very involved in gathering, processing and selling NTFPs. Apart from hunting, these two activities are in fact traditionally reserved for women and children.

These products vary by district, as well as by ecological cover and dietary habits in the departments. They include *Gnétum africanun*, currently called "coco" in Lingala, "fumbua" in Kituba, mushrooms, caterpillars, wild fruits, legumes, medicinal plants, leaves from different trees particularly arrowroot, which are used to cook cassava and other foods.

Men's forest activities are primarily for profit. The same applies to the manufacture of charcoal, which is an exclusively male activity. The development of the relevant sectors will enable these women to increase their financial independence and their purchasing power.

³⁹ FAO National Gender Profile op.cit.

NTFPs provide livelihoods and income for the interviewed women. Some of these products are used for their own consumption, and others are intended for sale. It is therefore easy to understand the negative effects of any natural resource degradation phenomena on the lives of rural communities.

NTFPs have many functions: food, medicine, traditional medicine, construction and craft materials, income sources through the sale of some NTFPs such as caterpillars, honey, Gnetum leaves, palm nuts, kola nuts, etc.... religious and mystical (protective talismans etc.).

3.3.6 Fuelwood:

In Congo, firewood supplies to cook food are, by nature, an activity for women. This is effectively based on the fact that women are in charge of preparing family meals, and they therefore appear to be the primary users of natural resources in all their activities (fuelwood supplies, traditional medicine, gathering of mushrooms and caterpillars, picking of wild leaves and fruits).

Unfortunately, the focus groups with women showed that they know very little or nothing about the links between environmental conservation and global warming. They make absolutely no connection between the unusual phenomena that they are experiencing, such as drought, drying up of water sources, soil infertility, etc. and activities like deforestation. It is important to promote more awareness among women on these phenomena as well as on climate-resilient agricultural practices.

Concrete and effective alternatives to slash and burn agriculture should be introduced to women given that restrictions to natural resources access would be counterproductive and would increase the economic vulnerability of the women and their families.

3.4 Work contribution

In terms of women's contributions to work, their workload in the productive, as well as the reproductive spheres should be revisited. Field investigation shows that women producers constitute a real agricultural workforce in the target areas.

The report of the General Agricultural Census conducted in 2016 showed that the agricultural workforce represents a total of 514,358 farmers, out of an estimated population of 4,801,684 inhabitants in 2015. Of this number, 65% of women contribute to 70% of food production. According to the same report, women represent 70% of agricultural labor and are responsible for 60 to 80% of the country's subsistence crop production. However, agriculture contributes only 3.6% on average to the GDP. Also, despite the high level of involvement of women in agricultural activity, as well as other considerable advantages, the agricultural sector does not manage to satisfy the national food demand.

It should be emphasized that, despite their strong motivation for agricultural work, women experience economic and social disparities which negatively impact their output. The same applies to their level of education, which, during conversations, proved to be greatly inferior to that of the men in the groups. There are so many difficulties which could (at least partially) justify the low level of impact by women in agriculture on the GDP despite their high level of participation in the agricultural workforce.

The project should take this situation of illiteracy into account in the different capacity building programmes planned in the various components.

3.5 Women and agricultural groups (associations, cooperatives)

Collective groups are the most functional type of organization found during field work. They are either mixed or exclusively made up of women. However, they are not organized in sectors, and they have an average of 20 members per group. They are groups of private individuals which function independently. However, the general trend is more towards individual work. They (the women) work on common plots, but they prefer their own plots on which they work alone.

Also, in some districts, groups exist only by name. This is the case in the district of Ngo where it was noted that, after receiving support, the groups broke up once the projects left. The members were divided and only some of them continued the activities.

For those who work together within a group context, they can handle expenses that they could not have managed individually. This is particularly the case with women from certain groups in the district of Hinda who believe that this facilitates the purchase of seed and cuttings. They plan to purchase a mechanical pump on behalf of the group in the near future.

We note that another type of association-based operation was observed in some villages. In fact, in this method of operation, women help each other with sowing, weeding and harvesting, but each woman has her own field (exp. presented by a participant at the meeting in Ngo: six women each have 2 ha).

Most of the interviewed women's groups function informally. Women are not familiar with the legalization circuit. The illiteracy that characterizes many of them is not helpful (this is specifically the case with most women's groups from the town of Kayes).

Based on the fact that legal recognition is a fundamental prerequisite for any organization, and that the Project will not be able to work with non-formalized groups, it is important that these women's groups, that have functioned informally until now, be supported in their formalization in order to become legal entities and therefore eligible for the Project support.

Apart from aspects related to formalization of these groups, problems inherent in their operation, management and structure were also noted. In fact, all the dysfunctions noted within these groups will prevent these women from creating strong foundations of solidarity in order to develop strategies and derive maximum profit from opportunities that could result from their association.

3.6 Women and representation

The representation of women in the local or community authorities of the districts visited seems to be related to the perception of communities about women and their socially attributed and recognized roles. The blatant absence of women was noted at the head of all target departments. In fact, the chairpersons of the Departmental Councils and the prefects of Bouenza, Niari, Pool, Kouilou and Plateaux are exclusively men.

"I assure you that the fault lies with the women... They exclude themselves; they limit themselves due to their fear, illiteracy and education". Statements made by Mr. Aimé Sibi, Departmental Director of Women's Integration in Niari. Dolisie, May 23, 2019.

In the district of Mvouti, the executive of the village committee that makes the important decisions for the village is made up exclusively of men.

This under-representation of women and their weak decision-making power and leadership were also observed within the visited groups and communities. Women take part in public meetings cautiously. They sometimes do not have the information or are informed at the last minute. This is the case with the district of Ngo 2 and Eluna in Plateaux, where we held discussion groups with women who had only been informed of our activity on our arrival.

However, men were fairly represented and seemed to have been informed well in advance. As this is effectively a matter of access to information, it was noted during field work that the channel by which information arrives in a village is a determining factor in whether or not women take part in public meetings. In fact, village chiefs and community leaders seem to have little inclination to associate with or involve women in public meetings. The information is managed by/with men from the community. For them, public meetings are primarily a men's affair. However, every time agricultural sector chiefs were used to pass on information, a maximum of women was at the meetings. The plausible explanation for this attitude by village chiefs and other community leaders seems to be the fact that the latter are still fairly influenced by sociocultural obstacles and the traditional perception of the role of women, which confine their role to that of wives and mothers, with no place in the management of the community's public affairs.

For this reason, the Project must strategically rely on these agricultural sector chiefs or public employees (Departmental Directorate for Women' Empowerment and Integration in Development) to relay information within communities.

Also, in order to reinforce women's power within mixed agricultural groups, but also communities, awareness must be raised for women, as well as men on the distribution of social roles and gender inequalities. This can take place through training programmes and validation of the positive results of participation by women in various community activities implemented within the Project framework, as well as other things. It can also be achieved through intensified educational campaigns among community leaders and organizational and religious leaders on the role of women in development. This development cannot be achieved without the effective participation of men and women in the decision-making process at local and community levels.

3.7 Firewood use

According to the results of the agricultural sector study conducted in 2011 in Congo, the majority of rural households use firewood for cooking (72% to 84%), followed by charcoal (12% to 15%)⁴⁰. As women are at the heart of household use of firewood, they bear the costs incurred by purchasing firewood (in urban areas). Women and children may spend a significant amount of time in the collection of firewood for cooking.

3.8 Agroforestry

Agroforestry is still scarcely practiced in Congo. Arboriculture is mainly dominated by men, 70.5% versus 29.5% for women⁴¹. The low level of involvement by women in this activity may be explained by their limited access to land in certain departments.

The interviewed women farmers claim that they have never practiced or been trained in agroforestry. However, they plant fruit trees on their farms (those who have the right to do so). On the other hand, men seem a little more familiar with this practice, particularly in Ignie, when in the past they had experience with an agroforestry project. This is also the case in Kayes, where according to some participants, agroforestry seems to be practiced already but only by landowners (land is leased only for subsistence crops/1 ha at 84 USD). This is also the case in Bouenza, deemed to be an arboreal land with aging orchards and disappearing knowledge. However, in this district, there have been several landmark experiences with existing agroforestry, other than that of the SNR (*Service National de Reboisement* [National Reforestation Service]), supported by the ASCs or by the NGO ID or by individuals trained by ID or the ASC.

Generally, the women interviewed in the different target districts claimed that they are ready to improve their knowledge about agroforestry. The only obstacle is the restrictions related to land.

The women's subsistence crop group, supported by the ASC in Nkayi, also expressed their willingness to plant trees to ensure sustainable income for the future. *"A tree nursery and planting trees, that's the future."* Zita, a nursery gardener taking part in the ID consultations.

In any case, a real training-action strategy must be planned and developed in order to technically build women's agroforestry capacities. They must also be supported to avoid any dropouts.

However, with the state of customary laws governing land, agroforestry could be complicated in that women could be forced out at any time. This is also the case for women living in the districts of Ngo, Kayes, where only landowners can plant trees. During the implementation phase, the Project must therefore take these sociocultural realities into account.

3.9 Processing and marketing

Fieldwork reveals that processing and marketing activities are part of women's duties. Men only get involved on an ancillary basis. In most districts where interviews were conducted, women were in fact seen

⁴⁰ African Development Fund, Republic of Congo: Congo Agricultural Sector Study 2011.

⁴¹FAO, National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods: Country Gender Assessment Series

to have primary responsibility for activities related to harvesting, storage, transport, processing and marketing of agricultural products.

These activities, particularly those related to processing, take place almost daily, both to feed the family and for commercial purposes. However, they are not without difficulties for women. Processing essentially concerns the cassava tubers.

Women producers from the visited districts stated that they face several constraints that may vary from one district to another. Generally, they have limited access to reliable road connections, a lack of customers for their products and storage and processing difficulties. They also experience enormous deficits in terms of information on market opportunities, technological advances, as well as quality requirements, which considerably limits their economic and commercial opportunities.

Although the difficulties cited above may seem common to male and female producers, it must be recognized that the impact on women is greater.

For this reason, the establishment of “purchase agreements” and sales platforms, as planned by the Project through under Component 4, is especially commendable as it will reduce the difficulties faced by women farmers in selling their products.

More specifically, producers from the district of Louvakou are faced with the lack of a local market, and they transport their products to Dolisie for sale. This impacts the cost price and the profit. Deterioration of the road hinders sales. This is also the case in Loudima where the isolation of the agricultural tracks and the arduous nature of transport prevents effective marketing of their products. They also have difficulty storing products prior to selling them owing to a lack of “warehouses” and cold rooms. Producers in Kayes lack customers to buy their products owing to the impracticable nature of the tracks, amongst other factors.

3.10 Women and climate change

Women’s activities in rural areas, particularly the type of agriculture practiced and the collection and use of firewood, link women to deforestation and its negative effects. Women contribute towards deforestation, which is one of the main causes of climate change; they are also the ones who primarily suffer the adverse consequences.

In Loudima, climate change seems to have impacted peanut production this year due to a lack of rain and stronger winds than in past years. The issue of drought and drying up of water sources, as well as bush fires destroying plantations kept coming up during different interviews held with women in Bouenza. This is the case in Ngo, for example, where bush fires are very common and cause a loss of crops. Because of drought, inhabitants buy water during the dry season at 1.80 USD for a 200-liter barrel.

In Mpouya, the loss of 1 ha of banana trees due to heat and sandy soils that do not retain enough water was reported. Due to the roles assigned to them by the community, women are more affected than men by drought, hunger, malnutrition, soil infertility, bush fires, poverty, harvest losses and other product losses due to climate change. This has consequences for women, in terms of their social status and their role within the community and family.

Unfortunately, due to a lack of information, women suffer the effects of climate change, while continuing to practice activities that jeopardize environmental conservation. In other words, due to ignorance and a lack of information, they continue to expose themselves to climate change risks, while also contributing towards them. However, their contribution to climate change is very small compared with that of industry. It is important to rethink strategies to prevent and combat the effects of climate change, fundamentally integrating the role of women and the different impacts of climate change on men and women. In fact, the policies and strategies developed to date in the Republic of the Congo are general and do not take gender specificities into account (the REDD+ national strategy does not take the gender issue into consideration at this time).

Within the context of the fight against climate change, it is also important to emphasize education and awareness-raising for women.

The efficacy of environmental and climate change policies and strategies can be ensured through gender mainstreaming and gender equality. These policies and strategies should take into account problems of differentiated impact induced by natural phenomena and strengthen the participation of women in decision-making on the subject.

3.11 Women and food security

Undernourishment and malnutrition are the main health problems affecting the most vulnerable segment of the Congolese population (children, pregnant women, the elderly and low-income households)⁴².

The women farmers interviewed about their personal investment in feeding their households are incontestably the guarantors of food security for their families. As they have a key role in providing a balanced diets for their families, women are generally in charge of producing subsistence crops, legumes and vegetables that are a direct part of household consumption. Due to their primary responsibility in terms of food security, women have an important role to play in conserving the environment and natural resources, as well as promoting sustainable development.

During field work, women within the different interviewed groups were unfortunately not informed on their very important role in adopting agricultural systems that will guarantee sustainable food production.

⁴² Country Programming Framework - FAO/Congo-Brazzaville 2013-2016

4. Analysis of the gender skills of the different stakeholders

The design, management and implementation of field activities incorporating a gender approach requires methods that match the practical needs and strategic interests of each community and their different component groups, which requires a certain level of expertise.

Hence the importance of reviewing the gender knowledge of individuals involved in the entire Project cycle.

4.1 Skills of stakeholders and potential partners

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAEP) and the Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF)

The Ministry of Forest Economy

Issues related to forestry, agroforestry, NTFPs and fuelwood are under the supervision of the MEF. As a project stakeholder, its capacities need to be strengthened on gender issues and development for effective support to the Project.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries is implementing the government's agricultural policy.

The National Reforestation Service (SNR)

The SNR is a public establishment under the supervision of the Ministry of Forest Economy, with numerous scientific and technical responsibilities: public plantations on behalf of the State or local authorities, technical assistance to private investors and sponsors of agroforestry plantation projects, technical assistance to forestry companies in the reforestation component of their management plans, protection of catchment areas, development of non-timber forest products, dissemination of technical information, production and distribution of seeds/plants for local populations, research and development.

A key Project partner, this entity will play a fundamental role in implementation. Hence the need to build the capacities of agents on gender and development issues to guarantee gender mainstreaming in all support provided to the Project.

National Afforestation and Reforestation Programme (Projet national d'afforestation et de reboisement - PRONAR)

The objectives of this programme include mitigating human pressure on forests through the promotion of forestry and agroforestry plantations, supporting stakeholders in afforestation and reforestation activities. It is a strategic Project partner, specifically within the context of supporting women in agroforestry. For this reason, it would be judicious to build the capacities of this organization on gender and development issues to ensure maximum impact on the women targeted by the Project.

United Nations Agencies

United Nations agencies such as UNDP and UNFPA offer real opportunities to promote women's rights through the implementation of activities within the context of the Project.

In fact, within the context of cooperation programmes and the annual work plans with the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Integration of Women in Development, these agencies already carry out activities in the district (Madingou) covered by the Project. Useful partnerships may be considered in order to support Project activities related to their gender equality mandate.

This is the case of the United Nations Development Programme which, within the context of its annual work plan, carries out educational activities on women's rights in the departments of Bouenza and Niari.

Gender focal points in the different sectoral ministries

Within the context of institutional meetings organized for this assessment, interviews were held with gender focal points in the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, the Ministry of Land Use Planning, the Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research and the Ministry of Forest Economy.

Almost all focal points interviewed are not really aware of their role of ensuring crosscutting gender integration. Mainly women, these focal points, or at least most of them, limit their roles to the celebration on March 8.

There is a need to build capacities, not only on gender basics, but also on gender mainstreaming in public policies, policy and strategy documents, as well as projects.

Agricultural Sector Chiefs

These are the representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries in the districts. They provide a real opportunity for the Project in terms of the gender dimension although their relevant capacities need to be strengthened.

The Project should rely on the ASCs to ensure that information reaches women in the communities, and that they effectively take part in the different consultations and meetings organized, as part of the Project or any other related activity.

5. Analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to gender mainstreaming in the Project.

Implementation of the GCF project has advantages that could be capitalized upon. This section analyzes some of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to gender mainstreaming in the Project.

5.1 Strengths

- Motivation of women farmers in the target districts

During field work, we witnessed women's motivation for participation in the Project. All of them agreed to the Project's objectives, while declaring themselves receptive to the practice of agroforestry. This motivation suggests strong mobilization on their part during Project implementation.

- Strong involvement of rural women

The strong involvement of rural women, coupled with the different Project strategies and actions, will also allow the Project to easily reach its objective of 35% women.

5.2. Weaknesses

During the assessment, we noted several weaknesses that could impact the achievement of some of the Project's objectives:

- Poor knowledge of the gender concept, as well as its mainstreaming in the different steps of the Project cycle by some project stakeholders. This was definitely noted during the assessment, but corrective measures are proposed in the plan of action.
- The poor culture of routinely disaggregating data by gender; this is also a weakness noted by the assessment that is taken into consideration in the Project operational strategies.

5.3 Opportunities

Opportunities concern legal, political, commercial or strategic measures that are new in the project environment and that relate to gender promotion on which the Project may be based.

- Implementation of the National Gender Policy action plan

The National Gender Policy adopted in 2016 has the long-term objective of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. It includes five strategic axes. Strategic axis 2 covers strengthening of the role and the place of women and girls in the market economy and has the objective of:

- Increasing the visibility and importance of labor by women, in particular rural and indigenous women, in diversification of the national economy;
- Promotion of female entrepreneurship.

Implementation of this national gender policy covers all departments and districts in the Republic of the Congo including those within the Project area. This is an opportunity for the Project in that the activities related to the role of women are directly aligned with the objectives targeted by strategic axis 2 of the National Gender Policy.

To this end, the Project should consider working in synergy with the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Women's Integration in Development and its partner, UNDP, to pool their interventions.

5.4 Threats

Threats are understood here to be any action likely to perpetuate or reinforce gender inequalities. These are addressed in order to propose mitigating actions in the action plan.

- The low income received from agricultural activities coupled with the fact that women (married, widowed, or heads of household) are those who primarily take care of the family.

This financial vulnerability prevents some of them from finding the **10% or 20%** contribution required by the Project and could be a gender threat for this Project. In fact, regarding the financial vulnerability of women revealed by the assessment, it is not surprising that this criterion could rule out a substantial proportion of women because they are incapable of meeting it.

- Cultural practices and determinants that give preeminence to men over women are a threat to Project implementation from the gender promotion point of view.

In fact, if all disparity reduction strategies noted during the assessment are not implemented, in order to motivate full participation by women, with particular reference to access to information and the representativity and mixed nature of the management boards of groups, the Project's targeted objective of 35% risks being difficult to achieve.

- Stereotypes linked to gender-based division of labor: these considerably limit women and prevent them from expressing their full potential. They limit women in their daily actions, confining them to socially constructed roles, and making them dependent on men within the context of performing certain tasks.

These stereotypes must be deconstructed to allow woman to freely perform all tasks related to their agricultural or agroforestry activity with the only obstacle being their physical ability.

For example, the following was suggested during field interviews:

- Misunderstanding/lack of cohesion in women's groups;
- Lack of a cooperative working culture makes it difficult to provide support to beneficiaries within the context of the Project.

6. Gender integration strategy in the Green Climate Fund

6.1 Gender integration in the different Project stages

6.1.1 In terms of the logical framework

The logical framework of the PREFOREST Project must integrate objectives and indicators disaggregated by gender (the indicators will allow monitoring of progress over time, while following changes throughout the Project). The gender dimension must be crosscutting throughout all axes of intervention and should not only incorporate a few actions in favor of women. The results, indicators and activities should therefore

already be pre-defined in the logical framework. This would force the Project implementation team to formulate actions in annual operational plans.

The Project will ensure that the stipulated institutional provisions take the gender issue into account and enable strategies to be implemented and gender integration to be measured in the proposed actions.

6.1.2 At implementation level

- Rely on the situational analysis (Gender Assessment) and other qualitative and quantitative data (disaggregated by gender), when evaluating the gender impact of the Project's interventions;
- Build the capacities of the Project team agents, as well as other partners, such as government agencies, the Steering Committee and the Technical Committee, on gender and development modules for effective gender mainstreaming in the different components of the GCF Project, as well as monitoring of action plan implementation;
- Recruit a gender expert in the Project team;
- Routinely disaggregate all data in the different activity reports and/or other Project documents in order to highlight the different situations of each of the targets (men/women/young people);
- Within the context of implementation of the GCF Project, routinely target the incorporation of the specific needs of men, women and young people in all the Project's interventions. To this end, the Project has set an objective of ensuring that 30% women are affected by all activities during implementation, as well as all support being provided to targets within the Project context (strengthening of land rights, support to mechanization...).

6.1.3 In terms of monitoring/evaluation

- Incorporate the gender dimension in missions to evaluate the performance and impact of the Green Climate Fund Project, including gender objectives within the framework of the terms of reference (factors to be considered in all evaluations);
- Include gender expertise in the Project team;
- Ensure that all data from the various evaluation reports is disaggregated by gender, specifying data in the "young people" category;
- The Project team must ensure the availability of reports on successes or failures of initiatives or the achievement of gender objectives.

6.2 Intervention axes

The actions proposed below are the results of an analysis of the assessment. They take into account the identified priorities, as well as relevance in terms of feasibility. Five axes of intervention have been identified including: 1) Training, 2) Women, forestry, agroforestry and climate change, 3) Access to land, 4) Women's empowerment, and 5) Collective actions and small-scale farmer's organizations.

6.2.1 Axis 1: Training

The assessment revealed that, due to their status as mothers and wives and constraints related to their domestic workload, women from the different districts visited did not always benefit from the training programmes offered to them, either as individual producers or members of a group.

Also, factors such as illiteracy and their low appropriation ability leads to self-stigmatization and prevent women from benefiting from capacity building programmes to increase their productivity.

To this end, training on agricultural and financial management techniques should be planned. All this should take into consideration not only the family constraints experienced by women, but also language difficulties.

Proposed actions:

- Incorporate functional literacy in the activities to be conducted with beneficiaries;
- Experiment with training women trainers to provide technical supervision of producers;
- Train women's and mixed groups in accounting management for farming (keeping records of sales, procurement, and other expenses related to farming) and entrepreneurial culture;

In terms of support teams:

- Build the capacities of the project team on gender concepts and gender mainstreaming in development projects;
- Build the capacities of PRONAR, SNR, MEF, MAEP, MTE (*Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Environnement* [Ministry of Tourism and the Environment]) on the gender and development approach;
- Build the capacities of the ASCs on gender and incorporation of gender in development so that they can act as supervisory agents in their communities and promote the rights of women.

6.2.2 Axis 2: Women, agroforestry, forestry and climate change.

Unfortunately, due to ignorance and a lack of information, women suffer the effects of climate change, while continuing to practice activities that jeopardize environmental conservation. Due to their daily interaction with ecosystems, women must be informed, trained and involved in discussions relating to climate change and associated thematic.

Proposed actions:

- Promote sharing of experiences and dissemination of good practices related to agroforestry and climate change developed with the participation of women within the context of the project;
- Educate/train women on agroforestry techniques to mitigate climate change

6.2.3 Axis 3: Access to land

Customary practices and norms negatively impact land access and control by women in rural areas. They recognize four methods of land acquisition in rural areas. These four methods of land allocation are all in the hands of men, leading to women marginalization. As a result, women find themselves in a situation of land insecurity which makes them even more vulnerable.

Proposed actions:

- Raise awareness of community leaders in terms of behavioral changes (mindsets) to promote access to land by women within the customary framework;
- Raise awareness and inform women about the existing legal mechanisms and procedures for land security.

6.2.4 Axis 4: Women's empowerment

The assessment revealed that sociocultural obstacles and some stereotypes are detrimental to the image of women and considerably limit their power and full participation in decision-making bodies at community and local levels. This leads not only to discrimination, but also unequal treatment.

Proposed actions:

- Build the capacity of women in leadership and citizenship, in order to improve the quality of their production and strengthen their negotiating power with men from the community, within their families and their environment;
- Organize educational sessions with community leaders and men on the role of women in the development process through their representation within community organizations in the project implementation areas (rural);
- Raise awareness of men and women on stereotypes linked to the gender-based division of labor/sociocultural obstacles, to combat the work overload of women at domestic level.

6.2.5 Axis 5: Collective actions and small-scale farmers' organizations

Various shortcomings were observed within the interviewed farmers groups. Apart from aspects related to their formalization, problems inherent in the operation, management and structure of these different entities were also noted. Furthermore, these groups find it difficult to grasp the need to organize themselves, form associations and group together to become stronger and more empowered.

Proposed actions:

- Support to the structure and operation of women's and mixed groups, particularly family groups carrying out production and marketing activities (at least 30%);
- Strengthen the organizational and technical capacities of groups so that they can offer their members (men/women/young people) sustainable services (group marketing, sale of inputs, etc.) and ensure these services are equally accessible to men and women (at least 30%);
- Strengthen mixed farmers' organizations so that women can be represented in decision-making bodies and ensure that these organizations incorporate the strategic interests of women in their orientations and activities.

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Gender Action Plan

Strategic Guidelines

The objective of this action plan is crosscutting integration of gender in the GCF project. It provides guidelines on priority actions within the logical framework, as well as those to be taken into account during implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Logical framework of the project:






The Project will integrate objectives and indicators disaggregated by gender (the indicators will allow monitoring of progress over time, while following changes throughout the project). The gender dimension must be crosscutting throughout all the axes of intervention and should not only incorporate some actions in favor of women. The results, indicators and activities should therefore already be pre-defined in the logical framework. This would force the project implementation team to formulate actions in annual operational plans.

The Project will ensure that the stipulated institutional provisions take gender into account, that they enable implementation of strategies, and measure the proposed gender integration.

At implementation level:

- The Project's overarching gender target has been clarified as 'at least 35% women' or 35%. In this sense, while striving for gender equality (50/50 male-female participation), some activities will be expected to have more or less women but none less than 35% women. By committing to and communicating a clear project-wide target of 35% women for every activity, the project team, its counterparts and partners will be better coordinated to support this clear objective.
- The implementation of the GAP will be the responsibility of all members of the project team, and job descriptions/terms of reference for all team members will reflect various tasks in relation to the GAP and gender mainstreaming. Overall management/ supervisory responsibility for the plan's implementation will fall with the Chief Technical Officer and Lead Technical Officer. Gender experts at national and headquarters level will track the implementation of the GAP, conduct the mid-term and final evaluation (as part of a team), and provide support on technical queries related to implementation.
- The project wide target of 35% women will be applied in recruitment to the Project Management Unit (PMU), with responsibility for day-to-day management.
- All data will be systematically disaggregated in the different activity reports and/or other Project documents in order to highlight the different situations of each of the targets (men/women/youth);
- During implementation, there will be a systematic focus on incorporating the specific needs of men, women, youth and elderly in all interventions.
- In addition, the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Integration of Women in Development will coordinate closely with the project and provide support for gender mainstreaming (i.e. capacity building, awareness). This Ministry will also be represented in the Project's Technical Committee, part of the Project governance structure.
- A female focal point will be designated in each Project village to assist with information sharing and coordination among female beneficiaries.
- The Project will be based on the situational analysis and other qualitative and quantitative data (disaggregated by gender) at the time the gender impact of the Project's interventions is evaluated;
- The capacities of the Project team's agents will be strengthened on gender and development modules, to ensure effective gender mainstreaming in the different components of the GCF Project. Awareness raising and procedures for handling cases of GBV will be part of the capacity building strategy.
- A Project Stakeholder Engagement Strategy will specifically address how best to engage and ensure the benefits for women, youth, and the elderly in project activities.

- A Project Communication Strategy will include appropriate messaging on gender based violence (GBV).
- The Project Grievance mechanism will be fully accessible to women. The mechanism will include clear procedures to deal with GBV and those handling complaints will be trained on appropriate steps to take. Information will be forthcoming on medical, psychological, legal, security and socioeconomic support for victims. Complaints may be submitted orally if necessary.
- Prevention of GBV will also be promoted by incorporating messaging on GBV in the project's Communication Strategy, by encouraging household/couples dialogue, by mobilizing local traditional chiefs and leaders for GBV related conflict management, and by including GBV in the project' grievance mechanism. The project will collaborate with organizations providing support and advice on GBV (e.g. UNICEF, UNFPA, IFRC, MSF, ACOLVEF, and Thomas Sankara Association).
- Women's participation during meetings will be monitored. A notetaker will record how many times men and women intervene during meetings and how their interventions are handled (See table).

			Observations (If possible, the names of the people who participate)
 # of people attending			
 # of people who express their opinion			
 # of people who propose something that is then agreed upon			

-

At monitoring and evaluation level:

- Incorporation of the gender dimension in missions to evaluate performance and impact by the Green Climate Fund Project, including inclusion of gender objectives in the terms of reference (factors to be taken into account in all evaluations);
- Inclusion of gender expertise in the Project team;
- Ensure that all data from the various evaluation reports is disaggregated by gender, specifying data for the "youth" category;
- Ensure the availability of reports on successes or failures of initiatives or the achievement of gender objectives.

Table. Gender Action Plan

Components	Results	Activities	Target	Indicators	Timeline	Budget	Responsible party
Component 1. Land-use and resources planning and strengthening of land access and security rights	Objective 1: Promote the land tenure rights of women within the customary and national framework						
	Result 1: The land tenure rights of women or women's groups are strengthened pursuant to Law 21/18	Establish a baseline of information on situation for women's existing tenure rights	At least 800 women will receive joint or sole land agreements through the project.	Number of women or women-led groups who obtained land agreements thanks to the Project in order to conduct agroforestry or sustainable forestry activities	<u>Y1 – Y8 (long-term support needs anticipated)</u>	\$123,200	FAO; MAEP; Ministry of Forest Economy; MPFIFD; UNDP; CSOs
	Result 2: Women's land tenure rights are promoted and strengthened within the customary framework	Support women or women's groups in acquiring land tenure rights within the context of the Project	At least 29,000 men and women (including youth and elderly) will be exposed to awareness campaigns on women's access to land and/or legal mechanisms.	Number of M/F/community leaders sensitized			
Result 3: Women farmers master national legal mechanisms related to land	Raise awareness and inform women and men about the existing legal mechanisms and procedures for land tenure security using also channels	At least 25% of women and men in the project area are aware of legal mechanisms and procedures for land tenure security.	Number of women and men sensitized or trained	<u>Y1-Y2</u>		FAO PRONAR Project team	

		to reach youth and elderly.					
Component 2.		Objective 2: Strengthen the adoption of more sustainable agroforestry and forestry practices by women					
Establishment of agroforestry and forestry systems for climate change mitigation	<p>Result 1: Effective and increased adoption of more resilient agroforestry and sustainable forestry practices by women</p> <p>Result 2: Women's capacities are strengthened, and their knowledge of</p>	<p>Encourage women (as well as youth and elderly) to use agroforestry and forestry systems that are more resilient to climate change</p> <p>Strengthen women's knowledge on agroforestry, forestry and climate change issues</p> <p>Support women to establish village tree nurseries</p> <p>Promote experience sharing and the dissemination of good practice, developed with the</p>	<p>At least 35% of participants in agroforestry training activities will be women.</p> <p>At least 5 tree nurseries will be managed by village women.</p> <p>At least 3 stories featuring women's role in agroforestry and forestry systems will be shared.</p>	<p>Number of women participating in agroforestry training</p> <p>Number of tree nurseries managed by women</p> <p>Number of experiences shared</p>	Y1-Y8	9,080,543	<p>MAEP Ministry of Forest Economy MPFIFD FAO PRONAR SNR (<i>Service National de Reboisement</i> [National Reforestation Service])</p>

	agroforestry techniques and climate change is increased	participation of women, youth, and elderly in the areas of agroforestry and climate change within the context of the Project					
	Result 3: Women's capacities are strengthened, and their knowledge of assisted natural regeneration and climate change is increased	Raise awareness /train women, youth, and elderly on agroforestry techniques to mitigate climate change	At least 900 women will receive training on agroforestry techniques.	Number of women and men trained	<u>Y1-Y3</u>		FAO; MAEP; Ministry of Forest Economy; MPFIFD; PRONAR; SNR
	Result 4: Women are aware of the benefits of adopting climate resistant agroforestry practices	Training of women trainers for technical supervision of producers	At least 5 women will be trained as trainers.	Number of female supervisors/technical trainers recruited	<u>Y1-Y2</u>		FAO; MAEP; Ministry of Forest Economy; MPFIFD; PRONAR; SNR
		Train and equip women for assisted natural regeneration	At least 500 women are practicing assisted natural regeneration	Number of women trained in assisted natural regeneration Number of women practicing assisted natural regeneration	<u>Y2-Y6</u>		FAO; MAEP; Ministry of Forest Economy; MPFIFD; PRONAR; SNR
		Raise awareness and inform women about the benefits of agroforestry.	At least 10,000 women will receive information on the benefits of agroforestry.	Number of awareness raising campaigns Number of women and men sensitized or trained	<u>Y1-Y8</u>		FAO PRONAR Project team
Component 3.	Objective 3: Strengthen the technical and financial capacities of producers						

Strengthening national agricultural financing structures, business capacities and value chains	Result 1: The financial management capacities of women's and mixed groups are increased Result 2: Women have increased access to agricultural credit to implement sustainable practices	Train women's and mixed groups (including youth and elderly) in accounting management for farming (keeping records of sales, procurement and other expenses related to farming) and the entrepreneurial culture	At least 5 training sessions organized on accounting management for women farmers. At least 100 people (with at least 35% women) trained on accounting management.	Number of on-site training sessions organized on accounting management for women farmers Number of women/men/young people trained	<u>Y1 – Y3</u>	\$ 273,850	MPFIFD ; FAO CERPAC (Center for Exchange and Resource for the Promotion of Community Actions) CSOs
		Strengthen the organizational and technical capacities of groups so that they can offer their members (Men/Women/Youth & elderly) sustainable services (group marketing, sale of inputs, etc.); and ensure these services are equally accessible to men and women Train women, youth and elderly in the procedures for obtaining credit and support them	At least 10 groups or associations (and their members) will be trained on organizational capacity topics. At least 50 women will be part of the developed a business plan. At least 100 women and young people informed in financing methods (e.g. fundraising).	Number of groups trained Number of women trained Number of women involved in a business plan development Number of women and young people informed in other financing methods	<u>Y1-Y3 with ongoing support/coaching</u>		MPFIFD FAO CERPAC CSOs

		in developing solid business plans					
		Train women, youth and elderly in financing methods other than banks (e.g. fundraising)					
Project Management	Objective 4: Strengthen the technical and institutional capacities of the project team on the gender dimension						
	<p>Result 1: The technical and institutional capacities of the Project team on the gender dimension are increased</p> <p>Result 2: The project effectively communicates and engages with women, youth, and elderly</p>	Strengthen the capacities of the Project team and stakeholders (government authorities) on the gender concept and the gender dimension in development projects (including facilitation skills to engage women, youth, and elderly)	All team members will complete gender training and have access to gender advisory support when needed.	Number of persons (M/W/Y) trained on the gender approach and development	Ongoing	332,885	MAEP ; MET [Ministry of Employment and Labor) ; Ministry of Forest Economy ; MPFIFD ; FAO ; PRONAR ; SNR
		Gender expertise provided in the interim and final Project evaluation		Gender sensitive expert is recruited and is taking part in evaluation of the Project	Y4 & Y8		FAO MPFIFD MAEP
		Prepare and implement a Stakeholder Engagement strategy and Communication strategy,		Stakeholder Engagement Strategy; Communication Strategy	Y1		

		addressing also issues of GBV		Female focal point designated in each participating village			
		Increase access of women, youth and elderly to the project's grievance mechanism.	Information on the grievance mechanism is included in workshops and meetings attended by women, youth and elderly.	Workshop reports	<u>Y1-Y2</u>		
		Establish collaboration with organizations working on GBV		Meeting reports	<u>Y1-Y8</u>		
<u>TOTAL</u>						\$9,810,478	

6. Annexes

Lists of participants

Institutional meeting with gender focal points in the different sectoral ministries Place: FAO meeting room Date: 05/02/2019				
N	First and Last Names	Institution	Position	Telephone and mail
1	Paulette EBINA	MEF	Gender Focal Point	055569567 / 066413600
2	Yves Joclain KABA	MPFIFD	Focal Point	066623574 / 050674873
3	Blanche MAKO	Major Works	Focal Point	055786025 / 065680176
4	Françoise R OTABO	MRSIT (<i>Ministere de la Recherche Scientifique et de L'innovation Technologique</i> [Ministry of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation])	Focal Point	066689662 otabo.franoise@gmail.com
5	Prisca ONDONGO	MTE	Gender Focal Point	040262650 / 066453396
6	Jean Parfait AMPALI	FAO	Consultant	055284911 parfait.ampali@fao.org
7	Claude MABIALA NGOMA	FAO	Assistant	066197098 claudemabialangoma@gao.org
8	Nicole NGUEMA METOGO	FAO	Consultant	065716214

Interviews with various stakeholders				
Place: Mvouti sub-prefecture				
Date: 05/24/2019				
No.	First and Last Names	Group	Position	Telephone and mail
1	MENO Marie	Kissivo	Member	
2	KIJONETO Rachelle	Kissivo	Member	053218434
3	MAKONA Judith	Kissivo	President	055983290
4	KIBA Merline	Kissivo	Member	065806251
5	IBATA Danielle	Kissivo	Member	044509015
6	MABIALA Agathe	Adem	Member	
7	MAKAYA Angèle	Kiburi Mambou	Treasury	055042829
8	TCHIBINDA Elisabeth	Kiburi Mambou	Member	050289280
9	PEMBA Louise	Kiburi Mambou	Member	057518189
10	MAKAYA Victoire	UAE	Treasury	
11	LOEMBA KIBINDA Antoinette	Kissivo	Member	
12	TCHIBINDA Solange	Kajumba na Likondo	Member	055852499
13	MBOUNGOU Cedrick	UAE	Member	
14	LOUMBA Clandine	UAE	Member	053572643
15	PEMBA Adèle	UAE	Member	
16	PAMBOU Claudine	Lougoukoulou mu ntoto	Secretary	057099981
17	MENO Marguerite	Sala Bilanga	Member	
18	MAHRUNGOU Elie	Sala Bilanga	Member	065029398
19	BOULOU Yvette	Sala Bilanga	Member	069117835
20	BATOMBI Judith	Lougoukoulou mu ntoto	Treasury	053338210
21	TSANGUI Bamamaralle	Lougoukoulou mu ntoto	Member	057498122
22	TSADI Honorine	Sala Bilanga	PVFE	065712324
23	MAVUNGOU Francina	Sala Bilanga	Member	
24	MIETE Cydie	Sala Bilanga	Member	064599108
25	MASSIAKA Melanie	Sala Bilanga	Member	
26	BIMOKONO Marguerite	Lougoukoulou mu ntoto	Member	
27	TCHITONLA Jacqueline	Lougoukoulou mu ntoto	Member	
28	MISSAMOU BOUANGA Martine	Sala Bilanga	Member	056366253
29	MOUKOKO Roger	Sub-prefecture Protocol	Private Secretary	050308377
30	IBATA Daniel		Agricultural Sector Chief	044509015
31	Claude MABIALA NGOMA	FAO	FAO Assistant	066197098
32	NGUEMA Nicole	FAO	FAO Consultant	065716214
33	KAMPE Jean Pierre	FAO	Consultant	066303226

34	ROY Hagen	FAO	Consultant Researcher	
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Interviews with various stakeholders			
Place: Madingou			
Date: 05/20/2019			
No.	First and Last Names	Group	Address and email
1	NZENGO Pierrette	SPF	069796892 Madingou Gare
2	ADJOMEY Angèle	AFE	069671371 Madingou Gare
3	KOUANGA Léontine Epse NZIKOU	R.A.I.D	066799676 Madingou Poste
4	MOUKOULA Elizabeth	Gp Ayro-p. les J.SLM	069534137 Madingou Gare
5	MATONDO Pauline	AFMDM (<i>Association des Jeunes Filles Mères Désœuvrées de Moyoundzi</i>) [Association for Young Unemployed Mothers from Moyoundzi])	055651127 Mouyondzi cq NKILA
6	NGOMA MABIALA Mesmin Déchou	C/sert at DDPF - B	Madingou Gare
7	BOUTSLO née NGOUNGA Marcelia	MTD	066393111 Mouyondzi (M'KOSSO)

Meeting with groups from Kinkala				
Place: Kinkala				
Date May 29, 2019				
No.	First and Last Names	Institution	Position	Telephone and mail
1	BITSOUMANOU Félicité	Departmental Directorate	DDIFD (<i>Direction départementale de l'Intégration de la femme au développement</i> [Department Directorate for Women's Empowerment and Integration in Development])	066782027
2	NIAKATSINDILA Elisabeth	Zola Farmer	General Secretary	055485475
3	ZALA Pauline	Zola Farmer	Manager	068506504
4	LOUMOUMAMOU Christophine	PISCA	President	055451871
5	MALEKA Cécile	Sala zingu	President	055000763
6	MVILA Marie	Sala zingu kia m	Member	069352676
7	WATOULA Avila	Sala zingu kia m	President CCV	057289396
8	BIBILA Clémentine	COFMKI	President	057825955
9	NGANGA Mireille	COFMKI	Member	069045282
10	BOUKANZO Emiliene	COFMKI	Member	055118166
11	MILANDOU Astride	COPIBO	Member	066768718
12	BOUBONDZO Annie	COPIBO	Controller	069953506
13	NKOUNKOU Ursula	Pilot Farm	Supervisor	068359003
14	MASSAMBA Seraphine	Pilot Farm	Member	068613046
15	MATONDO Martine	Sala Nzingu	Member	064841992
16	NTIMANAKOLA Marie Gilberte	Pilot Farm	Member	050299586
17	MBIRI Anne Nathalie	Sala Kia Nzambi	Member	066390554
18	MASSAMBATSONA Elie	Sala Kia Nzambi	Treasury	065003045
19	MANCKOUD Claude	Sala Kia Nzambi	Member	055818867
20		Sala Kia Nzambi	Member	055872753

NGO Meetings
Date: 05/30/2019

No.	First and Last Names	Institution	Position	Telephone and mail
1	Nino Alexis Bienvenu	GAPAN Group	President	[REDACTED]
2	MVIRI Urban	GAPAN Group	President CCV	
3	GALLY Hyacinthe	MKOUENDAW Group	President	[REDACTED]
4	NKUERE Daniel	La Main dans La Main (<i>Hand in Hand</i>) Group	Secretary	[REDACTED]
5	NGATSEBE Adrien	Independent	//	[REDACTED]
6	EDZONG Stéphanie	Independent	//	[REDACTED]
7	MFOUROU Gaston	La Main dans La Main Group	President	[REDACTED]
8	AMPIE Véronique	La Main dans La Main Group	Assistant Treasurer	[REDACTED]
9	GUILANGO Cresti Djenelaline	GPJA	Student	[REDACTED]
10	ADZABI Mexanet	GPJA	Farmer	[REDACTED]
11	MACKELA Hermann	Entreprise Josephat	Manager	[REDACTED]
12	TCHIKAYA Donatien	Entreprise Josephat	DT Manager	[REDACTED]
13	KONGANDO Eveline	GAPAN Group	Vice-President	[REDACTED]
14	CHIO Angèle	PS COFTN		[REDACTED]
15	NDALA Elvis Thierry	Okiéne Production Group	President	[REDACTED]
16	MBOUANDZOBO Peggy Carine	Okiéne Production Group	Member	[REDACTED]
17	LOUBA Parfaite	Grace à Dieu (<i>Thanks to God</i>) Group	President	[REDACTED]
18	FUNKHAT OMBOU François	NDOUO-DOUO Group	President	[REDACTED]
19	BILELELE Angèle	NDOUO-DOUO Group	Treasury Secretary	[REDACTED]
20		Grace à Dieu (<i>Thanks to God</i>) Group	Treasury Secretary	[REDACTED]

Meeting in MPOH village Date 06/30/2019				
No.	First and Last Names	Institution	Position	Telephone and mail
1	NGUELOLO Richard			
2	NGANTSOU Denis			
3	NGAYO William			
4	NGANION Godefroy			
5	NGOKANA Arvelon			
6	NGAYOU Mesmin			
7	OGNAMY OTIA Léonard			
8	IMBOU Jonas			
9	AGNIN Louis			
10	WAWOLI Honoré			
11	OKILI Anatole			
12	INDO Parfaite			
13	Mangobali Genevieve			
14	NDZALA Diane			
15	OLONKOUINI Yvette			
16	AYIAYIE Cyriac			
17	AGNIN Audrey			
18	NGANTSOU Estelle			
19	NGANION Lena			
20	IBATA Judrelle			

Annex 9. List of risks and mitigation measures compiled from the annexed plans

Table 25: List of risks and mitigation measures compiled from various plans (i.e. Indigenous Peoples Plan, Biodiversity Management Plan, Pesticides Management Plan, Labor Health and Safety Management Plan)

Risks	Mitigation Measures
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES PLAN	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bantu landowners will not agree to give Indigenous Peoples the right to use their land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with Bantu landowners will be contingent on providing use rights to Indigenous Peoples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy levels will be so low that it is difficult to engage Indigenous Peoples in some activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face to face meetings will not rely on written material but instead on oral communication, photos, and graphics. Radio broadcasts in local language will be used to reach a wider audience.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Peoples will find it difficult to market their products due to discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixing of Bantu and indigenous products through a village platform with established buyer relationships. Radio broadcasts to change attitudes and overcome discrimination.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous people will not be selected for participation in project activities due to discriminatory practices favoring Bantu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orientation of field staff on selection process and criteria; indigenous representative on the local committee responsible for selection; accessible grievance mechanism;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Peoples will not participate in agroforestry activities due to lack of equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply farming equipment for people who do not have their own (lending system).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous women will not be able to participate in agroforestry due to high household burdens, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Radio broadcasts to raise awareness on gender and sharing of household burdens.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous women will suffer GBV on the way to and from the planting site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Villagers are encouraged to travel in groups to and from the planting area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of sustainability of activities after the project due to lack of assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising sessions on the importance of autonomy, self- confidence, etc.
BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PLAN	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disturbance of wildlife through resource tenure, agroforestry, and ANR activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness on value of biodiversity (meetings and awareness raising meetings) Prohibit off-road driving
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearing of trees and other valuable plant species for planting activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include conserved grasslands/savanna and forest areas in participatory planning and tenure mapping. Conserve existing trees in the planting areas. Prohibit fires to clear planting areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade in bushmeat by project personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibit hunting and bushmeat purchase by FAO and partner staff during missions and fieldwork.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to markets and business planning contributes to increased sales of bushmeat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness on importance of biodiversity conservation through radio programs and village workshops.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of invasives through increased traffic to remote sites and planting areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build awareness of project personnel on invasive species and adverse impacts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adverse impacts on water sources upon which wildlife depend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor water bodies near plantations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adverse impact on biodiversity corridors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design planting areas with biodiversity corridors in mind
PESTICIDES MANAGEMENT PLAN	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accidental contamination Nuisance to nearby populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thorough training and awareness-raising of pesticide management personnel on all aspects of the pesticide chain, as well as on emergency response. Equip staff with protective equipment and encourage their full use Provide adequate storage equipment, rehabilitate existing sites Raise public awareness of the use of pesticides and their containers Training on the management of empty containers for safe disposal Avoid large-volume containers to prevent decanting Reduce the quantity of pesticides used through the effective use of alternatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contamination of water sources by container washing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ingestion of products through reuse of containers 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dermal contact, well contamination 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accidental spillage, groundwater pollution by leaching 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil contamination 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> soil contamination from accidental or deliberate spills, groundwater pollution groundwater 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inhalation of product: vapor, dust, risk of skin contact 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skin contact due to spillage caused by cramped conditions premises 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inhalation vapor, dermal contact by splashing during preparation or decanting Dermal and respiratory contact Dermal contact 	
LABOUR, HEALTH & SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLAN	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discrimination during recruitment especially against Indigenous Peoples and women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a Selection Committee with representatives of Indigenous Peoples and women. The Selection Committee will favor local workers over external applicants and will avoid hiring children (under 16). Awareness raising on the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a Selection Committee with representatives of Indigenous Peoples and women. The Selection Committee will favor local workers over external applicants and will avoid hiring children (under 16). Awareness raising on child labour issues for PMU members, implementing partners, and local stakeholders Awareness raising on the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discrimination during recruitment especially against Indigenous Peoples and women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a Selection Committee with representatives of Indigenous Peoples and women. The Selection Committee will favor local workers over external applicants and will avoid hiring children (under 16). Awareness raising on the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising on GBV and sexual harassment for PMU members, implementing partners, and local stakeholders Awareness raising on the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender based violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising on issues of GBV Awareness raising on the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payment issues (late payment) and conflicts over payments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising on the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influx of external labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set priority for local hires
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forced labour by Indigenous Peoples to substitute for Bantu workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising on the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abusive working conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising on decent work conditions and the project Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism Safeguards Specialist to conduct regular monitoring visits to villages and field sites and to file and respond in a timely manner to any complaints/grievances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poisoning by pesticides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See 'Pests and Pesticides Management Plan' for full set of measures Equip workers with personal protective equipment (PPE) and require it to be worn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pollution of soil and water by pesticides and fertilizers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See 'Pests and Pesticides Management Plan' for full set of measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equip workers with personal protective equipment (PPE) and require it to be worn Vehicle safety (according to FAO Office Policy) First Aid Training and Certification requirement for Field Site Coordinators First Aid Kit available
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spread of communicable diseases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising on communicable diseases among PMU and implementing partners
CHANCE FIND PROCEDURE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NO SPECIFIC RISKS NOTED 	