

WWF Environmental and Social Safeguards - Risk Categorization Memorandum

Name of Project: GEF 7 Project – Integrated management of Cameroon’s forest landscapes in the Congo Basin.	Date: 7 June 2021
Name of GEF Executing Agency / GCF Executing Entity: Executing Agency – Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED) in collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) - Cameroon.	Date of Previous Cat Memo: 25 January 2021
Landscape Categorization on E&S Risks: High Risk - (A) ___ and/or (Special Consideration) _X_ /Medium Risk (B) ___ / Low Risk (C)___	Conservation Project Management (CPM) No.: N/A

Substantive Safeguard Standards Triggered:	Yes/ TBC	No
Natural Habitats	X	
Pest Management		X
Indigenous Peoples	X	
Involuntary Resettlement & Access Restrictions	X	
Community Health, Safety and Security	X	
Physical and Cultural Resources	X	

In addition to the Substantive Safeguards above, the four Process Standards apply to all medium and high risk landscapes:

- Environmental and Social Risk Management
- Consultation and Disclosure
- Community Stakeholder Engagement
- Grievance Mechanism

Landscapes categorized as low risk have been screened in accordance to the Standard on E&S Risk Management.

Summary of Key Safeguard Issues

The project will be implemented across the Cameroon segments of three transboundary landscapes - Rio-Campo landscape; Tri-National Dja-Odzala-Minkebe (TRIDOM) landscape; Sangha Tri-National (TNS) landscape.

Project Description: The proposed GEF-funded project “Integrated management of Cameroon’s forest landscapes in the Congo Basin” is a child project under the global Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program on Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes (CBSL). It will be executed by the Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED) in close coordination with the World Wild Fund for Nature - Cameroon (WWF-Cameroon). The project’s objective is to strengthen the integrated management of Cameroon’s globally important forest landscapes in the Congo Basin to secure its biological integrity and increase economic opportunities and livelihoods for forest dependent people. Over a six-year period, the project will address key barriers and tackle the drivers of deforestation, forest degradation and biodiversity loss through an inclusive, integrated approach that aims to achieve and sustain the effective participation and empowerment of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and reinforce their

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resilience. The project will be implemented across the Cameroon segments of three transboundary landscapes: (i) the Rio-Campo landscape (769,446 ha), specifically around Campo Ma'an National Park; (ii) the Tri-National Dja-Odzala-Minkebe (TRIDOM) landscape (4,949,174 ha), and (iii) the Sangha Tri-National (TNS) landscape (1,490,552 ha), specifically in and around Lobeke National Park. The project is divided into five components, as follows:

Component 1: Mainstreaming integrated land use planning (LUP) and management. The project will mainstream LUP by applying a bottom-up approach for participatory, informed and integrated LUP and management across the 1.2 million hectares of the Ngolya and Mintom councils of the TRIDOM landscape.

Component 2: Improving management effectiveness and governance of high conservation value forests. The project will directly address barriers associated with the lack of participatory management models for sustainable forest and wildlife management by promoting better governance of protected areas and their peripheries, notably for Campo Ma'an National Park (CMNP) and Lobéké National Park (LNP).

Component 3: Advancing sustainable forest management (SFM) through non-timber forest product (NTFP) and hardwood value chains, in the TRIDOM landscape. The project will address the impacts of unsustainable resource use by local communities and private sector actors by promoting their increased engagement in local-level models for SFM that engage IPLCs and the private sector.

Component 4: Increasing benefit generation from biodiversity through sustainable tourism development. The project will take advantage of the unique set of attractions that can be found in and around CMNP to develop a sustainable tourism value chain in the Cameroon segment of the Rio-Campo Landscape.

Component 5: Project and knowledge management (KM), monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

Key Safeguards Issues:

Standard on Protection of Natural Habitats – This standard is triggered as the proposed project directly targets protecting and restoring species and their habitats; strengthening local communities' ability to conserve the natural resources they depend on through the strengthening and establishment of integrated land use plans in the Ngoyla and Mintom council areas of the TRIDOM landscape; and through promoting access to sustainable harvesting and value chains of non-timber forest products (NTFP) in 30 communities in all three project landscapes.

Standard on Access Restriction and Resettlement – While the proposed project will not cause displacement of people, the project might lead to certain access restrictions. Given that the activities proposed under the project include, but are not limited to, protected area management and the development of integrated land use plans for the Ngoyla and Mintom council areas; the strengthening and establishment of sustainable NTFP harvesting and value chains for 30 communities from all three project landscapes; and the improvement of governance and management practices in both Campo Ma'an and Lobeke National Park, the Policy on Involuntary Resettlement is being triggered and the project will prepare a Process Framework (PF). The purpose of this PF is to ensure participation of Project Affected People (PAP) while recognizing and protecting their interests and ensuring that they do not become worse off because of the project. This, however, will eventually only occur with the consent of the affected people and following a decision made with all required information at hand. WWF policy prohibits forced evictions which include acts involving the coerced or involuntary displacement of individuals, groups, or communities from homes and/or lands and common property resources that were occupied or depended upon. In addition, the project will exclude financing any activities that would lead to physical displacement and voluntary or involuntary relocation. However, economic displacement or restriction to livelihoods or access to natural resources may occur as a result of project activities including negotiating through highly participatory consultations the establishment of collaborative land use management plans and arrangements for protected areas and other natural resource sustainability approaches, such as establishing sustainable NTFP value chains.

Standard on Indigenous Peoples – This policy is triggered since the project area is inhabited by the various ethnic groups, including two considered to meet the definition of Indigenous Peoples under WWF's Policy on Indigenous Peoples (SIPP:74). These are the Bagyeli or Bakola (estimated at about 24,000 people) living in the western part of the project area and the Baka (estimated at about 40,000 people) that are living in the central and eastern part of the project area. Both groups are traditionally hunter-gatherers and internationally considered as the traditional owners and customary users of the vast forests outside the settlements of agricultural populations along the streams and roads in the

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project area. However, their rights are largely not recognized, and they do not have equal access to decision making processes, despite recent efforts and governance structures put in place to support these processes. To gain a better understanding of these challenges, a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) should be conducted and an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) or an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) will be developed. The IPPF will be established in close consultations with the affected Indigenous Peoples to a level where it gains the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of the affected people.

Standard on Cultural Resources – This standard is being triggered as a precautionary measure, since two out of the three project landscapes will be implementing activities that may increase risks of affecting communities’ cultural resources, especially those of Indigenous Peoples, namely in the Campo Ma’an and TRIDOM landscapes. Activities in those landscapes involve promoting sustainable tourism and land use planning processes, respectively. Therefore, close monitoring of these activities will be required throughout the project life cycle. In the event risks relating to cultural resources are surfaced during the project implementation phase, appropriate measures will be taken to develop mitigation plans to address those newly identified risks.

Standard on Community Health, Safety and Security - This standard is being triggered as a precautionary measure since this project will be engaging with numerous stakeholders and partners, who for some groups, have a history of conflicts between them. Certain project activities may increase the potential for these existing conflicts to escalate or for new conflicts to emerge among these groups and lead to violence and abuse targeted at some communities or individuals. Therefore, it is essential to monitor the situation closely during the project life cycle, to ensure that if risks arise, appropriate assessments and mitigation measures and plans are developed to address these risks and reduce any negative impacts that may ensue.

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Summary of Cross Cutting Issues; (Human Rights, Gender Equality and Women's Rights, Children's Rights, Conflict Sensitivity and Climate Change).

Human Rights issues:

Indigenous Peoples groups and other local communities and individuals affected by the project may be at higher risk of lacking access to knowledge and information on their rights for a number of reasons including: their status in the community leading to marginalization, their low level of literacy and education, their remote location, and lack of opportunities in the community. In addition, the duty-bearers involved in the project may lack the capacity to meet their project obligations, most specifically to knowledge and actions relating to human rights obligations, good governance practices and technical aspects of the project. These may include, but are not limited to, community organizations, CSO leaders and representative entities of certain civil society groups, the private sector, local government entities, among others. The project has been designed to ensure equal access to information and opportunities for all stakeholders, and mitigation measures will be put in place to address these identified risks, and ensure rigorous implementation, monitoring and adaptive management is employed to adjust mitigation plans in response to any concerns relating to these risks.

Gender Issues:

Women and girls are considered a vulnerable group in the project area as they experience discrimination at all levels and are most often excluded from decision-making and governance processes and from equal access to opportunities and benefits from conservation/development programs. Measures are in place to avoid/reduce to a minimum gender-based negative impacts the project may produce and to employ a gender-responsive approach to address gender dimensions at all levels. This will be ensured through the implementation of the Gender Action Plan that resulted from the required gender analysis conducted during project design and development phase.

Children's Rights:

Children and adolescents may be at risk of exposure to outsiders and tourists through Campo Ma'an National Park's project activities that will aim to strengthen and improve the ecotourism value chains in this area, which could expose them to unintended negative impacts. Proper measures will be put in place through further identification of potential risks relating to ecotourism activities and children's rights.

Conflict Sensitivity:

Differential access rights between the Baka and Bangando and the Baka and Bantu, have caused tensions and conflicts in the recent past. Increased awareness and monitoring of the situation helped to reduce risks of conflict escalation. Ensuring proper and regular monitoring of the situation and the use of appropriate mitigation measures to avoid or reduce to a minimum any further tensions that may arise among these groups, is essential.

Required Actions for Impact Assessment (ESIA) and Mitigation Framework (ESMF):

An Environmental and Social Impact Assessment will be required to identify gaps in contextual knowledge essential for the implementation of the project. An Environmental and Social Management Framework which responds directly to the impacts and risks enumerated above is required, including a Process Framework to address potential access restrictions risks and an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework. In addition, a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Consultations, Disclosures and a Grievance Mechanism are required.

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