



**WWF GEF Agency**

**Environmental and Social Management Framework  
(incl. Process Framework and Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework)**

**GBFF**

**Addressing Outstanding Barriers and Leveraging  
Durable Financial Mechanisms to Achieve Target 3  
in Gabon**

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABS	Access and Benefit Sharing
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCGL	Comités Consultatif de Gestion Local
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
COMIFAC	Central African Forests Commission
CTF	Conservation Trust Fund
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
ESSF	Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDSA	Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
IP	Indigenous Population
IPLC	Indigenous Population and Local Communities
IPP	Indigenous Peoples Plan
IPPF	Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework
LRP	Livelihood Restoration Plan
MCNP	Monts de Cristal National Park
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
PA	Protected Area(s)
PAP	Project Affected People
PF	Process Framework
PFP	Project Finance for Permanence
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SIPP	Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

## 1. INTRODUCTION

HWC is a major threat to wildlife populations and the livelihoods of smallholder farmers worldwide, as crop-raiding by elephants, monkeys, and other species can drastically reduce income and food security of rural communities, producing negative perceptions towards wildlife and perpetuating poverty. In Gabon, human-wildlife conflicts have become more common with a growing population and a greater need for access to land. Gabon has experimented with the use of electric fences and monetary compensation to mitigate conflicts, though access to these programs can be difficult for rural communities. President Nguema has voiced concern about Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC), mentioning the topic in his first address to the nation as president. In March 2024, President Nguema approached WWF-Gabon, requesting that the organization convene a meeting to develop an HWC action plan as early as mid-April 2024.

This Gabon GBFF project, “Addressing Outstanding Barriers and Leveraging Durable Financial Mechanisms to Achieve Target 3 in Gabon,” builds on the Enduring Earth Partnership (“EE”) “Accelerating Sustainable Finance Solutions to Achieve Durable Conservation—GEF ID: 11014—an ambitious collaboration to support governments and communities to conserve the resources that sustain life by accelerating inclusive area-based conservation measures in furtherance of 30x30 and other development goals through the Project Finance for Permanence (“PFP”) approach. Under a PFP approach, target countries define a unique set of commitments from multiple stakeholders in a single closing to ensure that, over the long term, large-scale systems of conservation areas are well-managed, sustainably financed, and benefit the communities who depend on them. This project reinforces the PFP by focusing specifically on HWC by integrating it into the PFP programming and operations; implementing Indigenous Peoples/Local Community (IPLC)-led HWC actions in four sites; and publishing lessons learned from this work for application in other Gabon PAs.

This project has four components:

**Component 1:** Enabling Conditions for improved Protected Area conservation and HWC Management in Gabon.

**Component 2:** IPLC led-HWC Solutions

**Component 3:** Knowledge Management & Communications

**Component 4:** Project M&E

By implementing activities under each component, the project will have the following impacts: improving the effective management of, approximately, 11% of the total terrestrial PAs (approximately 1,113,700 ha in Loango, Monts de Cristal, Minkébé, and Mayumba national parks); improve the management of at least 14,000 ha of areas outside PAs key for connectivity with the PA system including lands inhabited by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), and benefit approximately 6,723 (50% male, 50% female).

Most project beneficiaries will be IPLCs who will lead the development of and benefit from measures to reduce pressures from HWC and to support better coexistence and co-benefits for humans and wildlife including: improved planning and wildlife management, conflict deterrence approaches, installation of deterrence structures (such as fences), and financial mechanisms to support benefit and relief to IPLCs. Other beneficiaries will include PA and environment ministries staff, small landowners who depend on subsistence agriculture in and around the four project PAs, and community groups.

At least \$700,000 of Component 2 will support IPLC-focused HWC management interventions co-designed and adopted by IPLCs at risk of HWC. The communities will be invited to engage in HWC actions and co-define the priorities to address. If the interventions are effective, the IPLCs participating in the project will have higher tolerance of wildlife and see greater benefits to the presence and coexistence of wildlife. They

will also benefit from financial mechanisms (forming part of the PFP architecture) that will be designed to improve outcomes for IPLCs and biodiversity (Component 1). IPLCs will lead in the design and execution of the interventions, but will not manage financial resources as this is the responsibility of the lead executing agency.

The Environment and Social Safeguards screening conducted for the GEF 7 EE project in Gabon resulted in it being designated as Category B (Medium Risk). This GBFF project holds the same risk categorization because: a) it will work on the ground, in combination with said GEF 7 project in some of the same identified areas; b) directly involves the participation of vulnerable peoples, including IPs; and c) is concentrated on a phenomenon that is of high and severe significance in the targeted areas. This categorization requires the development of an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and, given the nature of this project and what is known to date, it also includes Process Framework and an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework.

WWF-US, through its WWF GEF Agency, is the GEF Project Agency for this project and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is the Project Lead Executing Agency, who will execute the project through a PMU that sits within TNC Gabon.

### **1.1. Objective of the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)**

The preparation of this ESMF was required in accordance with the WWF's Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF), through guidance and procedures described in WWF's Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP), in order to identify and manage the environmental and social risks and impacts of this GEF Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) project, "Addressing Outstanding Barriers and Leveraging Durable Financial Mechanisms to Achieve Target 3 in Gabon." Given that this project will be implemented alongside the GEF 7 Project - Enduring Earth (*Accelerating Sustainable Finance Solutions to Achieve Durable Conservation*) in Gabon, this ESMF builds on the ESMF from the GEF PFP project. This ESMF aims to outline the principles, procedures, and mitigation measures for addressing environmental and social impacts associated with the project in accordance with the laws and regulations of Gabon and with the ESSF.

Since the precise scope of activities that will be implemented as part of this GBFF project will only be determined during the implementation phase, site-specific social and environmental impacts are uncertain at this stage. Thus, the development of site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) is currently not feasible, and an ESMF is necessary to set out procedures for addressing potential adverse social and environmental impacts that may occur during project activities. Site-specific ESMPs (and any other necessary safeguards plans) will be developed pursuant to the guidance provided by this ESMF during project implementation.

The specific objectives of the ESMF include the following:

- Carry out a preliminary identification of the positive and negative social and environmental impacts and risks associated with the implementation of the Project, including any SEAH risks;
- Outline the legal and regulatory framework that is relevant to the Project implementation;
- Specify appropriate roles and responsibilities of actors and parties involved in the ESMF implementation;
- Propose a set of preliminary recommendations and measures to mitigate any negative impacts and enhance positive impacts;
- Develop a screening and assessment methodology for potential activities, that will allow an environmental/social risk classification and the identification of appropriate safeguards instruments;

- Set out procedures to establish mechanisms to monitor the implementation and efficacy of the proposed mitigation measures; and
- Outline requirements related to disclosure, grievance redress, capacity building activities, and budget required for the implementation of the ESMF.

### **1.2. Objective of the Process Framework (PF)**

The Project triggers the WWF's Standard on Access Restriction and Resettlement as it is possible that, as part of the HWC strategy and the behavioral changes may restrict or otherwise affect access to natural resources and the livelihood activities of project affected people (PAP). This Process Framework (PF) describes the process by which affected communities participate in identification, design, implementation and monitoring of relevant project activities and mitigation measures. The purpose of this PF is to ensure participation of Project Affected People (PAP) while recognizing and protecting their rights and interests and ensuring that they do not become worse off as a result of the project. Specifically, the PF will:

- Describe activities that may involve new or more stringent restrictions on use of natural resources in the project area.
- Establish the mechanism through which the local communities can contribute to the project design, implementation and monitoring.
- Identify the potential negative impacts of the restriction on the surrounding communities, including any gendered differences or SEAH risks associated with access restriction or differing uses of natural resources.
- Specify the criteria for eligibility of economically displaced persons to receive compensation benefits and development assistance (no physical displacement will be allowed under this project or any WWF project).
- Describe the mitigation measures required to assist the economically displaced persons in their efforts to improve their livelihoods, or at least to restore them, in real terms, while maintaining the sustainability of the landscape and the seascape.
- Describe the grievance procedure or process for resolving disputes to natural resource use restrictions.
- Describe the participatory monitoring arrangements with neighboring community members.

As the project intends to enhance the livelihoods and resilience of IPLCs regarding HWC, the allocation of project benefits among local community members is particularly important. The intent of the framework is to ensure transparency and equity in the planning and implementation of activities by the project. This framework details the principles and processes for assisting communities to identify and manage any potential negative impacts of the project activities. Since the exact social impacts will only be identified during project implementation, the PF will ensure that mitigation of any negative impacts from project investments occurs through a participatory process involving the affected stakeholders and rightsholders. It will also ensure that any desired changes by the communities in the ways in which IPs exercise customary tenure rights in the project sites would not be imposed, but should emerge from a consultative process.

### **1.3. Objective of the Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF)**

The target project areas include indigenous groups. As stated by the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), there are hunter/gatherer communities (often called Pygmies) comprising numerous ethnic groups (Baka, Babongo, Bakoya, Baghame, Barimba, Akoula, Akwoa, etc.) with different languages, cultures and geographical locations, all throughout Gabon.<sup>1</sup> There are Bakoya living in Ivindo, in Djouah (north) and Loué (east) districts of Zadié department (Mékambo). They number some 1,618

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<sup>1</sup> IWGIA, *Indigenous World 2023: Gabon*. Available at <https://www.iwgia.org/en/gabon/5051-iw-2023-gabon.html>

individuals across Ogooué-Ivindo. The greatest concentration of Pygmies is found among the Babongo of Lopé (Ogooué-Lolo), estimated at 708 individuals, but also the Bakouyi (Mulundu) and Babongo of Koulamoutou, Pana and Iboundji, numbering some 2,325. To these statistics must be added the Babongo or Akoula of Haut-Ogooué (4,075 individuals) and those in Ngounié and Nyanga, 4,442 individuals. Lastly, there are the Bavarama and Barimba in Nyanga (2,263 persons) and the Akowa (Port-Gentil, Omboue and Gamba) who account for around 327 individuals.

Based on WWF’s Standard on IPs, the people affected by this project would thus be considered Indigenous, ethnic or tribal minorities. An Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework thus has to be prepared.

The objective of the IPs Planning Framework (IPPF) is to clarify the principles, procedures and organizational arrangements to be applied to IPs for the GEF GBFF project, “Addressing Outstanding Barriers and Leveraging Durable Financial Mechanisms to Achieve Target 3.” This framework will serve as a guideline to the project team to:

- Enable them to prepare IP Plans (IPPs) for specific activities proposed consistent with WWF’s Environment and Social Safeguard Integrated Policies and Procedures.
- Engage affected IPs in a Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process.
- Enable IPs to benefit equitably from the project.

#### **1.4. ESMF/PF/IPPF Preparation Methodology**

This ESMF was prepared on the basis of a series of consultations conducted in 2024 with relevant stakeholders in Gabon as well as the ESMF developed for the GEF 7 EE project, whose methodology for development included:

- Literature review of existing policies and legislation of Gabon, WWF and GEF Policies and procedures, and other ESMFs on the topics of protected areas and biodiversity conservation.
- Analysis of relevant national policies and legislation that are likely to have an impact on the implementation of the project;
- Field visits and consultation with Indigenous People and Local Communities in the project landscape.
- Interviews with stakeholders from relevant Government Agencies, Local Authorities, Municipalities, NGOs, private sector companies. and WWF and TNC staff;

The ESMF/PF/IPPF draws on consultations results, and on the relevant laws and regulations of Gabon and the ESSF and SIPP. The relevant laws and regulations of Gabon related to safeguards apply to the project since it is implemented within the jurisdiction of Gabon. WWF’s SIPP apply since the project is managed by WWF, which is an implementing agency of GEF.

***In order to avoid duplications and for ease of reference, the ESMF, PF, and IPPF are combined into a single document.***

## **2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This chapter outlines the objectives of the GEF GBFF project, “Addressing Outstanding Barriers and Leveraging Durable Financial Mechanisms to Achieve Target 3 in Gabon,” its components, milestones, and major supported activities.

## 2.1. Project Objectives and Components

The project objective is to improve protected and conserved area management in Gabon by integrating a national HWC strategy into the PFP financial mechanism and managing human wildlife conflict at key sites. The project will address HWC as an outstanding barrier and threat to effective PA management and will thus leverage the PFP as a mechanism to achieve KMGBF Target 3-Conserve 30% of Land, Waters and Seas.

At the national level, under **Component 1**, the project will:

- develop a national-level HWC Strategy and capacity for improved PA management through managing HWC;
- support the GoG in the refinement and operationalization of the HWC national strategy; and
- integrate this strategy into the PFP funding mechanisms operations (transition and endowment funds) to ensure resource availability to address ongoing HWC management challenges.

At the field level, under **Component 2**, the project will focus on HWC management in communities in and around four Gabon PAs (Loango National Park, Mayumba National (Marine) Park, Monts de Cristal National Park, and Minkébé National Park) and particularly in areas of connectivity and other high human-wildlife interface. The project will undertake a community-driven approach to identify, co-design and then implement appropriate and priority interventions to manage HWC.

Following the consultation period and during the first stages of the project, a socioeconomic study will be conducted in communities surrounding each PA to further understand the baseline context in each community and gather information on:

- # and name of communities around each PA
- Ethnic makeup (groups and predominant languages)
- Population and % men/women
- Age categories disaggregated by gender
- % women speaking/reading French; % men speaking/reading French
- Primary income sources disaggregated by gender
- Crops grown broken by men; crops grown by women
- # of HWC conflicts per species over the last 3 years
- HWC mitigation measures undertaken over the last 3 years
- Rank of HWC as a threat to community/household livelihoods (as perceived by men and women)
- Perceived benefits/disadvantages of living near a protected area (as perceived by men and women).

This information will inform the development of HWC behavior change tools including community, government, and specialist project staff collaborating to understand the conflict and drivers of the conflict (e.g. drivers of crop destruction by wildlife species) and identify possible interventions, including behavior change, tools and equipment, and technical assistance, to deliver prevention, mitigation, and response, such that communities become more tolerant of wildlife and human wildlife coexistence increases.

The project will then work directly with the affected communities to incorporate HWC behavior change and deliver other interventions to reduce HWC incidents or increase tolerance. As such, upon gathering the necessary socioeconomic data and once the target communities are better identified, the project will proceed to seek free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) if deemed necessary. If the project will be engaging with Indigenous communities to implement some of the tools identified, then Indigenous Peoples Plans (IPPs) will need to be developed together with any other necessary environmental and



social management plans. Once these plans are completed, approved by WWF GEF US and disclosed, the work around implementing the identified tools can begin.

This IPLC approach is based on addressing the six elements of conflict management: understanding the conflict, mitigation, preventions, response, strategy, and monitoring. This integrated approach will help manage HWC so that people’s tolerance of wildlife improves, the constituency for conservation remains, and incidents of non-tolerance and retaliation are reduced, such that critical wildlife, like forest elephants, have improved protection, and the integrity of Gabon’s protected areas is sustained. Importantly and given the growing incidence of HWC in Gabon, this project will provide field-based evidence, training, and documentation of lessons learned for the expansion of HWC mitigation across Gabon’s PA network.

This project is transformative in that it will address HWC at a national strategy and field level simultaneously—raising awareness of HWC nationally and integrating it into PA management training while at the same time working with IPLCs in a socially inclusive and participatory way to define, implement, monitor, and evaluate appropriate site-based HWC management strategies based on lessons learned from other HWC projects and their own experiences. The informed leadership of IPLCs in the project will help sustain support for Gabon’s extensive biodiversity. This project will provide learning for other HWC projects in Africa and beyond.

The following four components will deliver the project’s objective: To enhance effective management of conserved areas in Gabon by integrating a national HWC strategy into the PFP financial mechanism and managing human wildlife conflict at key sites.

**COMPONENT 1: Enabling Conditions for improved Protected Area conservation and HWC Management in Gabon.** This component will support the development of a Stakeholder- and evidence-driven National Strategy on HWC for Gabon and its integration into the PFP/CTF operations to support protected area management sustainability.

**Outcome 1.1: Stakeholder and evidence driven National Strategy on HWC**

**Outcome 1.1 Indicator 1:** Stakeholder and evidence-driven National Strategy to enable better management of HWC

**Outcome 1.2: PFP / CTF Strengthened for Protected Area Based Conservation and HWC Management**

**Outcome 1.2 Indicator 1:** HWC management integrated into PFP and CTF instruments and operations, including conservation plans, finance plans, safeguards plans, operations manual(s), institutional capacity assessments, among others.

**COMPONENT 2: IPLC led HWC Solutions**

At the time of submission and due to time constraints, this project has only had minimal consultations with communities. Much of the information gathered regarding communities in and around the four PAs was gathered during the preparation of the GEF 7 PFP project. As mentioned above, one of the first actions during implementation will be to conduct consultations with the local communities and Indigenous Peoples (IPLCs) who will be affected by the project. Once interventions and other on-the-ground activities have been identified based on those data, the project will need to apply the Safeguard Eligibility and Impacts Screening (available in Appendix 1 of the project’s ESMF), which will yield information on what the likely environmental and social risks are and, consequently, shed light on which management plans are needed, which might include, for example, IPPs and ESMPs. Once those plans have been drafted, approved by WWF GEF US and disclosed, implementation of those interventions and activities can commence.

Component 2 will deploy funding to implement HWC management in communities impacted by HWC with a focus on areas of connectivity and other high human-wildlife interface around four national

parcs/protected areas. This component will be initiated at project start up and will inform the development of the HWC Strategy and integration into the PFP (Component 1). Funding for this component will be direct funding over the life of this project and over the medium-term (following PFP close), through the PFP Transition and Endowment Funds of the FPBG. Under Component 2, the project will work with communities surrounding/within the four project PAs to identify appropriate species-specific HWC strategies for each community. The development of these strategies will include a focus on community ownership and community responsibility for maintaining, evaluating, and reporting on the effectiveness of HWC mitigation action. The project will provide training on HWC awareness through education campaigns for both IPLC communities and PA staff. These trainings will help resolve conflicts stemming from a lack of familiarity or understanding of present restrictions and focus on livelihood opportunities that can stem from a well-managed wildlife presence.

**Outcome 2.1: Improved coexistence between humans and key wildlife conflict species in select areas, through IPLC-led evidence-based approaches**

**Outcome 2.1 Indicator 1:** A reduction in the number of reports across the four target PAs of incidences of HWC

**Outcome 2.1 Indicator 2:** Amount of project funding going toward IPLC-led HWC actions (in \$US)

**Outcome 2.1 Indicator 3:** Number of communities reporting a positive shift in community attitudes, knowledge and practices towards wildlife and habitat conservation and/or willingness to coexist with wildlife

**COMPONENT 3: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Under this component, the project will capture and disseminate messages supporting HWC mitigation and lessons learned to a broader and diverse public audience. The project will work with the PFP project to design and integrate HWC messaging into social media including posters, radio spots, Facebook, and other platforms. The community-based socio-economic study carried out during the first 6 months of the project will inform the design and content of communications for project communities including focal language(s), crops, and species. In Year 4, HWC success stories and learning derived from the four pilot sites will be synthesized into a formal document that will be made available on the Gabon PFP website.

**Outcome 3.1 Lessons Captured and Disseminated**

**Outcome 3.1 Indicator 1:** Number of case studies and other materials showcased and share lessons learned

**COMPONENT 4: MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Under this component, the project will monitor and evaluate project data and information according to WWF GEF M&E protocols to ensure efficient decision making and promote adaptive project management.

**Outcome 4.1: Project monitoring and evaluation data contributes to efficient decision making and to adaptive project management.**

**Outcome 4.1 Indicator 1:** GEF annual reports that include progress towards project goals are published.

**2.2. Project Area Profile**

This GEF GBFF Project, “Addressing Outstanding Barriers and Leveraging Durable Financial Mechanisms to Achieve Target 3 in Gabon”, will focus activities at the national level and in four PAs that were also selected as focal areas for the GEF 7 PFP project.

**Overview of the country**

Gabon is a central-African country that spans from the Atlantic coast, with its lowland humid forests, to the country’s vast interior rainforests, interspersed with forest-savanna and wetland mosaic landscapes.

Gabon is situated across the equator, between 2°30' North and 3°55' South latitude and 8°30' East and 14°30' East longitude. The western coastal boarder is along the Atlantic Ocean, south of the Bight of Biafra. Gabon shares land borders with Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon to the north, and Republic of Congo to the east and south. The country has a surface area of 268,000 square kilometers, with forests covering 85% of the territory<sup>2</sup>.

Gabon has over 20 million hectares of forests. The country's sea-front is associated with numerous rivers, resulting in significant marine and continental fish stocks. Over 70% of the country's population lives in the coastal areas, which also houses the majority of economic activities. Gabon also has a wealth of extractive natural resources, primarily manganese, oil as well as its timber and forest reserves<sup>3</sup>.

Gabon is a relatively sparsely populated country with a population of 2.2 million people (2019), with a population growth rate of 2.5%. The country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was more than \$16.6 billion (2019), with a current annual growth rate of 3.4%<sup>4</sup>. The country has one of the highest urbanization rates in Africa (89.7%)<sup>5</sup> and this is expected to rise to 92% and 95% by 2030 and 2050, respectively. The country's population projected to reach 2.7 million people by 2030 and 3.8 million by 2050<sup>6</sup>.

Gabon's rich tropical forests currently harbor half of the world's remaining forest elephant population and 80% of the western lowland gorillas<sup>7</sup>, among others. Marine and terrestrial protected areas represent 25.1% of the total national area, with marine areas accounting for 28.8% and terrestrial areas, 22.4%. Forests in Gabon comprise an estimated 8,000 plant species with a 20% endemism rate.

Gabon belongs to the Congo Basin, the second largest carbon sink in the world after the Amazon, although some people argue it may even surpass it. Gabon is a net absorber of carbon: it emits very little and absorbs a lot, positioning it among the most carbon-positive countries in the world, thus serving the planet and humanity.

The terrestrial and aquatic biomes host rich biodiversity and high ecosystems diversity, and harbor significant ecosystem services. Aware of this unique heritage in the world, and by accountability to future generations, President Omar Bongo Ondimba announced on September 4, 2002 during the Johannesburg Earth Summit, the creation a network of 13 National Parks. In November 2017, his successor, President Ali Bongo Ondimba, announced the creation of 20 Marine Protected Areas (9 marine parks and 11 aquatic reserves) to protect 26% of Gabon's territorial waters. Also, Gabon currently has nine sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), with a surface area of 3,001,769 hectares<sup>8</sup>. Other areas of special use or designation include the Ipassa Makokou Biosphere Reserve and the two properties

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<sup>2</sup> World Bank (2021). Gabon Country Overview. URL: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/gabon/overview>

<sup>3</sup> Gabon (2011). Second National Communication on Climate Change to the UNFCCC. URL: [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Second%20Nat%20Com\\_GABON\\_Complete.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Second%20Nat%20Com_GABON_Complete.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> World Bank (2021). World Development Indicators: Gabon. URL: <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&country=GBN>

<sup>5</sup> World Bank Group (2020). Gabon. Increasing Economic Diversification & Equalizing Opportunity to Accelerate Poverty Reduction. Systematic Country Diagnostic. URL: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/34108/Gabon-SystematicCountry-Diagnostic.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>

<sup>6</sup> World Bank Open Data (2021). Data Retrieved March 2021. Data Bank: Population Estimates and Projections, Gabon. URL: <https://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=health-nutrition-and-population-statistics:-population-estimates-and-projections>

<sup>7</sup> Terada S. et al (2021), Human-Elephant Conflict Around Moukalaba-Doudou National Park in Gabon: Socioeconomic Changes and Effects of Conservation Projects on Local Tolerance

<sup>8</sup> Ramsar.org  
<https://www.ramsar.org/wetland/gabon#:~:text=The%20convention%20entered%20into%20force,surface%20area%20of%203%2C001%2C769%20hectares.>

inscribed in 2021 on the World Heritage List (the Ecosystem and Relict Cultural Landscape Lopé - Okanda and the Ivindo National Park)<sup>9</sup>.

Gabon has already pledged its support to the 30x30 biodiversity agenda under the High-Ambition Coalition for Nature and People and has recently indicated its interest in ensuring protection in perpetuity of 30% of Gabon’s oceans, lands, and freshwater ecosystems by 2030. Gabon is also poised to maintain a leading role as a high forest and low deforestation nation.

Gabon is taking a leading role in the fight against climate change at the continental and international level and has adopted the ‘Green Gabon’ approach. With Green Gabon, the country aims to transition away from an extractive-based (oil and mining) economy to a more green and sustainable economy that is aligned with the 2030 Agenda.

**2.2.1. Description of selected, representative sites for ESMF development**

Until 2011, the government provided approximately 10 million euros (\$10.8M) for PA operations annually, however, donor funding varied from park to park. As evidence of the importance of HWC within Gabon, in 2023, the presidency granted budgets (\$5 million on average) for 3 months dedicated solely to anti-poaching operations for the following parks: Minkébé, Loango, Moukalaba-Doudou, Waka, Birougou, Pongara, Akanda, Mayumba, Ivindo and Mwagna. The footprint of Gabon's protected area network is shown in Figure 1 below (community consultations activities for this project focused on four National Parks: Mayumba, Loango, Minkebe and Monts de Cristal, which is why these appear highlighted in Figure 1).

Figure 1: Representation of the 13 Gabon’s National Parks



A synopsis of the situation in each of the four project national parks and surrounding area is provided below.

**2.2.1.1. Loango National Park**

<sup>9</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/1157/>

Loango National Park encompasses 115,100 ha and is one of thirteen national parks created in Gabon in 2002. The park's diverse coastal habitat protects part of the 22,000 ha Iguéla Lagoon. The area is a relatively pristine landscape where large mammals wander onto the beaches and even enter the Atlantic Ocean. The Park employs 38 workers and the most recent management plan dates from 2007 (this plan will be updated as a part of the PFP project). The park has the world's second largest concentrations and varieties of whales and dolphins.

There are approximately 1900 people—primarily farmers and fishers --living near the park. Women fish and weave mats that they sell to park visitors. Hunting is practiced in this area, mainly by men. Area farmers regularly complain about damage caused by elephants as well as buffalo, hippopotamus, porcupines, and monkeys that destroy plantations. Encounters with elephants are particularly difficult to solve and are a source of conflict between the communities and ANPN. Permanent and temporary fences have been installed both within the park and surrounding areas, though due to the size of the PA, they are inadequate for successfully managing HWC. The most recent information gathered by the project development team indicates that there have been around 1320 registered complaints on elephant-related HWC.

#### **2.2.1.2. Minkébé National Park**

Minkébé National Park is located in the extreme northeast of Gabon covering some 753,500 ha. Minkébé was gazetted as a Forest Reserve in 1998, and the government upgraded its status to a PA in early 2000. Minkébé National Park itself was officially recognized by the GoG in August 2002. The park employs 47 people and its most recent management plan expired in 2018 (this plan will be updated as a part of the PFP project). IUCN recognized Minkébé as a critical conservation site and has been proposed as a World Heritage Site.

Preliminary research finds that there are approximately 3400 people living around the park, almost all of whom are members of Indigenous groups. There are currently no human settlements inside the park, however, some communities including gold miners exist outside the protected area. Local populations, including the Baka once resided inside the park area, and some of their cultural heritage sites are still there. While there has been some HWC awareness raising in the past, there is currently a lack of infrastructure in place to support communities.

#### **2.2.1.3. Mayumba National Park**

Mayumba National Park encompasses 96,500 ha (90,000 ha of terrestrial area and 6500 ha of marine area) and is located in southwest Gabon in Nyanga province. This project will only focus on the park's terrestrial area. The park is home to some of the world's densest leatherback turtle nesting sites and extends for 15 km into the ocean, protecting important marine habitat for dolphins, sharks, and migrating humpback whales. The park employs 28 people, and its most recent management plan expired in 2018 (this plan will be updated as a part of the PFP project).

While there are no people living within the park, the park protects fishing habitat that provides a protein source for local communities while also providing a buffer against unsustainable fishing practices. This area was visited during the PFP project development, and baseline data indicate that there are some 150 people living around the park—IPLC populations—primarily fishers and farmers. Fishing is vital to the local economy and nutrition. Uncontrolled industrial fishing in and around the park threatens the longterm sustainability of these resources, and thus the future of everyone living in the area. Mayumba was one of the first sites where ANPN experimented with HWC management using electric fencing, hot pepper

cartridges, and HWC-related planning and awareness in elephant movement corridors. HWC challenges persist in the area with 300 people logging some 330 HWC complaints between 2022 and 2023. Presently, there is a 9 km-long electric fence intended to buffer 309 ha of community areas from elephants or other wildlife that present risk of conflict.

#### **2.2.1.4. Monts de Cristal National Park**

Monts de Cristal National Park covers an area of 119,200 ha in northern Gabon and includes large blocks of rainforest. This is one of Gabon's most remote parks and many botanists consider the park to contain some of the greatest plant diversity in all of Africa. The park has 28 employees and the most recent park management plan expired in 2020 (and will be updated as a part of the PFP project).

There are no communities located inside the park and local populations living nearby villages rely on fishing and agriculture for their livelihoods. This region has long been targeted for exploitation by logging companies that have secured government permission for large (30-70,000 ha) logging concessions. In more recent years, cobalt and iron ore mines have been established and have led to rapid infrastructure investments (mainly roads), increased numbers of illicit mining camps, and increased farmers, miners, and business interests migration into the area. Main threats to the park include logging, gold extraction, ivory poaching, and commercial hunting for the local bush-meat trade. HWC is a challenge in the villages on the outskirts of the park and its buffer zone and some electric fencing has been installed in the communities of Andock and Foula, with a total of around 1000 complaints of elephant-related HWC tallied.

### **2.3. Demographic and economic information**

#### **2.3.1. Demographics**

According to Gabon's most recent general census of population and housing, the population was 1,811,079 in 2013, with a ratio of 51.58% men to 48.42% women. The country is sparsely populated. The average age is 26 years and half of the population is under 22<sup>10</sup>. The population is distributed very unevenly across the country, as almost half of the population lives in the province of Estuaire. Population density is low at the national level, with 6.8 inhabitants per square kilometer. However, it is high in some places, such as the municipalities of Libreville and Port-Gentil, where it exceeds, respectively, 3,700 and 2,480 inhabitants per square kilometer. The population is predominantly urban (87 per cent) and concentrated in only 1.1 per cent of the country's territory, while rural areas are very sparsely populated. The rate of population growth remains significant.<sup>11</sup>

#### **2.3.2. Ethnic groups**

Approximately 40 ethnic groups are represented, the largest of which is the Fang (32%), a group that covers the northern third of Gabon and expands north into Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon. The other ethnic groups are the Mpongwè (15%), Mbédé (14%), Punu (12%), Baréké or Batéké, Bakota and Obamba. More than 10,000 native French live in Gabon, including an estimated 2,000 dual nationals. Some ethnicities are spread throughout Gabon, leading to contact, interaction among the groups, and intermarriage<sup>12</sup>.

#### **2.3.3. Poverty**

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<sup>10</sup> UN Economic Commission for Africa (2017), Gabon Country Profile 2016

URL: [https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/gabon\\_cp\\_eng.pdf](https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/gabon_cp_eng.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> UN Economic Commission for Africa (2017), Gabon Country Profile 2016

URL: [https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/gabon\\_cp\\_eng.pdf](https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/gabon_cp_eng.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> International Working Group of Indigenous Affairs (2023), The Indigenous World 2023

URL: <https://www.iwgia.org/en/resources/indigenous-world.html>

The poverty rate was estimated at 33.5% in 2005. The most recent data show that poverty affected 30% of Gabon's total population. Living conditions have worsened in terms of access to basic services (health care, drinking water and electricity) in 60 per cent of regions<sup>13</sup>.

#### **2.3.4. Employment**

Unemployment is high in Gabon, as it affects one out of six members of the labor force aged 16 to 65 (16.5%). Unemployment is higher among women (22%) than men (13%). Geographic disparities in the unemployment rate are more pronounced at the departmental level than at the provincial one. Unemployment is higher among young people, regardless of gender or area of residence<sup>14</sup>.

#### **2.3.5. Health**

Life expectancy at birth in Gabon is estimated at 66.5 years in 2023 (World Bank, 2023). The current infant mortality rate for Gabon in 2023 is 31.049 deaths per 1000 live births, a 2.65% decline from 2022. The infant mortality rate for Gabon in 2022 was 31.894 deaths per 1000 live births, a 2.58% decline from 2021<sup>15</sup>.

#### **2.3.6. Education**

Adult literacy rate is the percentage of people ages 15 and above who can both read and write with understanding a short simple statement about their everyday life. Gabon literacy rate for 2021 was 85.46%, a 0.79% increase from 2018<sup>16</sup>.

### **2.4. IPs and Vulnerable Groups**

#### **2.4.1. Overview of Indigenous Peoples situation in Gabon**

Throughout Gabon, there are hunter-gatherer communities (often called Pygmies) comprising numerous ethnic groups (Baka, Babongo, Bakoya, Baghame, Barimba, Akoula, etc.) with different languages, cultures and geographical locations. The Pygmy communities live both in the towns and in the forest. (Figure 2). Their livelihoods and their cultures are inextricably linked to the forest. According to official data stated during a conference in Libreville on 27 April 2017<sup>17</sup>, there are now some 16,162 Pygmies living across the national territory. The Baka live in Woleu-Ntem, particularly in the seven villages of Minvoul (North of Gabon), and they number between 373 and 683 individuals. Other Baka have also been noted in Makokou, and upstream of Ivindo. They number some 866 individuals.

There are also Bakoya living in Ivindo, in Djouah (north) and Loué (east) districts of Zadié department (Mékambo). They number some 1,618 individuals across Ogooué-Ivindo. The greatest concentration of Pygmies is found among the Babongo of Lopé (Ogooué-Lolo), estimated at 708 individuals, but also the Bakouyi (Mulundu) and Babongo of Koulamoutou, Pana and Iboundji, numbering some 2,325. To these statistics must be added the Babongo or Akoula of Haut-Ogooué (4,075 individuals) and those in Ngounié and Nyanga, 4,442 individuals<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> UN Economic Commission for Africa (2017), Gabon Country Profile 2016

URL: [https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/gabon\\_cp\\_eng.pdf](https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/gabon_cp_eng.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> UN Economic Commission for Africa (2017), Gabon Country Profile 2016

URL: [https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/gabon\\_cp\\_eng.pdf](https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/gabon_cp_eng.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> UN Economic Commission for Africa (2017), Gabon Country Profile 2016

URL: [https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/gabon\\_cp\\_eng.pdf](https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/gabon_cp_eng.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> UN Economic Commission for Africa (2017), Gabon Country Profile 2016

URL: [https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/gabon\\_cp\\_eng.pdf](https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/gabon_cp_eng.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> International Working Group of Indigenous Affairs (2023), The Indigenous World 2023

URL: <https://www.iwgia.org/en/resources/indigenous-world.html>

<sup>18</sup> International Working Group of Indigenous Affairs (2023), The Indigenous World 2023

URL: <https://www.iwgia.org/en/resources/indigenous-world.html>





25,000 individuals. Despite being dispersed over an area of some 150,000 sq. km, the Baka are remarkably uniform (in the same area live at least 17 different ethnic Bantu groups, each of them with their own language). The Baka everywhere speak the same language. Their 42 clans are known everywhere in their area of dispersion. Relations with neighbors are based on their reputation for reliability, which is important for the barter trade with the Bantu in which mainly agricultural products are exchanged for bushmeat and labor. Hunting practices and techniques of gathering forest fruits are completely uniform throughout the area. So too are a wide variety of ceremonies. And, last but not least, all Baka are expert in elephant hunting.

As noted above, Gabon's Baka are located in the Minkébé area. Groups of Baka live near the border with Cameroon, in the extreme north of the Woleu/Ntem province (Minvoul district), and along the Ivindo River, onto the provincial capital Makokou. It is estimated that they total some 500 individuals. Above that, some 200 Baka from Cameroon and Congo are thought to live at least part of the year in the Minkébé Forest.

The threats (forest-logging, gold extraction, ivory poaching, and commercial hunting for the local bushmeat trade) have brought about increasing investments in anti-poaching activities, resulting in indigenous Baka being cut off from their traditional lands, and having their human rights threatened by overzealous ecoguards.

## **2.5. Gender**

The section below describes the Gender profile of Gabon. More details and project-specific information is provided in the Gender Assessment and Action Plan that has been created for the project.

### **2.5.1. Gender equality and women's empowerment in Gabon**

Gabonese data reveal total parity in health and education as well as in youth literacy. It is also important to note that the goal of parity has been exceeded, within two standard deviations, with regard to lack of stunted growth in children under five, an indicator for which girls have overtaken boys. Despite the progress made in health and education, it must be stressed that there is still work to be done to achieve parity in certain areas such as employment and representation in parliament and in ministerial positions. The labor force participation rate is significantly higher for men (74.9%) than for women (49.4%). Women hold only 12.5% of ministerial positions, against 87.5% held by men. Inequalities still exist with respect to the representation of women in parliament, as only 14.2% of members of parliament are women, while 85.8% are men.

The status of gender equality and women's empowerment is measured in terms of the key areas indicated in the circular chart below. The calculation for the scoring is based on Gender Status Index (GSI) data. GSI is one of the components of AGDI. For each key indicator, the score is calculated as an unweighted arithmetic average by taking the female to male ratio of the indicator values, multiplying it by 10 and rounding the result off to the nearest whole number. A score of zero represents the highest level of inequality, five shows middle parity level and 10 represents perfect parity. Parity levels exceeding 10 represent situations in which women have outperformed men, irrespective of the level of development of the area being assessed. Most of the figures used to calculate scores are from the most recent national data available. However, for some indicators, countries do not have disaggregated data. In those cases, the data used are international and drawn from various sources: surveys by the Gabonese National Institute of Statistics, the Demographic and Health Survey (2012), the World Bank's Global Index Database 2014 and the 2009 Statistical Yearbook.

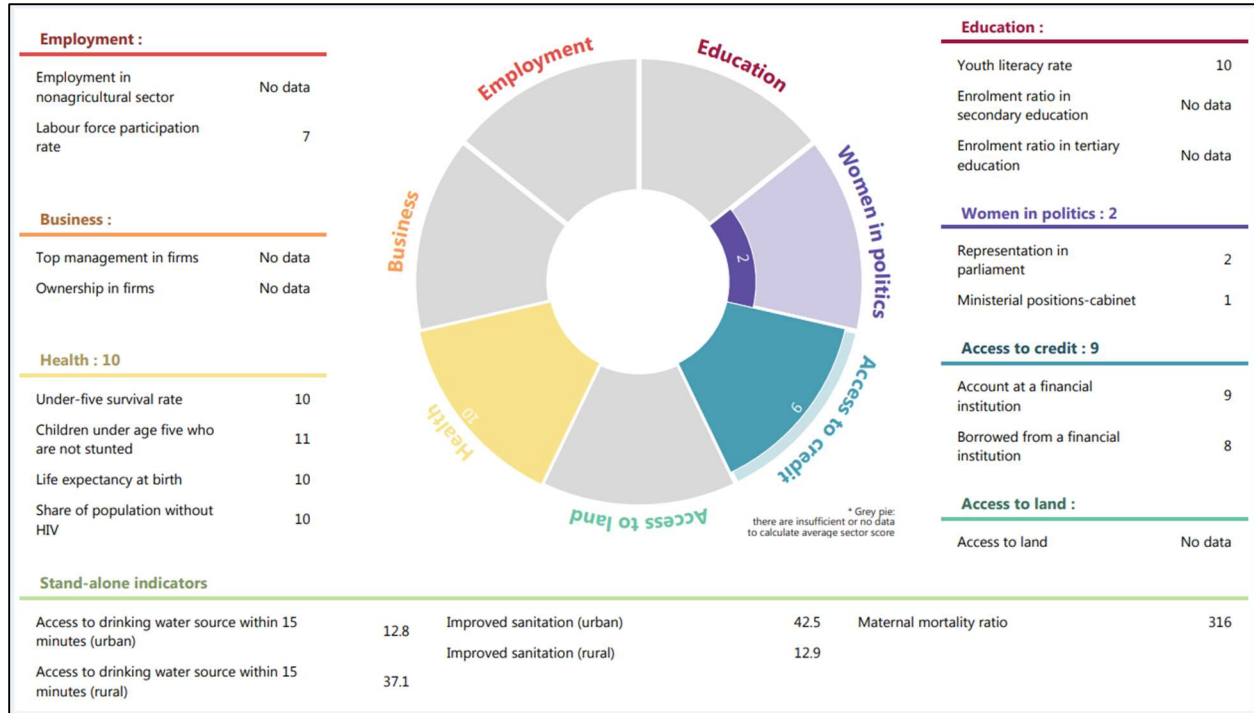


Figure 3: Gender inequality scoring in Gabon. Source: African Union Commission and ECA, 2015.

**2.5.2. Participation of Women and Members of Minority Groups:**

In the past, cultural and traditional factors, as well as social stigma, prevented women and historically marginalized groups from participating equally in political life. Currently, in Gabon, no laws limit participation of women and members of minorities in the political process, and they do participate. Women are in several prominent positions in the government and have held positions such as Prime Minister and the Presidents of the Senate and the Constitutional Court. In July 2021, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Women’s Rights initiated a mentoring program to encourage women to enter politics as part of the “strategy for promoting women’s rights and reducing gender equalities in Gabon.” (State.gov, 2021)

**2.5.3. Rape and Domestic Violence:**

The law criminalizes rape; convicted rapists face penalties of 10 to 20 years’ imprisonment and a fine. Nevertheless, authorities seldom prosecuted rape cases. The law addresses spousal and intimate partner rape regardless of gender. There are no reliable statistics on the prevalence of rape, but a women’s advocacy NGO estimated it to be a frequent occurrence. (State.gov, 2021)

Discussing rape remained taboo, and survivors often opted not to report it due to shame or fear of reprisal. The government provided in-kind support to an NGO center to assist victims of domestic violence, and through the center’s work, police intervened in response to incidents of domestic violence. In April 2021 the government opened a national hotline to assist persons experiencing any kind of violence. (State.gov, 2021)

**2.5.4. Sexual Harassment**

The law states sexual harassment “constitutes an offense against morals (and includes) any behavior, attitude or repeated assiduous or suggestive words, directly or indirectly attributable to a person who, abusing the authority or influence conferred on him by his functions or its social rank, aims to obtain sexual favors from an individual of one or the other sex.” Conviction of sexual harassment is punishable

by up to six months' imprisonment and a substantial monetary fine. NGOs report that sexual harassment of women continues to be pervasive. (State.gov, 2021)

#### **2.5.5. Reproductive Rights**

The Ministry of Health provides guidance on family-planning best practices to health facilities throughout the country. There are some social and cultural barriers to access to family planning based on behavioral norms, religious beliefs, and an individual's sexual orientation. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated the maternal mortality rate in 2017 at 252 deaths per 100,000 live births. According to the 2012 Gabon Demographic and Health Survey, girls and women ages 15 to 19 were among the most affected, representing 34 percent of maternal deaths. The main causes of maternal death were hemorrhages during childbirth, high blood pressure, and infections.

### **3. ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY, REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES**

This chapter first outlines the laws and regulations of Gabon and the WWF's ESSF and SIPP that are applicable to the project, and then discusses gaps between Gabon laws and regulations and the SIPP. For the purposes of the implementation of this GEF GBFF project Addressing Outstanding Barriers and Leveraging Durable Financial Mechanisms to Achieve Target 3 in Gabon, the principles and procedures of the ESSF and SIPP shall prevail in all cases of discrepancies.

#### **3.1. Gabon Policies, Laws, Regulations Guidelines**

##### **3.1.1. Institutional frameworks**

Several public institutions ensure the management of wildlife resources, namely:

**Ministry of Water and Forests, the Sea and the Environment**, responsible for the Climate Plan and the Land Use Plan in Gabon; under which

- DGEPN, Direction Générale de l'Environnement et pour la Protection de la Nature (the project's Implementing Partner), itself being the high-level coordinating DG under which are found the following four directorates:
- DGFAP, Direction Générale de la Faune et des Aires Protégées
- DGEA, Direction Générale des Ecosystems Aquatiques
- DGF, Direction Générale des Forêts
- DGI, Direction Générale des Industries, du Commerce du Bois et de la Valorisation des Produits Forestiers

**Conseil National sur les changements climatiques (CNC)**, in charge of monitoring the implementation of the National Climate Plan which proposes Gabon's climate policy.

**Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux (ANPN)**, responsible for implementing national policy for the protection of natural resources and natural processes in protected areas under its authority.

**Agence Gabonaise d'Etudes et d'Observations Spatiales (AGEOS)**, which has the mission of ensuring satellite monitoring of the national territory for the sustainable management of the environment, natural resources, land use and management issues;

**Agence Gabonaise de Développement et de Promotion du Tourisme et de l'Hôtellerie (AGATOUR)**, a public establishment of an industrial and commercial nature placed under the technical supervision of the Minister in charge of Tourism. Its mission is to implement the governmental policy in terms of tourism development and to create a favorable environment for operators in the concerned sector.

##### **3.1.2. Laws Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation**

###### **National laws**

In terms of national laws, Gabon has a wide range of sectoral laws addressing the management of its natural resources and which support the sustainable development of the wildlife economy.

#### Wildlife

- National action plan on the sustainable use of wildlife by local populations in Gabon 2017-2019 - November 2016, issued from the sub-regional strategy on the sustainable use of wildlife by indigenous and local populations of the COMIFAC space countries
- Law n°016/2001 of 31st December 2001 enacting Forestry Code in the Gabonese Republic (related articles)
- Decree n°00099/PR/MFE of 19th March 2018 placing the Kévazingo in reserve
- Decree n°350/PR/MPERNFM of 7th June 2016 setting the conditions for Kévazingo and Ozigo logging
- Decree n°0164/PR/MEF of 19th January 2011 regulating the classification and the latitudes of slaughter of animal species
- Decree n°0163/PR/MEF of 19th January 2011 setting the conditions for the detention, transport and trade of wild animal species, trophies and hunting products.
- Decree n°0161/PR/MEF of 19th January 2011 establishing the conditions for issuing hunting and capture permits and licenses
- Decree n°137/PR/MEFEOA of 04th February 2009 on the reserve of selected multiple-use plants in the Gabonese forest
- Decree n°692/PR/MEFEPEPN of 24th August 2004 setting conditions on the applicability rights of customary use on wildlife and hunting
- Decree n° 679/PR/MEFE of 28th July 1994 setting the opening and closing dates for the hunting season
- Decree n° 678/PR/MEFE of 28th July 1994 supplementing Decree No. 189/PR/MEFCR of 4 March 1987 on the protection of wildlife
- Decree n°677/PR/MEFE of 28th July 1994 on special approval for trade in hunting products
- Order n°0024/PR/MEFMEPCODDPAT of 31st March 2020 prohibiting the hunting, capture, possession, marketing, transport and consumption of pangolins and bats
- Order n°012/MAEPA/SG/DGPA of 8th October 2019 on classification of aquatic animal species
- Order n°491/MEFPTE/SG/DGEF/DFC of 14th August 1995 setting the opening and closing dates for the hunting season

#### Environment

- Law n°002/2014 of 1st August 2014 on the orientation of sustainable development in the Gabonese Republic
- Law n°007/2014 of 1st August 2014 related to the protection of the environment in the Gabonese Republic
- Decree n°000925/PR/MEFEPEPN of 18th October 2005 on the establishment, responsibilities, organization and functioning of the National Commission for Sustainable Development
- Decree n°000539/PR/MEFEPEPN of 15th July 2005 regulating Environmental Impact Studies
- Decree n°000543/PR/MEFEPEPN of 15th July 2005 establishing the legal regime for classified installations

#### Protected areas

- Law n°003/2007 of 27th August 2007 on National Parks
- Law n°016/2001 of 31st December 2001 enacting Forestry Code in the Gabonese Republic (related articles)
- Decree n°00161/PR of 1st June 2017 on the creation of aquatic protected areas in the Gabonese Republic

- Decree n°001032/PE/MEFEPEPN of 1st December 2004 setting the grading and downgrading of protected areas of forests and protected areas

It is worth noting that the Law n°003/2007 of 27th August 2007 on National Parks, mentions in Article 16 that "In peripheral areas [of National Parks], the exercise of customary rights of use, in particular fishing, hunting, slaughtering and capturing wildlife, agricultural and forestry activities, collecting plants, collecting minerals is free, and subject to the provisions of the management plan of the National Park of concern".

#### Forest

- Law n°016/2001 of 31st December 2001 enacting Forest Code in the Gabonese Republic
- Decree n°01400/PR/MEF of 6th December 2011 on the creation and organization of the Agency for the execution of activities in the forest-wood sector in the Gabonese Republic
- Decree n°00273/PR/MEF of 2nd February 2011 establishing the status of abandoned woods
- Decree n°00669/PR/MEF of 20th September 2010 laying down the conditions for issuing the special cutting permit
- Decree n°01206/PR/MEFPE du 30th August 1993 fixing the general and specific requirements of the logging specifications
- Decree n°1028/PR/MEFEPEPN of 1st December 2004 setting the conditions for the creation of community forests

It is worth noting that the Law n°016/2001 of 31st December 2001 enacting the Forestry Code also mentions, in Articles 151 – 161, that "Local populations can exercise their customary use rights in and outside protected areas".

The Forestry Code provides for the establishment of protected areas at the initiative of local communities. Such protected areas are called community forests.

The Forestry Code also formally recognizes Indigenous peoples in Gabon, and it sets the basis for the creation of *Comités Consultatif de Gestion Local (CCGL)*, which are consultation committees that allow representatives of the Government, local populations, and economic actors near these protected areas to take part in the management of the parks.

#### Fisheries

- Law n°002/2007 of 27th August 2007 on the creation, organization and operation of the Center for Fishing and Aquaculture Professions
- Law 015/2005 of 8th October 2005 to enact Code of Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Gabonese Republic
- Decree n°0579/PR/MPE of 30th November 2015 laying down the terms and conditions governing fishing activities in the Gabonese Republic
- Order n°013/MAEPA/SG/DGPA of 8th October 2019 regulating sport fishing

#### Climate

- Decree n°0122/PR/MRPICIRNDH of 23rd April 2010 on creation, missions, organization and functioning of the National Council on Climate Change

#### Tourism

- Law n°016/2001 of 31st December 2001 enacting Forestry Code in the Gabonese Republic (articles 209 to 213 concerning tourism activities in national parks and hunting areas)
- Law n°004/2000 of 18th August 2000 ratifying order n°002/2000/PR of 12 February 2000 on the regime applying to tourist investments
- Law n°15/98 of 23rd July 1998 setting the charter of investments

- Law n°5/86 of 18th June 1986 establishing the regime for admission of foreigners in the Gabonese Republic
- Decree n°0314/PR/MIMT of 25th September 2014 on the creation and organization of the Gabonese Agency for the Development and Promotion of Tourism and the Hotel Industry
- Decree n°649/PR/MTPN of 25th May 2001 regulating the entry of tourists and businessmen into Gabon
- Decree n°465/PR/MTPN of 18th May 1976 regulating the activities of travel agencies

#### Justice

- Law n°042/2018 of 05th July 2019 on the Penal Code, which reinforces penalties for environmental offences (such as ivory trafficking or offences against environmental protection)

#### **International and regional instruments**

Gabon is a signatory to numerous international and regional instruments, including but not limited to the following:

- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl habitat (commonly known as the Ramsar Convention) (1971);
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES) (1973);
- Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) (1979);
- Convergence Plan 2 of the Central African Forest Commission (2014);
- African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa (2015);
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (1992);
- Treaty on the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Central African Forest Ecosystems, which led to the establishment of the Central African Forestry Commission (COMIFAC) (2005);
- Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa (GDSA) (2012);
- FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;

#### **3.1.3. Specific relevant Policies and Plans**

##### **Emerging Gabon Strategic Plan 2011 – 2025 (2011)**

Formalizes the national economy diversification policy. This plan sets out alternative strategic orientations for sustainable development by 2025. Actions to promote an inclusive green economy are most perceptible through implementation of the “Green Gabon” pillar, which aims particularly to preserve and enhance the value of "green oil" (i.e., forest resources).

##### **Strategic Plan for the Sustainable Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture (2011)**

Has as objective to increase the contribution of the fisheries sector to national growth and socio-economic development. The document defines specific priority objectives for the development of fisheries and aquaculture.

##### **National Climate Plan (2012)**

Presents short and medium-term development strategies for sectors of activity with a strong impact on climate change, and measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change.

##### **National Industrialization Strategy (2013)**

Aims to make mining, wood and agro-industry (agriculture and fishing) major pillars of the Gabonese economy by optimizing local added value and to ensure the sustainable competitiveness of these sectors by 2025.

**Green Gabon Operational Plan Horizon 2025 / Giving Emergence a sustainable trajectory (2015)**

Defines approaches and the projects designed to promote and supervise the sustainable development of Gabonese ecosystems and their natural resources.

**National Strategy and Action Plan on Access to Biological / Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (2015)**

Serves as the framework for the strategic orientation and programming of actions related to Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) by 2020, in accordance with the global Nagoya Protocol. This is both a planning tool and information support system for all stakeholders involved in ABS processes.

**National Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for the Development of Tourism in Gabon - Horizon 2025 (2015)**

Aims to make tourism a major axis of economic diversification and job creation by 2025.

**Economic Recovery Plan 2017-2019 (2017)**

This plan's objective is to accelerate diversification of the economy and enhance social impact of public policies, by putting public finances on a sustainability path. One of its five programs aims to strengthen competitiveness of the timber, fisheries and tourism sectors.

**National action plan on the sustainable use of wildlife by local populations in Gabon 2017-2019 (2017)**

Derived from the subregional strategy on the sustainable use of wildlife by indigenous and local populations of the countries of the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC).

**Gabon's National Strategy and Action Plan on Biological Diversity (2018)**

Updated version of the first National Strategy and Action Plan on Biological Diversity, adopted in 2000. This strategy is in line with the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), through its three objectives: (i) conservation of biological diversity, (ii) sustainable use of its components, and (iii) sharing of the benefits arising from their use, in particular by carrying out actions to rehabilitate degraded ecosystems to support the functioning of ecosystems and the maintenance of the services they provide. This last version meets the thematic programs of work and guidelines of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and takes into account new national policy orientations.

**National Strategy for the Valorization and Promotion of Non-Timber Forest Products in the Gabonese Republic and Action Plan 2020 - 2025 (2020)**

Aims to ensure the management and sustainable use of Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) through an appropriate legal framework and specific incentives for the development of the sector leading to the further processing and enhancement of these natural resources, to a significant contribution of these products in local and national economy, to public awareness about the socio-economic importance of NTFPs and their value chains, and to the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of these resources.

**3.1.4. Laws on Labor and Working Conditions**

**Labor Code**

The Labor Code is referenced as Law No. 3/94 of November 21, 1994, on the Establishment of the Labor Code (as amended by the Law No. 12/2000 of October 12, 2000). As per the Gabonese Labor Code (Article 8), every employee is equal by law and is entitled to the same guarantees and protection. Any discrimination based on color, race, sex, political opinion, religion, natural ascendance, or social origins is prohibited and punishable by law.

**Laws related to the elimination of forced labor, child labor, protection of children and young persons**

- Ordinance No. 4/2001 of 14 August 2001 amending and supplementing certain provisions of the Criminal Code.

- Decree No. 0023/PR/MEEDD of 16 January 2013, establishing the nature of the worst forms of work and the categories of enterprises prohibited to children under 18 years of age.
- Decree No. 0651/PR/MTEPS of 13 April 2011 establishing individual derogations from the minimum age for admission to employment in the Gabonese Republic.
- Ordinance No. 018/PR/2010 of 25 February 2010 amending certain provisions of the Labor Code of the Gabonese Republic.
- Decree No. 000024/PR/MTE of 6 January 2005 laying down the conditions for checks, investigations and searches relating to the prevention and combating of trafficking in children in the Gabonese Republic.
- Act No. 09/2004 Coll. on preventing and combating trafficking in children.
- Decree No. 000031/PR/MTEFP of 8 January 2002 on combating child labor.
- Ordinance No. 4/2001 of 14 August 2001 amending and supplementing certain provisions of the Criminal Code.

#### **Laws related to Occupational safety and health**

- Decree n° 01494/PR/MTEPS of 29 December 2011 determining the general rules of health and safety in the workplace.

#### **3.1.5. Land Acquisition**

The State is the major landowner in Gabon with up to 90% of its area not just under its control but largely defined as ‘private government land’. Most of the population is technically landless, existing as mere occupiers and users of government property, and therefore have limited tenure security. Tenure reform faces a challenge in Gabon because it brings to light the need for more inclusive routes to resource-based economic growth. Demand for land tenure change among a new generation of state and non-state actors is emerging.

The key legal instruments regarding land rights and land acquisition include:

- Law No. 14-63 establishing the composition of the domain of the State and the rules that determine the modes of management and alienation. (1963)
- Ordinance No. 002/PR/2017 of 27 February 2017 on the orientation of urban planning in the Gabonese Republic. (2017).
- Law No. 1/2012 of 13 August 2012 establishing the land development concession in the Gabonese Republic. (2012)
- Ordinance No. 6/2012 of 13 February 2012 laying down the general rules relating to urban planning in the Gabonese Republic. (2012)
- Ordinance 005/PR/2012 of 13 February 2012 establishing the land ownership regime in the Gabonese Republic. (2012)
- Law No. 12-78 amending Articles 3 and 42 of Law No. 15-63 establishing the regime of land ownership. (1978)
- Ordinance No. 2/76 of 6 January 1976 supplementing article 10 of Law No. 6/61 of 10 May 1961, regulating expropriation in the public interest and establishing easements for the execution of public works. (1976)
- Ordinance No. 37-67 amending Act No. 15-63 of 8 May 1963 establishing the regime of land ownership. (1967)
- Act No. 6-61 regulating expropriation in the public interest. (1961)
- Decree No. 173/PR of 2 June 1965 regulating occupations of the public domain. (1965)



### **3.1.6. Indigenous Peoples**

The Constitution of Gabon grants members of indigenous ethnic groups the same civil rights as other citizens, but they experienced societal discrimination. There is no specific national legal instrument focused on Indigenous Peoples.

Though, in 2005, Gabon agreed that its Indigenous Peoples Development Plan (PDPA) should form part of the World Bank loan agreement for the Forest and Environment Sector Project. This was the Gabonese government's first official recognition of the existence of Indigenous Peoples and of its responsibilities towards them. In 2007, Gabon voted in favor of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

### **3.1.7. Gender, Gender-Based Violence, and Sexual Harassment**

The Gabonese Constitution promotes equality and protection against discrimination based on sex. Indeed, the principle of the equality of men and women is enshrined in the Gabonese Constitution, in its article 2 Paragraph 2: "*The Gabonese Republic ensures the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race, sex, opinion or religion*".

Gabon has ratified many international and regional agreements that promote women's rights and gender equality, including:

At the international level:

- 1960: Signing of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women CEDEF/CEDAW (adopted on December 18, 1979, and entered into force on September 3, 1981, signed on July 17, 1980, and ratified on January 21, 1983)
- CEDAW Protocol (adopted on October 6, 1991, and entered into force on December 22, 2002, acceded to on November 5, 2004, and ratified on November 5, 2004)
- UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Prevention, Participation, Protection and Relief & Recovery). This Resolution affirms that peace and security efforts are more sustainable when women are equal partners in the prevention of violent conflict, the delivery of relief and recovery efforts and in the forging of lasting peace.
- Rome Statute: Adopted in Rome on July 17, 1998, and entered into force on July 1, 2002, signed on December 22, 1998, and ratified on September 20, 2000.
- In 1995, Beijing Declaration and Program of Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Commission on the Status of Women.
- The Resolution on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) was adopted by consensus at the 50th session of the UN Human Rights Council on July 8, 2022. The resolution focused on the theme of cross-border FGM and transnational protection, which remains a critical challenge in efforts to eliminate FGM.

At the regional level :

- 1986: Gabon adopted the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;
- 2003: Ratification of the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa adopted by the Conference of Heads of State of the African Union in Maputo.
- Reconciliation with national legislation is, however, difficult because of traditional values and the low level of information of the population on these various legal instruments. To harmonize Gabonese legislation with ratified international instruments, Gabon is working hard to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. Hence the adoption of the following texts:
- The adoption of Law No. 87/98 of July 20, 1999, on the Nationality Code promoting the reciprocal acquisition of Gabonese nationality through marriage and dual nationality for Gabonese women.

- The adoption in February 2010 of the document of the National Strategy for Gender Equality and Equity (SNEEG) to promote equal opportunities and treatment between men and women in education, vocational training, job and occupation. However, the results are still mixed
- The establishment since 1998 by the Gabonese Government of the competition for the Grand Prix of the President of the Republic for the promotion of socio-economic activities of women, in order to involve women more in the economic development of the country and with a view to their empowerment.
- The creation by decree n°00080 of February 06, 2007, of a listening unit within the Ministry in charge of the Family, whose mission is to receive, listen, advise and guide women in situation of distress.
- Adoption of Law No. 0038/2008 of January 29, 2009, on the fight against and prevention of female genital mutilation.
- Law No. 09/2004 of September 21, 2004, relating to the prevention and fight against child trafficking in the Gabonese Republic.
- The Ten-Year Plan for the Empowerment of Gabonese Women (23 Feb. 2016).
- Launch of the Equal Opportunities Program (February 2016).

### **The Constitution (Law 047/2010 of January 12, 2011)**

It solemnly affirms its attachment to human rights and fundamental freedoms as they result from the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981 and by the National Charter of Freedoms of 1990 (L. 1/97 April 22, 1997).

The Constitution of Gabon solemnly proclaims its attachment to its deep and traditional social values, to its cultural, material and spiritual heritage, and to respect for the freedoms of the rights and duties of the citizen. In its first Article, the Constitution establishes that: "The Gabonese Republic recognizes and guarantees the inviolable and imprescriptible rights of man who holds the public powers".

### **Law 007/2014 of August 1, 2014, on Environmental Protection**

In its article 7-(2), the Environmental Protection Law guarantees everyone the right to a healthy environment conducive to their development. In Chapter 2, which deals with fundamental rules and principles, the Law defines the principle of participation and stipulates, in its Article 7, that: "*every citizen has the duty to ensure the protection of the environment and to contribute to its improvement as well as the right to express an opinion on a subject likely to have an impact on the environment*". In its Article 30, it establishes environmental impact studies and its implementing decree number 539 of July 15, 2005 which regulates environmental impact studies. The public consultation procedure, required by decree 539 of July 15, 2005, regulates environmental impact studies, makes it possible to involve the public in the development of planning decisions. The purpose of this approach is to arouse the opinions, suggestions and counter-proposals of the populations who will or will not live in the developed area.

## **3.2. WWF Safeguards Standards and Procedures Applicable to the Project**

WWF's safeguards standards require that any potentially adverse environmental and social impacts are identified, and avoided or mitigated. Safeguards policies that are relevant to this project are as follows.

### **3.2.1. Standard on Environment and Social Risk Management Engagement**

This standard is applicable because the GEF 7 Project - Enduring Earth (*Accelerating Sustainable Finance Solutions to Achieve Durable Conservation*) in Gabon intends to support activities that result in a variety of environmental and social impacts.

The Project is expected to generate significant positive and durable social, economic and environmental benefits. Key adverse environmental and social impacts are related to potential access restrictions due to the presence, creation or extension of Protected Areas, thus affecting the sources of economic income or other types of livelihoods of affected communities. Though, those impacts are expected to be site-specific and can be mitigated using appropriate mechanisms and tools.

The precise location and impact of specific activities cannot be determined at this stage, and will only be known during project implementation. Thus, an ESMF is prepared to set out guidelines and procedures on how to identify, assess and monitor environmental and social impacts, and how to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts. Site-specific ESMPs will be prepared as required, based on principles and guidelines of the ESMF.

### **3.2.2. Standard on Protection of Natural Habitats**

WWF's mission is to protect natural habitats, and it does not undertake any projects that would result in conversion or degradation of critical natural habitats, especially those that are legally protected, officially proposed for protection, or identified as having high conservation value.

Overall, activities proposed under the GEF GBFF project, Addressing Outstanding Barriers and Leveraging Durable Financial Mechanisms to Achieve Target 3 in Gabon, activities will produce several benefits, including protection and conservation of biodiversity and capacity building of Government staff and local IPLCs to conserve the natural resources on which they depend while developing and implementing effective HWC strategies. Any potential adverse environmental impacts on human populations or environmentally important areas will be mitigated using appropriate mechanisms and tools.

### **3.2.3. Standard on Restriction of Access and Resettlement**

The WWF's Standard seeks to ensure that adverse social or economic impacts on resource-dependent local communities as a result from restrictions on resource access and/or use are avoided or minimized.

This standard has been triggered out of an abundance of caution because the project will support activities that might result in some access restrictions to resources presently used by the communities affected by HWC. As the specific activities and locations of the project's activities are not yet defined, a Process Framework will be prepared as part of the ESMF to conform to WWF's Environment and Social Safeguards Framework to ensure community rights are respected. The purpose of this PF is to ensure the participation of the Project Affected People (PAP) while recognizing and protecting their interests and ensuring that they do not get worse as a result of the project.

### **3.2.4. Standard on Indigenous Peoples**

The WWF's standard requires ensuring that indigenous rights are respected, that IPs do not suffer adverse impacts from projects, and that IPs receive culturally appropriate benefits from conservation. The policy mandates that projects respect IPs' rights, including their rights to FPIC processes and to tenure over traditional territories; that culturally appropriate and equitable benefits (including from traditional ecological knowledge) are negotiated and agreed upon with the IPs' communities in question; and that potential adverse impacts are avoided or adequately addressed through a participatory and consultative approach.

This standard has been triggered because it is likely that the sites to be identified by the Project will entail Indigenous Peoples, as these groups are present in Gabon and the entire country is the targeted landscape of this project. Specifically, Gabon is home to a number of self-identifying, highly heterogeneous

Indigenous Peoples—including Baka, Bekui, Bebinga, Babongo, and Baringa—as well as to a significant forest-dependent Indigenous population, including up to 30,000 Baka and Babongo people. The specific activities and locations of the project’s activities are not yet defined and more information on Indigenous Peoples, their physical presence in this geography and their use of natural resources is needed, which is why an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework will be prepared as part of the ESMF to conform to WWF’s Environment and Social Safeguards Framework.

### **3.2.5. Standard on Community Health, Safety and Security**

This Standard ensures that the health, safety and security of communities are respected and appropriately protected. The Guidance on Labor and Working Conditions requires employers and supervisors to implement all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of workers through the introduction of preventive and protective measures. It also requires that the labor rights of project-employed workers are observed, as indicated in Annex 1: Screening Tool. Project activities should also prevent adverse impact involving quality and supply of water to affected communities; SEAH- related risks to both affected communities as well as project staff; safety of project infrastructure, life and properties; protective mechanisms for the use of hazardous materials; disease prevention procedures; and emergency preparedness and response.

Human-wildlife conflicts are a major threat to wildlife populations and the livelihoods of smallholder farmers given the prevalence of crop-raiding by different animal species (elephants and monkeys, among others), which can drastically reduce income and food security of rural communities, producing negative perceptions towards wildlife and perpetuating poverty. As noted above, these have become increasingly common in Gabon as its human population continues to grow, which is why this standard has been triggered.

### **3.2.6. Standard on Pest Management**

WWF-funded projects are not allowed to procure or use formulated products that are in World Health Organization (WHO) Classes IA and IB, or formulations of products in Class II, unless there are restrictions that are likely to deny use or access by lay personnel and others without training or proper equipment. The project will follow the recommendations and minimum standards as described in the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides and its associated technical guidelines, and procure only pesticides, along with suitable protective and application equipment, that will permit pest management actions to be carried out with well-defined and minimal risk to health, environment, and livelihoods.

The project will not fund nor include the promotion or usage of pesticides. Thus, this standard is not triggered by the project.

### **3.2.7. Standard on Cultural Resources**

This Standard ensures that Cultural Resources are appropriately preserved and their destruction, damage or loss is appropriately avoided. Physical cultural resources (PCR) include archaeological, paleontological, historical, architectural, and sacred sites including graveyards, burial sites, of unique natural values. Intangible cultural resources include traditional ecological knowledge, performing arts, oral traditions and expressions, traditional craftsmanship and social practices, rituals and events. The impacts on cultural resources resulting from project activities, including mitigating measures, may not contravene either the recipient country’s national legislation or its obligations under relevant international environmental treaties and agreements.

This standard has been triggered because forests are important for many Indigenous Peoples in Gabon for cultural practices and resources, in addition to relying on them for hunting and farming. The field visits and consultations revealed that some Protected Areas contain ancestral villages and ritual sites of

invaluable cultural wealth (e.g. Minkébé and Ivindo). Moreover, IPLCs have also detailed ecological knowledge, traditional conservation practices and a strong spiritual and physical link to the rainforest. As the project's specific activities and locations become better defined, further screening will be conducted to ensure there are no negative impacts on physical and cultural resources at the time of implementation.

### **3.2.8. Standard on Grievance Mechanisms**

Project-affected communities and other interested stakeholders may raise a grievance at any time to the CTF and WWF. The CTF will be responsible for informing project-affected parties about the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism. Contact information of the CTF and WWF will be made publicly available. Relevant details are also provided in the Grievance Redress section of this ESMF/PF/IPPF.

The WWF Standard on Grievance Mechanisms is not intended to replace project- and country-level dispute resolution and redress mechanisms. This mechanism is designed to: address potential breaches of WWF's policies and procedures in a gender-responsive manner; be independent, transparent, and effective; be survivor-centered and offer protections to those reporting SEAH-related grievances; be accessible to project-affected people; keep complainants abreast of progress of cases brought forward; and maintain records on all cases and issues brought forward for review.

### **3.2.9. Standard on Public Consultation and Disclosure**

This standard requires meaningful consultation with relevant stakeholders, occurring as early as possible and throughout the project cycle. It requires the Project Team to provide relevant information in a timely manner and in a form and language that are understandable and accessible to diverse stakeholders. This standard also requires that information concerning environmental and social issues relevant to the project is disclosed for at least 30 days prior to implementation, and 45 days if the Indigenous Peoples Standard has been triggered. WWF will disclose safeguards documentation on its Safeguards Resources web page. The final safeguards documents should be published on national websites of the Implementing Agencies and made available locally in specific locations. The project is also required to locally release all final key safeguards documents via hardcopy, translated into the local language and in a culturally appropriate manner, to facilitate awareness by relevant stakeholders that the information is in the public domain for review.

### **3.2.10. Standard on Stakeholder Engagement**

This standard ensures that WWF is committed to meaningful, effective and informed stakeholder engagement in the design and implementation of all GEF and GCF projects. WWF's commitment to stakeholder engagement arises from internal standards such as WWF's Project and Program Standards (PPMS), as well as WWF's commitment to international instruments such as United Nations Declaration on Indigenous People (UNDRIP). Stakeholder engagement is an overarching term that encompasses a range of activities and interactions with stakeholders throughout the project cycle and is an essential aspect of good project management. The project has prepared a Stakeholder Engagement Plan that will be implemented during the project.

### **3.2.11. Guidance Note on Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment**

All over the world, it is estimated that one in three women and girls experience GBV during her lifetime. A recent study conducted by IUCN, in collaboration with USAID as part of Advancing Gender in the Environment (AGENT), states that forms of GBV (ranging from sexual, physical and psychological violence, to trafficking, sexual harassment, sexual coercion and in some cases rape) can be linked to environmental issues.

Many projects implemented by WWF relate to effective management of protected areas and the landscapes in which they are located through support to law enforcement, patrolling and better

management and restoration of landscapes by restricting access to natural resources. These activities can potentially give rise to GBV/SEAH risks where government-employed law enforcement officials/rangers/guards supported by the project may misuse the power of their positions by sexually exploiting women in local communities. This is a particular risk if women are collecting water or natural resources in a protected area. As another example, projects that promote alternative livelihoods, particularly ones that improve women's empowerment and decision making, can often lead to changes in power dynamics within communities and increase the risks of GBV/SEAH toward those empowered women.

GBV and SEAH in the implementation of WWF activities in projects and programs is unacceptable and requires timely, proportional, and appropriate action. WWF recognizes that to achieve biodiversity conservation it is vital to promote gender equality and make every effort to ensure that project activities implemented by WWF respect integrity and human rights and mitigate any risk that gives rise to discriminatory and exploitative gender inequalities. WWF does support projects in areas where there is civil war, ethnic conflict, and insurgencies where there are existing GBV/SEAH risks. WWF therefore needs to understand these risks in order to avoid exacerbating local conditions that contribute to GBV/SEAH, which would undermine any conservation outcomes the project may seek to achieve.

For WWF projects, including GEF and GCF projects, under the Standard on Community Health and Security, the project team should identify any potential GBV/SEAH risks by screening proposed project activities using the following questions:

- Is there a risk that the project could pose a greater burden on women by restricting the use, development, and protection of natural resources by women compared with that of men?
- Is there a risk that persons employed by or engaged directly in the project might engage in gender-based violence (including sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment)?
- Does the project increase the risk of GBV and/or SEAH for women and girls, for example by changing resource use practices?
- Does any mandated training for any individuals associated with the project (including project staff, government park rangers and guards, other park staff, consultants, partner organizations and contractors) cover GBV/SEAH (along with human rights, etc.)?

The identification of GBV/SEAH risks in a project is normally undertaken as part of project preparation and could be conducted during community/stakeholder consultations together with identifying potential risks and screening impacts on vulnerable groups, community health, safety and security, labor and working conditions, gender equality issues, and any other social or environmental risks. Any potential GB V/SE AH risk identified during this stage would be factored into the project's overall social risk, which, in turn, is factored into the overall environmental and social risk associated with a project.

### **3.2.12. Guidance Note on Labor and Working Conditions**

As a conservation organization, WWF does not typically fund large infrastructure activities in conservation projects implemented by WWF's GEF and GCF Agency and therefore does not directly adversely impact labor and working conditions. However, WWF GCF Agency projects do implement projects in the forestry, agriculture and fisheries sectors, which may have potential unintended adverse impacts. This is mostly seen in financing activities necessary for strengthening protected area management systems, including construction of protected area administrative buildings, watch towers, or accommodations for park guards.

In such cases, these activities are usually executed by third party contractors who employ construction workers including sub-contractors. In such cases, WWF will ensure that any funding for such activities complies with WWF's Environment and Social Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP) and

more specifically international labor and working condition standards such as the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and any relevant local labor standards of the project specific countries.

This Guidance Note provides detailed guidance of reasonable precautions to implement in managing principal risks to occupational health and safety. The following is based on the IFC's Environmental, Health, and Safety Guidelines (April 30, 2007), and covers the following general thematic areas:

1. General Facility Design and Operation

- a. Integrity of Workplace Structures
- b. Severe Weather and Facility Shutdown
- c. Workspace and Exit
- d. Fire Precautions
- e. Lavatories and Showers
- f. Potable Water Supply
- g. Clean Eating Area
- h. Lighting
- i. Safe Access
- j. First Aid
- k. Air Supply
- l. Work Environment Temperature

2. Training

- a. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Training

3. Physical Hazards

- a. Rotating and Moving Equipment
- b. Rotating and Moving Equipment
- c. Vibration
- d. Electrical
- e. Eye Hazards
- f. Welding / Hot Work
- g. Industrial Vehicle Driving and Site Traffic
- h. Working Environment Temperature
- i. Ergonomics, Repetitive Motion, Manual Handling
- j. Working at Heights
- k. Illumination

4. Standards for Workers Living Conditions

- a. General living facilities
- b. Drainage
- c. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation and light
- d. Water
- e. Wastewater and solid waste
- f. Rooms/dormitories facilities
- g. Bed arrangements and storage facilities
- h. Sanitary and toilet facilities
- i. Toilet facilities

- j. Showers/bathrooms and other sanitary facilities
- k. Canteen, cooking and laundry facilities
- l. Medical facilities
- m. Leisure, social and telecommunications facilities

### **3.2.13. Guidance Note on Projects Relating to Dams**

In many river basins, WWF's freshwater conservation work is affected by the development of new dams or by the operations of existing dams. WWF is opposed to unsustainable dams that do not adhere to internationally recognized principles and criteria for good practice. WWF advocates that (1) no dams be built in, or affect, areas of high conservation value; (2) alternatives be fully considered before decisions are made to build new dams; and (3) principles, tools,<sup>14</sup> and inclusive, transparent processes be applied that make the best possible choices regarding the management of existing dams and development of new dams.

WWF actively works to assess existing dams to minimize impacts and maximize benefits and to reduce the demand for new dams. WWF advocates for improvement of operational management for environmental benefits at existing dams, through related policies, plans, or regulations. This can include:

- Establishing environmental flow regimes to restore ecological functions downstream of a dam by mimicking natural variability in river flows. Work may include assessment of environmental flow requirements, hydrological studies, design of reservoir releases, and policy work;
- Promoting retrofitting dams or infrastructure to improve performance and reduce need for new infrastructure;
- Promoting adaptation of existing infrastructure to allow for improved environmental performance; and
- Promoting decommissioning or removal of hazardous or obsolete dams.

### **Dam Safety**

Given the above instances, and in line with WWF Network's position on dams, WWF can:

- For GEF and GCF projects, partner with a GEF and GCF Implementing Agency that is accredited for Safety of Dams safeguards to jointly support such efforts, so long as the other agency's safeguards system is applied for the entire project;
- Implement projects that involve working with the government or relevant sector on strategic river basin planning, with the goal of restricting or concentrating dams to appropriate rivers and watersheds of lower conservation value (e.g., already altered);
- Implement projects that result in recommendations for environmental flow requirements for a stream or river (e.g., timing, volume, duration);
- Implement projects that involve working with governments to ensure better regulation of hydropower sector;
- Implement projects that build capacity in the hydropower sector and government ministries to improve environmental-based approaches/tools for sustainable development; and
- Implement small or minor water infrastructure work whose impact is deemed not to trigger Safety of Dams safeguards through WWF's Policy on Environment and Social Risk Management

### **3.2.14. Guidance Note on Ranger Principles**

Rangers play a key role in protecting wildlife, managing protected areas, and resolving human-wildlife conflict. Rangers must act within the law and under high ethical standards in order to achieve positive outcomes from both people and nature. WWF only supports legitimate law enforcement activities that



are carried out in a way that respects and protects the human rights of local communities and Indigenous Peoples. Certain measures are in place to uphold WWF's high ethical standards, including a risk assessment, mitigation actions, and continuous monitoring throughout implementation.<sup>20</sup> Rangers are expected to adhere to the following principles:

1. Act within the law.
2. Ensure accountability.
3. Build ranger capacity
4. Support the welfare of rangers and their families.
5. Partner with local communities.
6. Identify, monitor and plan for challenges.
7. Maintain impartiality.
8. Communicate regularly.
9. Sanctions for malfeasance.

### **3.3. Gaps between Gabon laws and policies and the WWF's SIPP**

The following section compares the applicable elements of WWF's SIPP and national laws and requirements. There are a few differences between the two systems, as discussed below. In all cases of conflict or discrepancy, the requirements of the WWF will prevail.

One of the key gaps relates to the standard on Indigenous Peoples rights. The Constitution of Gabon grants members of indigenous ethnic groups the same civil rights as other citizens, but there is no specific national legal instrument focused on Indigenous Peoples. Even though, Gabon voted in favor of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in 2007, there is no requirement for applying FPIC principles when consulting with Indigenous Peoples. WWF adheres to a policy of FPIC based on International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). WWF When a project identifies impacts on indigenous peoples, WWF requires the development of an action plan (Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP)).

The other key gap relates to the management of Environmental and Social Risk. WWF requires Environmental and Social screening of projects. The screening outputs result in a project being designated as Category A (which then requires a full or comprehensive Environment and Social Impact Assessment), or as Category B (which then requires a partial Environment and Social Impact Assessment is required), or Category C (no further assessment is required). In Gabon, the Decree 539/PR/MEFEPEPN of 15<sup>th</sup> July 2005 about Environmental Impact Studies make environmental assessment mandatory for any project likely to harm the environment. The decree defines the classification of projects into two (2) categories, namely Category A: activities subject to an environmental impact study. environment and Category B: activities subject to an environmental impact notice. The criteria that define Category A and Category B projects are not the same from WWF to Gabon.

For the purposes of this project, Addressing Outstanding Barriers and Leveraging Durable Financial Mechanisms to Achieve Target 3 in Gabon, as well as the GEF 7 Project - Enduring Earth (*Accelerating Sustainable Finance Solutions to Achieve Durable Conservation*) in Gabon, the provisions of the WWF's ESSF and SIPP shall prevail over Gabon legislation in all cases of discrepancy.

## **ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

<sup>20</sup> See [Ranger Principles document](#) for more details.

This section outlines potential adverse environmental and social impacts that may result from project activities. Project components 1, 3, and 4 are not expected to have any noticeable environmental impacts, the nature of activities being primarily planning and engagement processes with no direct impact on the ground. Component 2, however, involves a range of activities with the potential for environmental and social impact.

Under Component 2, Outcome 2.1: Improved coexistence between humans and key wildlife conflict species in select areas, through IPLC-led evidence-based approaches has both social and environmental impacts.

Specifically, Outcome 2.1 involves a range of activities geared towards:

- Capacity building of Government agencies for effective management of Protected Areas,
- Capacity strengthening to enable meaningful participation by local communities in conservation and HWC planning,
- Socioeconomic surveys and FPIC consultations in the project landscape
- Development of site-specific HWC strategies in communities in and around four PAs to mitigate HWC and achieve improved effective management these of protected areas.

The social and environmental impacts and mitigation measures are described in the sections below:

### **3.4. Adverse Environmental Impacts**

**3.4.1. Component 2 - Improved coexistence between humans and key wildlife conflict species in select areas, through IPLC-led evidence-based approaches** The adverse environmental impact is summarized below:

The project will work with PFP staff to develop site specific conservation management plans that incorporate HWC in communities in and around four protected areas. These management plans will have provisions for community livelihood or cultural interventions within or near the nationally protected parks, many of which are recognized as Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA). If those field-based interventions are not properly designed and managed, there could be impacts on Critical Habitats and adverse impacts to the fauna and/or flora species living in these KBAs and the ecosystems that support them.

### 3.5. Environmental Mitigation Measures

Table 3. Anticipated Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Project Activity	Potential impact	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsible party
<b>Component 2: IPLC led HWC Solutions</b>			
<b>Outcome 2.1. Improved coexistence between humans and key wildlife conflict species in select areas, through IPLC-led evidence-based approaches</b>			
<p><b>Activities:</b> As a part of project startup, the project will undertake a socioeconomic study in communities in and around the four project PAs. This study will inform the project on the demographics of the various communities as well as the type of HWC experienced and successful/unsuccessful mitigation measures taken to date. This information will then be used develop IPLC led HWC strategies that will be integrated into conservation management plans and will be designed, implemented, monitored, and reported on by IPLCs.</p>	<p>The conservation management plans that will be established for the protected areas will have provisions for community livelihood or cultural interventions within or near the National Parks, many of which are recognized as Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA). If those field-based interventions are not properly designed and managed, there could be adverse impacts to the fauna and/or flora species living in these KBAs and the ecosystems that support them.</p>	<p>During the implementation, further social and environmental screening will be completed for HWC project interventions. This will allow the Project to make decisions on the best course of action with regards to siting the planned interventions.</p> <p>The Project will assess the level of risk to biodiversity and ecosystem services of field-based interventions. The assessment will confirm whether endangered, vulnerable or critically endangered species are found at the project’s intervention sites, as well as the ecosystem services that could be impacted.</p> <p>Depending on the level of the risk, the assessment will lead to an action plan to address the biodiversity risks and ensure that i) there are no measurable adverse impacts on the area’s biodiversity values and supporting ecological processes, ii) no reduction in Vulnerable, Endangered, or Critically Endangered species, and iii) any lesser impacts are appropriately mitigated, and net gains of relevant biodiversity values.</p>	<p>TNC</p>

### **3.6. Adverse Social Impacts**

#### **3.6.1. Outcome 2.1: Improved coexistence between humans and key wildlife conflict species in select areas, through IPLC-led evidence-based approaches**

The adverse social impacts of this outcome are summarized below:

- Project implementation partners (e.g. Government agencies and sub-grantees) lack the necessary awareness and competency to meet their obligations in the project, especially those related to social and environmental safeguarding. This fact could negatively impact the implementation of the project.
- Violence and human rights violations perpetrated against IPLCs, during enforcement support by Rangers or Conservation Officers from ANPN. These personnel could also be confronting heavily armed poachers, thus exposing them to significant occupational health and safety risks.
- Full participation of potentially affected stakeholders, including IPLCs in the implementation of the Project is essential. However, because of logistical and/or cultural barriers, there is a risk that consultations with IPLCs may not be comprehensive, thus negatively impacting the project outcomes.
- The project interventions might perpetuate existing or lead to new discriminations against IPLCs and other marginalized groups.
- HWC strategies run by IPLCs and sponsored/supported by the Project could potentially involve practices that fail to comply with national and/or international standards regarding child labor.
- The project interventions might perpetuate existing or lead to new discriminations against women in their access to project benefits. The low knowledge of the formal law within rural communities, and the ambiguous customary practices, promote gender discrimination on accessing and controlling land. There is also a risk that women will be under-represented in project interventions.
- Almost all communities living in or near the National Parks are subject to HWC. Such conflicts negatively affect the livelihoods and safety of many communities. The improved management of the existing park may exacerbate these conflicts and grow frustration amongst the community members.
- Project-affected people (PAP), including IPLCs, might not be able to effectively claim their rights, raise their concerns or file grievances, due to limiting factors and barriers. Such barriers include, but are not limited to, awareness, logistics, language, culture, literacy, and technology. Moreover, the grievances that were effectively filed by the IPLCs (mostly related to damages to crop field by elephants) are not being timely and appropriately addressed. If the concerns, grievances and/or objections raised by the PAPs are not properly addressed, the achievement of the Project's objectives could be jeopardized.
- The enhancement of existing PAs may restrict communities from accessing certain territories for their livelihood.
- The field consultations revealed that there are Cultural Heritage sites inside some existing National Parks (e.g. Minkébé, Ivindo) traditionally used by Indigenous People. Access of Indigenous People to those cultural heritage sites is restricted by the park.
- The absence of a clear, physical materialization of the boundaries of the National Parks *and* their buffer zones creates confusion and is a source of constant conflict between the Conservation Officers and the communities, including indigenous Peoples.

### 3.7. Social Mitigation Measures

Table 4. Anticipated Social Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Project Activity	Potential impact	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsible party
<b>Component 2: Improved coexistence between humans and key wildlife conflict species in select areas, through IPLC-led evidence-based approaches</b>			
Socioeconomic study to be undertaken in project communities as a part of project startup. This study will inform the project on the demographics of the various communities as well as the type of HWC experienced and successful/unsuccessful mitigation measures taken to date. This information will then be used develop IPLC led HWC strategies that will be integrated into conservation management plans and will be designed, implemented, monitored, and reported on by IPLCs.	Project implementation partners (e.g. Government agencies and potential sub-grantees) lack the necessary awareness and competency to meet their obligations in the project, especially those related social and environmental safeguarding. This fact could negatively impact the implementation of the project and thus needs to guide the development of the strengthening plan and training for said partners.	<p>The project will assess capacities of third parties and will provide training and/or workshops to build the capacity of key project implementation partners and equip them with necessary knowledge and tools needed to achieve the objectives of the Project effectively and efficiently, in line with WWF’s SIPP.</p> <p>Such capacity building activities will include a combination of the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WWF’s Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP)</li> <li>• Stakeholder Engagement</li> <li>• Indigenous People and Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC)</li> <li>• Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment,</li> <li>• Human Rights</li> </ul>	TNC
	Violence and human rights violations perpetrated against Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, during enforcement support by Rangers or Conservation Officers from ANPN.  These personnel could also be confronting heavily armed poachers, thus exposing them to significant occupational health and safety risks.	As part of the capacity building program, the project will provide dedicated training to enforcement personnel (e.g. Rangers, Conservation Officers from ANPN) on Ranger Principles and Human Rights, which will make a strong emphasis on the fact that no human rights violations should be perpetrated during enforcement support and regular management of the Protected Areas. The training will also include topics such as de-escalation, conflict management and evacuation protocols.	TNC

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Project Activity	Potential impact	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsible party
	<p>Full participation of potentially affected stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples, in the implementation of the Project is critical. However, because of logistical and/or cultural barriers, there is a risk that consultations with IPLCs may not be comprehensive, thus negatively impacting the project outcome</p>	<p>The Project has developed a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), which informs on (a) means used to inform and involve affected people in the assessment process; and (b) summary of stakeholder engagement plan for meaningful, effective consultations during project implementation, including identification of milestones for consultations, information disclosure, and periodic reporting on progress on project implementation. The Project will implement recommendations in the SEP.</p> <p>Some of those measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporation of views of women and other relevant groups (minorities, elderly, young other marginalized groups).</li> <li>• Respect for indigenous peoples’ rights, including their rights to FPIC processes and to tenure over traditional territories.</li> <li>• Project disclosure and ongoing communications with stakeholders.</li> <li>• Training and capacity building across project partners, affected and interested stakeholders.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the project will hire two full time officers to engage with communities during the design and implementation phases of the HWC strategies/interventions.</p>	TNC
	<p>The project interventions might perpetuate existing or lead to new discriminations against Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized groups</p>	<p>The Project will ensure that, if present, Indigenous Peoples are represented and consulted in all relevant activities.</p> <p>The Project will ensure that the voices of all members of the communities are actively represented.</p>	TNC

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Project Activity	Potential impact	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsible party
	<p>HWC activities (e.g. agriculture, fisheries, etc.) run by IPLCs and sponsored/supported by the Project could potentially involve practices that fail to comply with national and/or international standards regarding child labor.</p>	<p>Risks associated with child labor and its prevalence in each project intervention site will be further assessed during the project implementation phase and addressed as appropriate mitigation measures, in line with WWF SIPP and other relevant policies and guidance.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Project will develop a Labor Management Procedure that will set out the conditions in which project intervention will employ and use labor. Some of the mitigation measures it might list include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written labor management procedures are established in accordance with applicable national laws and international best practice</li> <li>• Appropriate measures are in place to prevent child labor and protect children of working age.</li> </ul>	<p>TNC</p>

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Project Activity	Potential impact	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsible party
	<p>The project interventions might perpetuate existing or lead to new discriminations against women in their access to project benefits. The low knowledge of the formal law within rural communities, and the ambiguous customary practices, promote gender discrimination on accessing and controlling land. There is also a risk that women will be under-represented in project interventions</p>	<p>A Gender Analysis and Action Plan (GAAP) have been developed and will be regularly updated, implemented, and monitored during the full project. The Project will implement recommendation in the GAAP, some of which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening and development of staff capacities in gender and concepts, gender analysis, gender-responsive budgeting,</li> <li>• Development of a project Gender Strategy with an operational action plan</li> <li>• Mapping of all project stakeholders taking into account gender, based on the mapping of the actors done in the baseline study</li> <li>• Integrating gender into communication and project reporting</li> <li>• Supporting economic activities (improvement of crop and fish yields, etc.)</li> <li>• Strengthening entrepreneurship and income-generating activities</li> <li>• Strengthening the leadership of women and girls</li> </ul>	TNC
	<p>Almost all communities living in or near the National Parks are subject to HWC. Such conflicts negatively affect the livelihoods and safety of many communities. The improved management of parks will exacerbate these conflicts and increase frustration in the communities.</p>	<p>The Project will develop and implement a HWC mitigation program, following widely-recognized IUCN Best Practices guidelines or similar, to ensure that efforts to manage human–wildlife conflicts are pursued through well-informed, holistic and collaborative processes that take into account underlying social, cultural and economic contexts.</p> <p>The aforementioned program will be developed collaboratively with appropriate stakeholders, particularly IPLCs.</p>	TNC



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Project Activity	Potential impact	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsible party
	<p>Project-affected people (PAP), including Indigenous Peoples, might not be able to effectively claim their rights, raise their concerns or file grievances, due to limiting factors and barriers. Such barriers include, but are not limited to, awareness, logistics, language, culture, literacy, and technology.</p> <p>Moreover, the grievances that were effectively filed by IPLCs (mostly related to damages to crop field by elephants) are not being timely and appropriately addressed.</p> <p>If the concerns, grievances and/or objections raised by the PAPs are not properly addressed, the achievement of the Project's objectives could be jeopardized.</p>	<p>The Project will deploy the Grievance Mechanism included in the ESMF (see below).</p> <p>More importantly, the Project will widely and effectively inform the stakeholders about the existence of the mechanism and how to use it. The information shared will be adapted to each target audience (such as women, youth, IPs) and disseminated by means accessible to these groups.</p>	TNC

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Project Activity	Potential impact	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsible party
Design and implementation of IPLC focused HWC strategies.	Improved PA management will restrict communities from accessing certain territories for their livelihood.	<p>Any restrictions in access to land and resources, even temporary ones, should be based on free and prior informed consultations (FPIC) with affected communities and relevant authorities.</p> <p>If the agreed access restrictions negatively impact sources of economic income or other types of livelihoods of affected communities, appropriate alternative means of livelihoods or compensation shall be provided to all affected individuals, irrespective of their formal land title.</p> <p>The Project will carry out a screening, then a social assessment. Based on the finding of the screening and the social assessment, a Livelihood Restoration Plans (LRP) will be prepared in consultation with affected peoples and stakeholders.</p>	TNC

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Project Activity	Potential impact	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsible party
	<p>The field consultations undertaken during the GEF 7 PFP project development revealed that there are Cultural Heritage sites inside some existing National Parks (e.g. Minkébé) traditionally used by Indigenous People. Access of Indigenous People to those cultural heritage sites is restricted by the park.</p> <p>Because no studies were done before the creation of the current 13 National Parks of Gabon, there is a risk that cultural heritage sites might be found in other National Parks.</p> <p>Without proper studies and consultation, the creation of new parks could also lead to having cultural heritage sites within their boundaries.</p>	<p>In conjunction with the GEF 7 PFP project, this Project will initiate consultations with Government Officials and Indigenous People to ascertain the existence of the Cultural Heritage sites inside the boundaries of each of the four project National Parks.</p> <p>Furthermore, this project will collaborate with the Cultural Heritage consultant hired as a part of the GEF 7 PFP project to undertake a review of all the cultural heritage sites currently located inside the boundaries of each of the four project National Parks. The consultant will provide guidance on the process, and all consultation with Indigenous People will follow FPIC approach.</p> <p>If the sites are replicable, the Project will initiate a replication process outside of the park boundaries. If the sites are not replicable, the Project will facilitate discussions and negotiations between Government Officials, and Indigenous People in order to negotiate access of the Indigenous People to their cultural heritage site.</p>	TNC

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Project Activity	Potential impact	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsible party
	<p>The absence of physical materialization of the boundaries of the National Parks and their buffer zones creates confusion and is a source of constant conflict between the Conservation Officers and the communities, including indigenous Peoples.</p>	<p>As a part of the GEF 7 PFP project, this project will support the materialization (demarcation) of the boundaries of the National Parks and their buffer zones.</p> <p>The boundaries of the parks remain undefined, causing conflicts between the local communities and the parks' managers.</p> <p>Main activities for the materialization would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory meetings for mapping and materialization of the boundary, based on the interpretation of the law, will be organized between local communities and the Project and Management Team of the Park.</li> <li>• Field trip of a mixed team made up of conservation experts, anti-poaching brigade and local communities to demarcate the boundary of the parks and/or buffer zones.</li> <li>• Training workshops for the benefit of the local populations in order to raise their awareness of the soundness and benefits of demarcation.</li> <li>• Workshops with the traditional authorities to discuss the interpretation of the law in order to facilitate its implementation.</li> <li>• Acquisition and deployment of adequate materials for the materialization of the borders.</li> <li>• Conservation actions will be identified and developed for selected community groups.</li> </ul>	<p>TNC</p>

### **3.8. Process Framework: Livelihood Restoration Measures**

The development of site-specific HWC strategies may result in restrictions of access to livelihoods and natural resources for local communities. Any change of land use, sea use or new zonation should be based on free and prior informed consultations of the affected communities and relevant authorities, which should be carried out prior to finalizing any usage changes.

If such a change negatively impacts sources of economic income or other types of livelihoods of affected communities, full and timely compensation shall be provided to all affected individuals, irrespective of their formal land title. All affected communities and households around the project-supported areas will be provided with opportunities to restore their livelihoods to at least pre-project levels.

Livelihoods-related support during project implementation will be provided to the households (HH) of all communities impacted by project-induced restrictions of access to natural and community resources within the targeted areas. This process will be organized in the following manner:

- Screening

The Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer at the PMU will undertake screening of all planned activities for likely restrictions of access and use for local communities. This will include both communities that reside in project-affected areas as well as nomadic/seasonal users who have traditional and historical ties to the project landscape.

- Social assessment

If the screening confirms and identifies households affected due to access restriction to natural resources, a social assessment (SA) process based on participatory consultations with affected peoples will be carried out. The SA will generate the necessary baseline information on demographics, social, cultural, and economic characteristics of affected communities, as well as the land and territories that they have traditionally owned or customarily used or occupied, and the natural resources on which they depend. The SA will assess potential impacts and the extent of restriction of access to resources along with suitable mitigation and enhancement measures including options for alternative access to similar resources.

- Livelihood Restoration Plans

Based on the findings of the screening and social assessment, Livelihood Restoration Plans (LRP) will be prepared in consultation with affected peoples and stakeholders which will provide tailored livelihood support and benefit sharing for affected persons, groups and communities.

The LRPs will be site-specific and include the following issues: (i) identifying and ranking of site-specific impacts; (ii) setting out criteria and eligibility for livelihood assistance; (iii) outlining the rights of persons who have been either customarily or legally/illegally using forest, water or land resources for subsistence to be respected; (iv) identifying and describing available mitigation measures alternatives, taking into account the provisions of applicable local legislation, the available measures for mitigation promoted via project activities and any additional sound alternatives proposed by the affected persons; (v) outlining specific procedures on how compensation can be obtained.

- Mitigation measures as part of the LRPs

Participatory and inclusive consultations should be carried out with affected communities, individuals, and stakeholders to agree on the allocation of alternative livelihood. Eligibility criteria should be established according to guidelines provided in Section 4.5 Process Framework. Alternative livelihood schemes should be discussed, agreed upon and provided for affected persons/ groups. The livelihood options to be built on and be based upon the traditional skills, knowledge, practices and the culture/world view of the affected peoples/groups and persons. Affected persons should be provided project-related livelihood support and other opportunities as part of the planned project activities.

These may include activities implemented as part of Output 1.1.2: “Conservation plan, community engagement plan and financial model for Gabon.” An accessible and efficient grievance redress mechanism should be established and made functional (see Chapter 5.9 of this ESMF/PF/IPPF).

Special attention should be made to tailoring these mitigation measures to the needs of IP groups, in line with the guidelines provided in Chapter 4.5 of this ESMF/PF/IPPF. While some of them may be interested in the mitigation measures outlined above, others may necessitate an alternative approach (e.g., allocation of alternative agricultural areas or preserving access to wood collection, fishing, hunting, etc.). Any proposed measures should be closely coordinated with PAPs to ensure that they fully reflect their needs and priorities.

- **Compensation**

In case that compensation is awarded, it shall be agreed upon as part of a FPIC process. In cases where monetary compensation is awarded, it shall be calculated based on the replacement value of these livelihoods (economic market value plus any replacement costs) in a participatory manner and following FPIC, by community representatives and the Safeguards Specialist, in collaboration with relevant Government Officials and Local Authorities. In cases where compensation will consist of the allocation of alternative resources (e.g., alternative agricultural areas), measures will include identification of these resources with the active involvement of the affected persons/communities and assistance to access these resources. This should also be determined as part of an FPIC process. Detailed procedures on how compensation should be calculated and awarded should be provided in each site-specific LRP based on local conditions.

### **3.9. Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF)**

#### **3.9.1. IP Population of Project Sites**

Gabon covers an area of approximately 26.7 million hectares and maintains some of the largest remaining rainforest in West Africa. Indigenous hunter-gatherer communities (known variously as the Baka, Bakoya, Bagama, Babongo, etc.) are located throughout Gabon, and include numerous ethnic groups separated by locality, language and culture. According to Massandé (2005), the Pygmy populations number as many as 20,005 out of a total national population of approximately 1,400,000 (previous estimates 7,000-10,000). Due to colonial-initiated “regroupement” (resettlement) programs, many of these communities have settlements by the roadside, yet their livelihoods and cultures remain inextricably tied to the forest areas of the country.

Throughout Gabon, there are also hunter/gatherer communities (often called Pygmies) comprising numerous ethnic groups (Baka, Babongo, Bakoya, Baghame, Barimba, Akoula, Akwoa, etc.) with different languages, cultures and geographical locations. The Pygmy communities live both in the towns and in the forest. Their livelihoods and their cultures are inextricably linked to the forest, which covers 85% of Gabon. According to official data stated during a conference in Libreville on 27 April 2017, there are now some 16,162 Pygmies living across the national territory. The Baka live in Woleu-Ntem, particularly in the seven villages of Minvoul, and they number between 373 and 683 individuals. Other Baka have also been noted in Makokou, and upstream of Ivindo. They number some 866 individuals.

There are also Bakoya living in Ivindo, in Djouah (north) and Loué (east) districts of Zadié department (Mékambo). They number some 1,618 individuals across Ogooué-Ivindo. The greatest concentration of Pygmies is found among the Babongo of Lopé (Ogooué-Lolo), estimated at 708 individuals, but also the Bakouyi (Mulundu) and Babongo of Koulamoutou, Pana and Iboundji, numbering some 2,325. To these statistics must be added the Babongo or Akoula of Haut-Ogooué (4,075 individuals) and those in Ngounié and Nyanga, 4,442 individuals. To complete this geographical tour of Gabon’s ethnolinguistic Pygmy communities, there are the Bavarama and Barimba in Nyanga (2,263 persons)

and the Akowa (Port-Gentil, Omboue and Gamba) who account for around 327 individuals. These Indigenous Peoples hold a unique position in wider Gabonese society as a result of their specialist knowledge in forest resources. With the current trends in timber extraction, and the anticipated ecological and social effects, this knowledge base and their way of life are severely threatened.

More information on IPs and the sites where they can be found will become available as the project advances into its implementation phase.

### **3.9.2. Project Impacts on IPs Groups**

The potential impacts on Indigenous Peoples include:

- Violence and human rights violations perpetrated against Indigenous Peoples, during enforcement support by Rangers or Conservation Officers from ANPN.
- Discriminations against Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized groups (e.g. exclusion from Local Management Advisory Committees that will be created).
- Non participation of Indigenous Peoples, in meetings and decision-making processes
- The project interventions might perpetuate existing or lead to new discriminations against women, including Indigenous Women.
- Human-wildlife conflicts negatively affect the livelihoods and safety of many communities.
- Indigenous Peoples might not be able to effectively claim their rights, raise their concerns or file grievances, due to limiting factors and barriers. Such barriers include, but are not limited to, awareness, logistics, language, culture, literacy, and technology.
- Grievances filed by the Indigenous Peoples not being timely and appropriately addressed.
- Restricted access of Indigenous Peoples to certain territories due to the presence/creation of protected areas, thus impacting their livelihood.
- Access of Indigenous People to those cultural heritage sites located inside some National Parks (e.g. Minkebe, Ivindo) is restricted by the park.
- The absence of physical materialization of the boundaries of the National Parks and their buffer zones creates confusion and is a source of constant conflict between the Conservation Officers and the Indigenous Peoples.

### **3.9.3. Mitigation Planning**

At this point in time, the exact impacts of the project activities as described in section 3.9.2. cannot be determined. Much will depend on the design of key outputs. Furthermore, given that only a subset of potential project intervention sites was visited during the field consultations for the GEF 7 project and the additional consultations for the GBFF project were conducted in Libreville, further verification will be required throughout all the project landscapes to provide a definitive conclusion with regards to the presence of Indigenous People.

At this stage, therefore, mitigation planning would generally need to consider the following:

- In conjunction with their involvement for the co-design of the HWC strategies, regular consultations will be held with the IPs, including the women, to seek their informed participation both in assessing potential impacts and in designing mitigation measures and project intervention at all stages of project preparation and implementation. To achieve this information exchange, focus group discussions, awareness raising events, workshops, and distribution of pamphlets in local language will be carried out.
- Where potential negative impacts are expected, the scope and impact of these impacts should be assessed, and appropriate mitigation measures designed.
- Where IP groups may be affected, site specific Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPPs, see below) should be prepared considering best options and approaches that are in accordance with the

needs and interests of affected individuals and communities. Specifically, the social and cultural context of affected IPs and their traditional skill and knowledge in natural resource management should be considered in this regard.

- Community organizations, NGOs, and other stakeholders experienced in executing IP development plans or projects will be engaged to prepare these IPP's.
- The IPPs should provide a set of indicators for periodic monitoring of the progress of planned activities incorporated in the plans in order to confirm their effectiveness, and to plan and undertake alternative measures as appropriate.
- The project will allocate sufficient budget for the implementation of the IPP's as well as develop a financing plan to ensure smooth transitioning after project closure.

#### **3.9.4. Steps for Formulating an IPP**

WWF's Standard on Indigenous People requires that, regardless of whether Project affected IPs are affected adversely or positively, an IPP needs to be prepared with care and with the full and effective participation of affected communities.

The requirements include screening to confirm and identify affected IP groups in the project areas, social analysis to improve the understanding of the local context and affected communities; a process of free, prior, and informed consent with the affected IPs' communities in order to fully identify their views and to obtain their broad community support to the project; and development of project-specific measures to avoid adverse impacts and enhance culturally appropriate benefits.

Minimum requirements for projects working in areas with IPs are:

- Identification of IP groups through screening;
- Assessment of project impacts;
- Consultations with affected IP communities following FPIC principles and obtain their broad community support;
- Development of sites specific IPs plan (IPP) to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits; and
- In activities with no impacts, the requirements could be limited to consultations during implementation to keep local communities informed about project activities and documentation of all consultations held.

#### **3.9.5. Social Assessments**

WWF's Standard on Indigenous People requires screening for IPs to assess risks and opportunities and to improve the understanding of the local context and affected communities. The Project level ESS Screening – the *Safeguards Eligibility and Impacts Screening Form* (Annex 1 of this ESMF) - is completed yearly during the Annual Workplan development to screen for and assess these risks and opportunities.

The following outcomes may result in adverse impacts on IPs:

-Outcome 1.2: Outcome 1.2: PFP/CTF Strengthened for Protected Area Based Conservation and HWC Management

-Outcome 2.1: Improved coexistence between humans and key wildlife conflict species in select areas, through IPLC-led evidence-based approaches **Development of IP Plans (IPP)**

Based on the results of the social assessments, an IP Plan shall be developed for each project site.



The contents of the IPP will depend on the specific project activities identified and the impacts these activities may have on IPs in the project area. As a minimum, the IPP should include the following information:

- Description of the IPs affected by the proposed activity;
- Summary of the proposed activity;
- Detailed description of IPs' participation and consultation process during implementation;
- Description of how the project will ensure culturally appropriate benefits and avoid or mitigate adverse impacts;
- Budget;
- Mechanism for complaints and conflict resolution; and
- Monitoring and evaluation system that includes monitoring of particular issues and measures concerning indigenous communities.

For project activities that may result in changes in IPs' access to livelihoods, the provisions of the Process Framework (Section 3.8) should be followed.

#### **3.9.6. Free, Prior and Informed Consent Framework**

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is an approach for ensuring that the rights of IPs are guaranteed in any decision that may negatively affect their lands, territories or livelihoods. It ensures that they have the right to give or withhold their consent to these activities without fear of reprisal or coercion, in a timeframe suited to their own culture, and with the resources to make informed decisions.

FPIC is composed of four separate components:

- Free—Without coercion, intimidation, manipulation, threat or bribery.
- Prior—indicates that consent has been sought sufficiently in advance, before any project activities have been authorized or commenced, and that the time requirements of the indigenous community's consultation/consensus processes have been respected.
- Informed—Information is provided in a language and form that are easily understood by the community, covering the nature, scope, purpose, duration and locality of the project or activity as well as information about areas that will be affected; economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts, all involved actors, and the procedures that the project or activity may entail.
- Consent—The right of IPs to give or withhold their consent to any decision that will impact their lands, territories, resources, and livelihoods.

The processes of consultation and obtaining FPIC will be applied to all the aspects of the project (financed under WWF) that may negatively affect the rights of the IPs and ethnic minorities. FPIC will be required on any matters that may negatively affect the rights and interests, water areas, lands, resources, territories (whether titled or untitled to the people in question) and traditional livelihoods of the IPs concerned.

Thus, FPIC is integral to the execution of the proposed project, as the project areas includes diverse indigenous communities. WWF recognizes the strong cultural and spiritual ties many IP groups have to their lands and territories and is committed to strengthen these ties in all WWF/GEF/GCF funded projects. FPIC gives IPs the freedom to determine their own development path to promoting conservation sustainably. The following checklist (Box 1) may assist in helping to determine whether some Project activities may require an FPIC process.

**Box 1. Checklist for appraising whether an activity may require an FPIC Process**

1. Will the activity involve the use, taking or damage of cultural, intellectual, religious and/or spiritual property from IPs?
2. Will the activity adopt or implement any legislative or administrative measures that will affect the rights, lands, territories and/or resources of IPs (e.g. in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources; land reform; legal reforms that may discriminate de jure or de facto against IPs, etc.)?
3. Will the activity involve natural resource extraction such as logging or mining or agricultural development on the lands/territories of IPs?
4. Will the activity involve any decisions that will affect the status of IPs' rights to their lands/territories/water resources, resources or livelihoods?
5. Will the activity involve the accessing of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities?
6. Will the activity affect IPs' political, legal, economic, social, or cultural institutions and/or practices?
7. Will the activity involve making commercial use of natural and/or cultural resources on lands subject to traditional ownership and/or under customary use by IPs?
8. Will the activity involve decisions regarding benefit-sharing arrangements, when benefits are derived from the lands/territories/resources of IPs (e.g. natural resource management or extractive industries)?
9. Will the activity have an impact on the continuance of the relationship of the IPs with their land or their culture?
10. Will the interventions/activities restrict on access to NTFPs, timber, lands, etc. and other sources of livelihoods and community resources?

If the answer is 'Yes' to any of these questions in Box 1, it is likely that FPIC will be required of the potentially affected indigenous peoples for the activity that may result in the impacts identified in the questions. When an FPIC process is required, a stakeholder consultation process will need to be initiated to define and agree on an FPIC process with the community or communities. The IPs who may be affected by the Project will have a central role in defining the FPIC process, based on their own cultural and governance practices. The consultation process should be launched as early as possible to ensure full, effective and meaningful participation of IPs.

All consultations with IPs should be carried out in good faith with the objective of seeking agreement or consent. Consultation and consent is about IPs' right to meaningfully and effectively participate in decision-making on matters that may affect them. Consultations and information disclosure are integral parts of FPIC process and any development support planning for IPs to ensure that the priorities, preferences, and needs of the indigenous groups are taken into consideration adequately. With that objective in view, a strategy for consultation with IPs has been proposed so that all consultations are conducted in a manner to ensure full and effective participation. The approach of full and effective participation is primarily based upon transparent, good faith interactions, so that everyone in the community is empowered to join fully in the decision-making process. It includes

providing information in a language and manner the community understands and, in a timeframe, compatible with the community's cultural norms.

The affected IPs will be actively engaged in all stages of the project cycle, including project preparation, and feedback of consultations with the IPs will be reflected in the project design, followed by disclosure. Their participation in project preparation and planning has informed project design and will continue to actively participate in the project execution. Once the IPP or LRP is prepared, it will be translated into local languages (as applicable) and made available to them before implementation, including in formats other than written documents if and when requested by the communities.

The PMU/TNC shall ensure adequate flow of funds for consultation and facilitation of planned activities within the IPP. Project brochures and pamphlet with infographic containing basic information such as sub-project location, impact estimates, and mitigation measures proposed, and implementation schedule will be prepared, translated into a language understandable to the IPs, and distributed among them. If literacy is low in the communities, other means of communication must also be agreed upon with them, especially targeting community members who may have lower literacy levels.

A range of consultative methods will be adopted to carry out consultation including, but not limited to: focus group discussions (FGDs), public meetings, community discussions, and in-depth and key informant interviews; in addition to the censuses and socioeconomic surveys.

The key stakeholders to be consulted during screening, impact assessment; design and implementation of IPP, LRP and Process Framework (PF) include:

- All affected persons belonging to IPs/marginalized groups;
- Appropriate government Departments/Ministries
- Provincial and municipal government representatives;
- Relevant community cooperatives, management structures, umbrella bodies, etc;
- The private sector:
- Academia representatives.

The project will ensure adequate representation of each group of stakeholders mentioned above while conducting consultations using various tools and approaches.

The views of IPs communities are to be considered during execution of project activities, while respecting their practices, beliefs and cultural preferences. The outcome of the consultations will be documented into the periodical reports and included in project's trimester progress reports. The Project Manager with support of the Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer will also ensure that affected persons are involved in the decision-making process.

**Procedures to seek FPIC**

Project interventions and activities adversely affecting the IPs, therefore, need to follow a process of free, prior, and informed consent, with the affected IPs in order to fully identify their views and to seek their broad community support to the project; and development of project-specific measures to avoid adverse impacts and enhance culturally appropriate benefits.

Community involvement is a critical component of FPIC, as FPIC is a collective process, rather than an individual decision. In practice, FPIC is implemented through a participatory process involving all affected groups that is carried out prior to the finalization or implementation of any project activities, decisions or development plans. FPIC is established through good faith negotiation between the project and affected IPs. A facilitator should support this process, a person who will be available throughout the Project, who speaks the necessary languages and is aware of the project context. This person may or may not be part of the PMU, but should be agreeable to all parties involved.

Box 2 below outlines some generic steps to be followed for FPIC with the affected IPs in order to seek their broad community support.

**Box 2. Steps for Seeking FPIC from Project Affected Indigenous Peoples**

1. Identify communities, sub-groups within communities, and other stakeholders with potential interests/rights (both customary and legal) on the land or other natural resources that are proposed to be developed, managed, utilized, or impacted by the proposed project activity.
2. Identify any rights (customary and legal) or claims of these communities to land or resources (e.g., water rights, water access points, or rights to hunt or extract forest products) that overlap or are adjacent to the site(s) or area(s) of the proposed project activity;
3. Identify whether the proposed project activity may diminish the rights, claims, or interests identified in Step 2 above and also identify natural resources that may be impacted by this project and the legal and customary laws that govern these resources;
4. Provide the details of proposed project activities to be implemented along with their likely impacts on IPs either positively or negatively, as well as the corresponding proposed mitigation measures in a language or means of communication understandable by the affected IPs;
5. All project information provided to IPs should be in a form appropriate to local needs. Local languages should usually be used and efforts should be made to include all community members, including women and members of different generations and social groups (e.g. clans and socioeconomic background);
6. Selection of facilitator, who will be available throughout the Project, who speaks the necessary languages and is aware of the project context, and is culturally and gender-sensitive. The facilitator should be trustworthy to affected IPs. It will also be helpful to involve any actors which are likely to be involved in implementing the FPIC process, such as local or national authorities
7. If the IP communities are organized in community associations or umbrella organizations, these should usually be consulted.
8. Provide sufficient time for IPs' decision-making processes (it means allocate sufficient time for internal decision-making processes to reach conclusions that are considered legitimate by the majority of the concerned participants)
9. Support a process to create a mutually respected decision-making structure in cases where two or more communities claim rights over a project site.
10. If FPIC is not familiar to the community, engage in a dialogue to identify existing decision-making structures that support the principles underlying FPIC.
11. Identify the community-selected representative(s) or "focal people" for decision making purpose-- identification of the decisionmakers and parties to the negotiation.
12. Agree on the decisionmakers or signatory parties and/or customary binding practice that will be used to conclude the agreement, introducing the chosen representatives, their role in the community, how they were chosen, their responsibility and role as representatives;
13. If consent is reached, document agreed upon outcomes/activities that are to be included into the project, and agree on a feedback and a project grievance redress mechanism. Agreements

reached must be mutual and recognized by all parties, taking into consideration customary modes of decision-making and consensus-seeking. These may include votes, a show of hands, the signing of a document witnessed by a third party, performing a ritual ceremony that makes the agreement binding, and so forth;

14. When seeking “broad community consent/support” for the project, it should be ensured that all relevant social groups of the community have been adequately consulted. This may mean the project staff have to seek out marginalized members, or those who don’t have decision-making power, such as women. When this is the case and the “broad” majority is overall positive about the project, it would be appropriate to conclude that broad community support/consent has been achieved. Consensus building approaches are often the norm, but “broad community consent/support” does not mean that everyone has to agree to a given project;
15. When the community agrees on the project, document the agreement process and outcomes including benefits, compensation, or mitigation to the community, commensurate with the loss of use of land or resources in forms and languages accessible and made publicly available to all members of the community, providing for stakeholder review and authentication;
16. The agreements or special design features providing the basis for broad community support should be described in the IPs Plan; any disagreements should also be documented; and
17. Agree on jointly defined modes of monitoring and verifying agreements as well as their related procedures: how these tasks will be carried out during project implementation, and the commission of independent periodic reviews (if considered) at intervals satisfactory to all interest groups.

### **3.9.7. Disclosure**

The final IPPF and PF and any site specific IPPs and LRPs (and any other plan or program developed during implementation) will be disclosed on the website of the executing agency TNC and the website of WWF and made available to affected IPs; information dissemination and consultation will continue throughout project execution. Summaries of IPPs and mitigation measures proposed in IPPs will be translated into French and paper copies will be made available to the affected persons in the office of relevant local authorities.

### **3.9.8. Institutional and monitoring arrangements**

The Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer will be responsible for the development and implementation of the IPPF and any IPP, with support from the Human Wildlife and Project Management Specialist and Gabon PFP Director on logistical matters (e.g., conducting field visits, reaching out to IP communities, convening meetings, etc.).

The Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer will periodically report on the implementation of the IPPF/IPP to the Project Manager, TNC and WWF US. Monitoring and reporting will be undertaken together with reporting on the other ESMF commitments (as indicated in Section 4.4).

### **3.10. Cultural Heritage Mitigation Measure**

The Project will initiate consultations with Government Officials and Indigenous People to ascertain the existence of the Cultural Heritage sites inside the boundaries of existing National Parks. If deemed necessary for the GEF GBFF, the project team will engage with the Cultural Heritage Consultant that might be hired under the GEF 7 EE project to undertake a review of all the cultural heritage sites currently located inside the boundaries of existing National Parks. The Cultural Heritage Consultant

will provide guidance on the process, and all consultation with Indigenous People will follow FPIC approach.

#### **4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

##### **4.1. Procedures for the Identification and Management of Environmental and Social Impacts**

The following is an exclusion list of activities that will not be financed by the GEF GBFF project in Gabon. This includes activities that:

1. Lead to land management practices that cause degradation (biological or physical) of the soil and water. Examples include, but are not limited to: the felling of trees in core zones and critical watersheds; activities involving quarrying and mining; commercial logging; or dredge fishing.
2. Negatively affect areas of critical natural habitats or breeding ground of known rare/endangered species.
3. Significantly increase GHG emissions.
4. Use genetically modified organisms or modern biotechnologies or their products.
5. Involve the procurement and/or use of pesticides and other chemicals specified as persistent organic pollutants under the Stockholm Convention or within categories IA, IB, or II by the World Health Organization.
6. Develop forest plantations.
7. Result in the loss of biodiversity, alteration of the functioning of ecosystems, and introduction of new invasive alien species.
8. Involve the procurement or use of weapons and munitions or fund military activities.
9. Lead to private land acquisition and/or physical displacement and voluntary or involuntary relocation of people, including non-titled and migrant people.
10. Contribute to exacerbating any inequality or gender gap that may exist.
11. Involve illegal child labor, forced labor, sexual exploitation or other forms of exploitation.
12. Adversely affect indigenous peoples' rights, lands, natural resources, territories, livelihoods, knowledge, social fabric, traditions, governance systems, and culture or heritage (physical and non-physical or intangible) inside and/or outside the project area.
13. Negatively impact areas with cultural, historical or transcendent values for individuals and communities.

In advance of the initiation of any project activity, the Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer should fill in detailed information regarding the nature of the activity and its specific location in the *Safeguards Eligibility and Impacts Screening* form (Annex 1). Part 1 of this form comprises of basic information regarding the activity; Part 2 contains basic “pre-screening” questions. If the response to any of the questions in these two parts is “Yes”, the activity will be deemed ineligible for funding under the Project. The executing partners will thus be required to change the nature or location of the proposed activity so that it complies with all safeguards requirements and all responses at the Safeguards Eligibility and Impacts Screening form are negative.

If the activity is deemed eligible according to Part 2, an environmental and social screening procedure will be carried out in accordance with Part 3 of *Safeguard Eligibility and Impacts Screening* format, which is based on the WWF’s SIPP and applicable Gabon laws and regulations. The executing partners shall respond to the specific questions in Part 3 of the form, provide general conclusions regarding the main environmental and social impacts of each proposed activity, outline the required permits or

clearances, and specify whether any additional assessments or safeguard documents (e.g., ESMP) should be prepared.

Issues that are considered as part of this environmental and social screening include the following:

- a) Need for government-land acquisition;
- b) Environmental impacts (e.g., dust, noise, smoke, ground vibration, pollution, flooding, etc.) and loss or damage to natural habitat;
- c) Social impacts: identification of vulnerable groups or indigenous peoples, impacts on community resources, impacts on livelihoods and socio-economic opportunities, restrictions of access to natural resources, land usage conflicts, impacts on tangible or intangible cultural heritage, etc.; and
- d) Health and safety issues (both for workers and for local communities).

The screening of each activity should be undertaken by the Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer. If the screening process indicates that additional assessments or safeguards documents shall be prepared, these should be carried out by the executing partners prior to the start of activities.

If the screening reveals adverse environmental or social impacts that may arise from the planned activity, an ESMP should be prepared. The ESMP should be prepared by the Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer, in collaboration with the Project Manager(s)/Human Wildlife Coexistence and Project Management Specialist/PMU.

#### **4.2. Guidelines for ESMP Development**

In case that the Environmental and Social screening process identifies any adverse environmental or social impacts as a result of specific project activities, the Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer, in collaboration with the Project Manager(s)/Human Wildlife Coexistence and Project Management Specialist, should develop a site- and activity-specific ESMP. The ESMP should be prepared before the initiation of the project activity and closely follow the guidance provided in this ESMF.

The ESMP should describe adverse environmental and social impacts that are expected to occur as a result of the specific project activity, outline concrete measures that should be undertaken to avoid or mitigate these impacts, and specify the implementation arrangements for administering these measures (including institutional structures, roles, communication, consultations, and reporting procedures).

The structure of the ESMP should be as follows:

- i. **A concise introduction:** explaining the context and objectives of the ESMP, the connection of the proposed activity to the project, and the findings of the screening process.
- ii. **Project description:** Objective and description of activities, nature and scope of the project (location with map, construction and/or operation processes, equipment to be used, site facilities and workers and their camps; bill of quantities if civil works are involved, activity schedule).
- iii. **Baseline environmental and social data:** Key environmental information or measurements such as topography, land use and water uses, soil types, and water quality/pollution; and data on socioeconomic conditions of the local population. Photos showing the existing conditions of the project sites should also be included.
- iv. **Expected impacts and mitigation measures:** Description of specific environmental and social impacts of the activity and corresponding mitigation measures.

- v. **ESMP implementation arrangements:** Responsibilities for design, bidding and contracts where relevant, monitoring, reporting, recording and auditing.
- vi. **Capacity Need and Budget:** Capacity needed for the implementation of the ESMP and cost estimates for implementation of the ESMP.
- vii. **Consultation and Disclosure Mechanisms:** Timeline and format of disclosure.
- viii. **Monitoring:** Environmental and social compliance monitoring with responsibilities.
- ix. **Grievance Mechanism:** Provide information about the grievance mechanism, how PAPs can access it, and the grievance redress process.
- x. **A site-specific community and stakeholder engagement plan:** In order to ensure that local communities and other relevant stakeholders are fully involved in the implementation of the ESMP, a stakeholder engagement plan should be included in the ESMP. Specific guidelines on community engagement are provided in Section 4.5 below.

### 4.3. Stakeholders' Role & Responsibilities in the ESMF Implementation

#### 4.3.1. General

As mentioned, this GBFF project is designed to be implemented in tandem with the GEF 7 Enduring Earth Partnership (“EE”) “Accelerating Sustainable Finance Solutions to Achieve Durable Conservation—GEF ID: 11014 PFP project in Gabon. This project shares many of the PFP operating structures.

#### The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

TNC is the Lead Executing Agency for the project, which will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of project activities. As part of its responsibilities, technical and operational TNC Gabon and Gabon PFP staff will provide day-to-day management of the project, including project administration (including issuing sub-grants), project management, and monitoring and reporting. TNC will be responsible for the following functions and roles: (i) Human Wildlife Coexistence and Project Management Specialist, (ii) Grants, finance and operations roles; (iii) Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Role; and (iv) Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer. Additional functions/ roles may be assigned to program staff to fulfill GBFF-supported objectives.

#### WWF GEF Agency

WWF-US, through its WWF GEF Agency will: (i) provide consistent and regular project oversight to ensure the achievement of project objectives; (ii) liaise between the project and the GEF Secretariat; (iii) report on project progress to GEF Secretariat (annual Project Implementation Report); (iv) ensure that both GEF and WWF policy requirements and standards are applied and met (i.e. reporting obligations, technical, fiduciary, M&E); (v) approve annual workplan and budget; (vi) approve budget revisions, certify fund availability and transfer funds; (vii) organize the terminal evaluation and review project audits; (viii) certify project operational and financial completion, and (ix) provide no-objection to key terms of reference for project management unit.

#### 4.3.2. Safeguards Implementation

Specific arrangements and responsibilities related to the implementation of environmental and social safeguards requirements, as stated in this ESMF/PF are as follows:

#### Lead Executing Agency – The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has the overall responsibility for ensuring environmental safeguards are implemented and ensures coordination with relevant Government authorities. The lead executing agency will also:



- Monitor implementation of this ESMF and compliance with national and international regulations, and WWF ESSF standards; including keeping track that all ESS requirements are effectively and timely met including oversight for safeguards and the implementation of this ESMF.
- Collect grievances from the country/project-level GRMs and report back to the WWF US GEF Agency
- Provide strategic guidance to project implementation, including oversight for safeguards and the implementation of this ESMF.
- Ensure that bidding documents and contracts include relevant clauses or conditions relevant to environmental and social safeguards as set out in this ESMF. It is particularly important to include in bidding documents requirements related to occupational health and safety.
- Implement and supervise ESMF and other safeguard plans;
- Implement required Grievance Redress Mechanism(s) (GRM);
- Disclose safeguards documents; and
- Report on safeguards implementation and compliance to the PSC and WWF GEF Agency

***Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer within the PMU*** The responsibilities of this officer include:

- Provide inputs to the Human Wildlife Coexistence and Community Engagement Specialist to ensure safeguards compliance with reference to ESMF/PF/IPPF during project planning and implementation;
- Monitor implementation of the ESMF/PF/IPPF including inputs and recommendations from related consultants;
- Conduct ESS Screening on newly planned/revised project activities, as outlined in ESMF;
- Ensure the project team's understanding of environmental and social safeguards and how to support implementation of the ESMF/PF/IPPF;
- Provide training on safeguards requirements to PMU staff and relevant partners as required, particularly to sub-grantees;
- Join sub-grantees on their field visits/activities and other on-the-ground interventions;
- Regularly review the above-mentioned frameworks and make amendments as necessary;
- Set up, lead the socialization of and ensure implementation of the grievance redress mechanism including being a point of contact to receive grievances. Oversee the addressing of grievances with assistance from other CTF staff;
- Ensure full disclosure of existing and newly developed Plans with concerned stakeholders;
- Carry out regular monitoring and capacity building visits to the project sites;
- Provide inputs to project reports on the status of safeguards compliance and GRM implementation with the ESMF/PF during implementation and any issues arising;
- Coordinate with the other CTF staff to ensure alignment in implementation of the ESMF/PF/IPPF and the Gender Action Plan and Stakeholder Engagement Plan;
- Participate in monthly calls with the ESS Specialist in the WWF US GEF Agency; and

Undertake any other tasks assigned by the project manager to support the project with respect to environmental and social safeguard issues

#### **WWF GEF Agency**

The responsibilities of WWF include:

- Overall oversight and monitoring of compliance with safeguards commitments.
- Support and specific recommendations on specific safeguard issues if needed.

#### **4.4. Monitoring**

The compliance of Project activities with the ESMF will be thoroughly monitored by various entities at different stages of preparation and implementation.

- ***Monitoring at the project level***

The overall responsibility for implementing the ESMF/PF/IPPF and for monitoring compliance with the Project's environmental safeguard activities lies with the PMU at TNC. The Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer procured by TNC shall oversee the implementation of all field activities and ensure compliance with the ESMF. The Officer shall also provide the executing agency and partners with technical support in carrying out environmental and social screenings and preparing ESMPs and any other necessary documentation. The Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer shall also monitor the project's grievance redress mechanism (GRM) and assess its effectiveness (i.e., to what extent grievances are resolved in an expeditious and satisfactory manner).

Finally, the Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer will also be responsible for reporting on overall safeguards compliance on behalf of the PMU. They may also be required to report to TNC's regional and/or global safeguards specialists, the Project Steering Committee.

- ***Monitoring at the field activity level***

The PMU/TNC and, specifically, the Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer shall closely monitor all field activities and ensure that they fully comply with the ESMF/PF/IPPF and with the terms and conditions included in the environment clearances issued by Gabon's national authorities. The PMU is also fully responsible for the compliance of all external contractors and service providers employed as part of the project with the safeguards requirements outlined in the ESMF/PF/IPPF and ESMP (as applicable).

***Disbursement of project funds will be contingent upon their full compliance with the safeguards requirements.***

- ***Monitoring at the agency level***

WWF as the project's implementing agency and TNC, the leading executing agency, are responsible to oversee compliance with this ESMF.

In order to facilitate compliance monitoring, TNC will include information on the status of ESMF implementation in the six-monthly Project Progress Reports (PPRs) and the annual Project Implementation Review (PIR) reports.

#### **4.5. Community Engagement**

Community consultation undertaken during the development of the GEF 7 Gabon PFP project has been an integral part of these assessments as well as the proposed project design and will be carried out as a continuous process through the project cycle. This section describes community engagement during project preparation and implementation. This section is an overview, whereas the full details will be written out in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

##### **4.5.1. Community engagement during Project Preparation and ESMF/PF Preparation**

Community engagement during the development of the GEF 7 Gabon PFP project preparation, including the development of the ESMF/PF/IPPF, involved consultations with a range of local community and civil society organizations, to know:

- Local authorities (Mayumba Prefecture)
- Local authorities (Ndindi Town)
- Local communities (Village of Yoyo)
- Local communities (Village of Mallembé),

- NGO Koussou (Town of Gamba)
- NGO Ibonga (Town of Gamba)
- Local communities (Village of Sounga)
- Local communities (Village of Sette Cama)
- Private sector organization (Transval Office)
- Local authorities (Gamba Prefecture)
- Local communities (Village of Tchongorévé)
- Local authorities (Omboué Prefecture)
- Local communities (Village of Nkoum-Mbabo)
- Local communities (Village of Konossoville)
- Local communities (Village of Nkoum-Mbabo)
- Local communities (Village of Nkokakom)
- Local communities (Village of Eyanebot)
- Local communities (Village of Mintebe)
- Indigenous Peoples (Village of Doumassi)
- Indigenous Peoples (Village of Esseng)
- Local authorities (Minvoul prefecture)
- NGO Obangame (Town of Minvoul)
- Local communities (Village of Andock Foula)
- Private sector organization UFIGA (Town of Libreville)
- NGO BRAINFOREST (Town of Libreville)
- NGO ADCPPG (Town of Libreville)
- Government Official DGEPN (Town of Libreville)

#### **4.5.2. Community engagement during the GEF 7 PFP project implementation**

As noted, this GEF GBFF project, Addressing Outstanding Barriers and Leveraging Durable Financial Mechanisms to Achieve Target 3 in Gabon, builds on field work conducted as a part of the GEF 7 PFP project. The communities residing in and around the project area are the ultimate recipient of project impacts and benefits, and therefore constitute a key stakeholder. Because the interventions need community support or participation in order to succeed, a participatory process and community consultations approach engaging government authorities, right holders and stakeholders at different levels will provide substantial information on the patterns of resource use of local affected communities/groups and persons, which will provide accurate information about which groups/individuals will be affected most by project activities. Measures and approaches for continued community engagement during the project implementation phase are documented in the SEP.

A field visit and community consultation mission took place from 05 to 27 April 2023 in Gabon. The visit included meeting with communities living near and inside four National Parks (Mayumba, Loango, Minkébé and Monts de Cristal). To complement the information that had been ascertained during the 2023 consultations for the GEF 7 project, a series of additional consultations took place in Libreville during the week of March 25, 2024.

##### Mayumba National Park

The first communities visited were those living near the Mayumba National Park, which is essentially a marine park. It is located in the southwest of Gabon, in the province of Nyanga. The local populations living in the villages identified around this park have rural practices, mainly based on fishing and agriculture. The communities encountered lived in the following villages: Ndindi, Yoyo and Malembe (Figure 5). No community located inside the park. The consultation meetings showed that artisanal fishing is the main source of income for the communities living along the Banio lagoon. The share of

fish intended for sale is significantly higher than that intended for self-consumption. However, fish population have decreased significantly due to overfishing and the use of illegal nets. Conflicts also exist at the level of continental fishing, which is reserved for nationals, but is also illegally practiced by foreigners. Agriculture is practiced as a second activity, to supplement income from fishing.

However, the human/wildlife conflict disrupts this activity. The data obtained during the consultations conducted in 2024 demonstrates that HWC is a primary concern for communities in this NP and that it concerns both elephants and buffalo, who harm crops and demonstrate aggression towards humans. Around 330 complaints of elephant-related conflicts have been reported over the last three years.



Figure 5: Communities consulted near Mayumba National Park

#### Loango National Park

The second area visited was Loango National Park (Figure 6). Local communities practice agriculture but complain about damage caused regularly by elephants. This problem is particularly difficult to solve, and is a source of conflict between the communities and the Conservation Officer of the ANPN (National Park Agency). In addition to elephants' villagers mention that buffalo, porcupines and monkeys also destroy plantations. In the area, there is an overlap between the park and several protected areas, which weighs heavily on the communities in terms of restrictions. Around 1320 complaints of conflicts with these elephant species have been reported over the last three years

In addition to fishing, women also practice crafts. They weave mats which they sell to visitors, but they are rare these days. Hunting is practiced in this area, mainly by men. ANPN officers often visit the villages to raise awareness (arms permit, species authorized for hunting and species not authorized). However, communities complain that the boundaries between authorized and unauthorized areas for hunting are unclear (not physically materialized).

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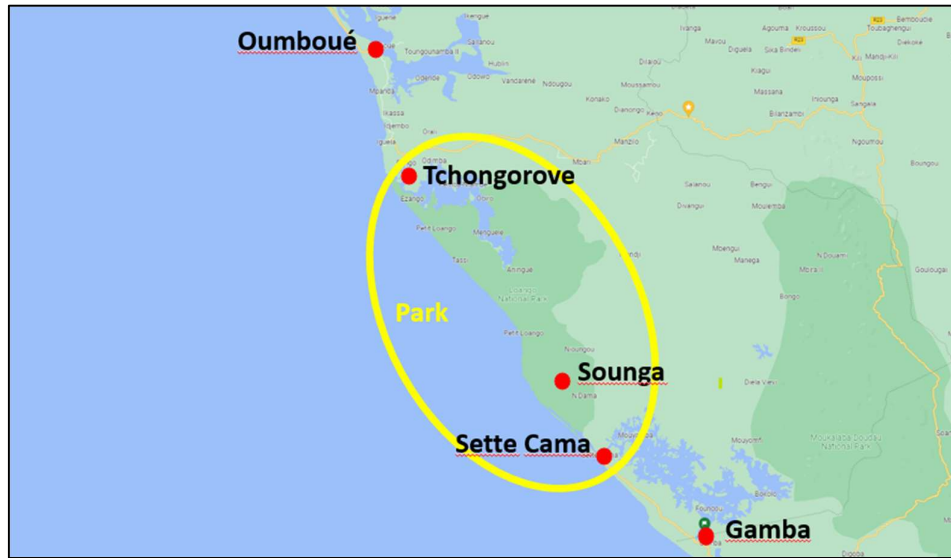


Figure 6: Communities consulted near Loango National Park

**Minkébé National Park**

In the area of Minkébé National Park the communities visited were in the following villages: Konossoville, Koumbabo, Doumassi (village of Indigenous People), Eseng (village of Indigenous People) and Mvathi (Figure 7). All the meetings took place in the local language (the Fang).

The main activity is agriculture, for women and men. To eat and meet their needs in the past, men grew coffee and cocoa, an activity that has been greatly reduced nowadays due to the fall in prices on the market. Women plant and harvest cassava, bananas, sugar cane, peanuts. However, elephants and hedgehogs destroy plantations. Despite the complaints from the women, they remain largely unanswered.

The inhabitants of Konossoville mention that Minkébé Park is far away, and this therefore does not interfere with their agricultural activities. Young people seem to be less and less interested in traditional activities. They mentioned the possibility of doing activities related to tourism because of the proximity to Minkébé Park.

On the outskirts of Minkébé Park, the consultation team met with Indigenous Peoples. Their activities include farming, the harvesting of palm worms (November to December), fishing, etc. Women fish and collect palm worms and practice agriculture.

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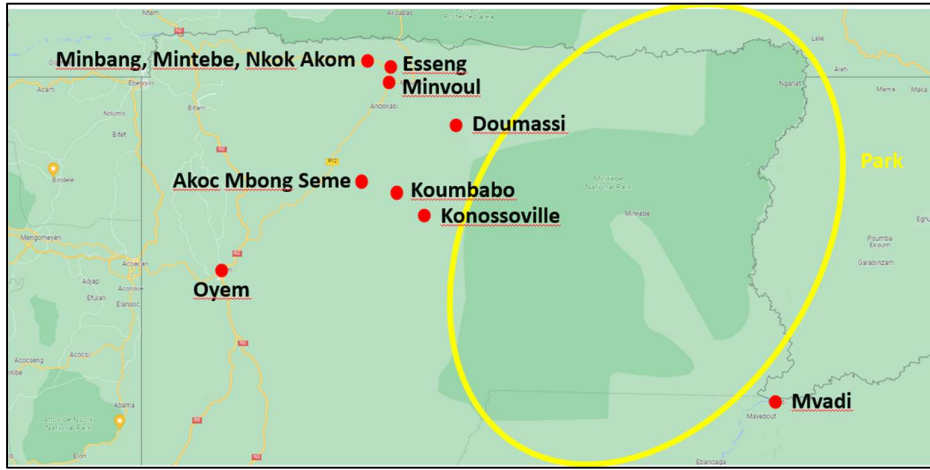


Figure 7: Communities consulted near Minkebe National Park

**Monts de Cristal National Park**

In the area of Monts de Cristal National Park, one community (Andock Foula) (Figure 8) was visited. The traditional activities are agriculture and fishing. Agriculture is severely impacted by damages by elephants, who are reported to have devastated crops and destroyed squares and sanitary facilities. Around 1000 complaints of elephant-related HWC have been recorded over the last three years.

Nowadays, lots of income comes from employment of youth in projects, such as Kinguele Hydropower. In the area, communities note that there are lots of restriction around the park, and do not understand some of the restrictions. Communities note lack of proper channel of communication between ANPN agents and the communities.

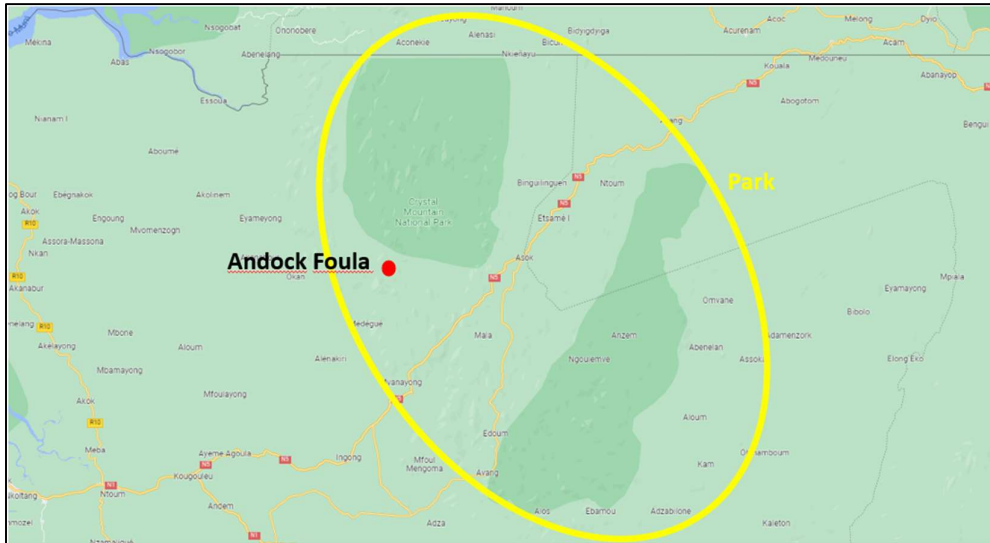


Figure 8: Communities consulted near Monts de Cristal National Park

**4.6. Guidance for SEAH Risk Mitigation**

Based on the results of the screening provided in Annex 1 of this ESMF, a detailed plan to address SEAH risks will be developed within the first six months of project start-up, using both information

already included in the GAP and updated procedures for SEAH-specific grievances outlined in below. This will include:

- Inclusion of any identified SEAH-related risk mitigation measures into the project's annual workplan and budget and annual reporting requirements.
  - This will require the participation of the entire PMU in reviewing any identified risks and mitigation measures to ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities and the responsibilities of EEs, project partners, contractors, and any other entities who will receive GEF funding for this project.
- Development of a communication mechanism between the local project partners and the Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer in order to address in a timely manner any SEAH situation that may arise at the territorial level. This early warning system will be included in the project's security protocol, and will require:
  - Reporting any such grievances or challenges within a defined time period of no less than 5 business days. This shall hold true even if grievances are informally submitted (i.e. not through an official GRM)
  - The confidentiality of anyone who has received a complaint or become aware of a SEAH-related situation, including protecting the personal identifiable information of all parties- both the potential victim(s) and potential perpetrators(s).
- Strengthen the capacities of the project's implementing partners on prevention of GBV and SEAH as well as WWF policies and codes of conduct to address SEAH risk. These trainings will be done in partnership by the project's Safeguards Specialist and should include:
  - Training within the first 3 months of project implementation that have been prepared with oversight and final approval from the WWF GEF Safeguards and Gender Leads.
  - Be mandatory for all implementing partner staff who will be involved in the GCF-financed activities.
- Strengthen the landscape technical committees so that they can establish rapid response mechanisms to address issues associated with threats to environmental leaders and gender-based violence. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - In cases of such threats, provide them with additional resources to ensure a timely response that is focused on the well-being of anyone who is threatened.
  - Provide the same GBV and SEAH training to these committees that the implementing partners will receive.
- Strengthen the capacities of the entities that participate in the multi-stakeholder bodies that will be strengthened by the project, so that specific prevention and rapid response measures are included to address GBV and SEAH-specific threats, including to social and environmental leaders they may work with.
  - Provide the same GBV and SEAH training to these multi-stakeholder bodies that the implementing partners will receive.

#### **4.7. Communications and Disclosure**

All affected communities and relevant stakeholders shall be informed about the ESMF requirements and commitments. The executive summary of the ESMF will be translated into French and made available, along with the full ESMF and SEP documents in English, on the websites of TNC, as well as the websites of the WWF GEF Agency. Hard copies of the ESMF will be placed in appropriate public locations and at TNC. Project Managers, the Human Wildlife Coexistence and Community Engagement Specialist and the Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer CTF will be responsible of

raising community awareness regarding the requirements of the ESMF, and will also ensure that all external contractors and service providers are fully familiar and comply with the ESMF and other safeguards documents.

During the implementation of the project, activity-specific ESMPs shall be prepared in consultation with affected communities and disclosed to all stakeholders prior to project concept finalization. All draft ESMPs shall be reviewed and approved by TNC in consultation with the PSC and WWF GEF Agency in advance of their public disclosure. The PMU must also disclose to all affected parties any action plans prepared during project implementation, including gender mainstreaming.

Disclosure should be carried out in a manner that is meaningful and understandable to the affected people. For this purpose, the executive summary of ESMPs or the terms and conditions in environment clearances should be disclosed on TNC and WWF websites.

The disclosure requirements are summarized in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Disclosure framework for ESMF related documents

Documents to be disclosed	Frequency	Where
Environment and Social Management Framework	Once in the entire project cycle. Must remain on the website and other public locations throughout the project period.	On the website of TNC and WWF. Copies should be available at TNC office, and in local municipal offices in project areas
Environmental and Social Management Plan/s	Once in the entire project cycle for every activity that requires ESMP. Must remain on the website and other disclosure locations throughout the project period.	On the website of TNC and WWF. Copies should be available in local municipal offices in project areas
Safeguards Monthly Progress Report	Monthly	Copies should be available at the TNC office, and in local municipal offices in project areas
Minutes of Formal Public Consultation Meetings	Within two weeks of meeting	On the website of TNC and WWF. Copies should be available at the CTF office and in local municipal offices in project areas
Grievance redress process	Quarterly, throughout the project cycle	On the website of TNC. Copies should be available at the TNC Gabon office.

#### **4.8. Capacity Building and technical assistance**

Capacity building activities will be provided as needed by WWF US to TNC to provide the latter with ESMF/PF/IPPF implementation requirements and good practices. These will focus in particular on



issues related to the preparation of ESMPs, LRP and IPPs, organization of consultations, operationalization of the GRM, and monitoring of ESMF implementation.

#### 4.9. Grievance Mechanisms

As with the GEF 7 project, this GEF GBFF project will also have four operating GRMs. However, given the differences in implementation arrangements and the timelines of both projects, only three of those GRMs are equally applicable to both projects—namely, the TNC one, which operates at the global PMU level for the entire GEF 7 project, the WWF US mechanism and the GEF Conflict Resolution Commissioner. Consequently, a specific project level GRM will be created for this GBFF project, which will be different from the project-level GRM to be created for the GEF 7 EE project.

##### **1. Project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism**

The project will have a direct and tangible effect on local communities and individuals residing within or in the vicinity of project sites. There is thus a need for an efficient and effective Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) that collects and responds to stakeholders' inquiries, suggestions, concerns, and complaints. This section will describe the details of the GRM, including details on the process to submit a grievance, how long the PMU will have to respond, and who within the PMU will be responsible for its implementation and reporting.

The GRM will operate based on the following principles:

1. **Fairness:** Grievances are assessed impartially, and handled transparently.
2. **Objectiveness and independence:** The GRM operates independently of all interested parties in order to guarantee fair, objective, and impartial treatment to each case.
3. **Simplicity and accessibility:** Procedures to file grievances and seek action are simple enough that project beneficiaries can easily understand them and in a language that is accessible to everyone within a given community, especially those who are most vulnerable.
4. **Responsiveness and efficiency:** The GRM is designed to be responsive to the needs of all complainants. Accordingly, officials handling grievances must be trained to take effective action upon, and respond quickly to, grievances and suggestions.
5. **Speed and proportionality:** All grievances, simple or complex, are addressed and resolved as quickly as possible. The action taken on the grievance or suggestion is swift, decisive, and constructive.
6. **Participation and inclusiveness:** A wide range of affected people—communities and vulnerable groups—are encouraged to bring grievances and comments to the attention of the project implementers. Special attention is given to ensure that poor people and marginalized groups, including those with special needs, are able to access the GRM.
7. **Accountability and closing the feedback loop:** All grievances are recorded and monitored, and no grievance remains unresolved. Complainants are always notified and get explanations regarding the results of their complaint. An appeal option shall always be available.

Complaints may include, but not be limited to, the following issues:

- (i) Allegations of fraud, malpractices or corruption by staff or other stakeholders as part of any project or activity financed or implemented by the project, including allegations of gender-based violence or sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment;
- (ii) Environmental and/or social damages/harms caused by projects financed or implemented (including those in progress) by the project;
- (iii) Complaints and grievances by permanent or temporary workers engaged in project activities.

Complaints could relate to pollution prevention and resource efficiency; negative impacts on public health, environment or culture; destruction of natural habitats; disproportionate impact on marginalized and vulnerable groups; discrimination or physical or sexual harassment; violation of applicable laws and regulations; destruction of physical and cultural heritage; or any other issues which adversely impact communities or individuals in project areas. The grievance redress mechanism will be implemented in a culturally sensitive manner and facilitate access to vulnerable populations. Special training will be provided to the ESS Specialists within the first 6 months of project implementation, or before the GRM is finalized, whichever is sooner. This will help to ensure they have the capacity to address SEAH-related grievances in a culturally sensitive and victim-centered way.

**(1) Disseminating information about the GRM:** All materials describing the GRM once approved by the PMU and cleared by the WWF will be made publicly available through posting them on the WWF/TNC websites and disseminated as part of the Project stakeholder engagement activities. The GRM will be communicated with all communities and stakeholders by the Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer, who will also develop GRM materials (brochure, flyers, etc.). Materials will include basic information on GRM and contact information on all grievance uptake locations as follows:

1. Name of location/channel to receive grievance.
2. Address of location.
3. Responsible person.
4. Telephone(s).
5. Email.
6. Days and hours for receiving verbal grievances.

The materials will also include a summary of the process for registering, reviewing and responding to grievances including the estimated response time. The information about the GRM will also be presented as a chart to make it easy for people to view. The materials will be produced in English and French.

**(2) Submitting complaints:** Project affected people, workers, or interested stakeholders can submit grievances, complaints, questions, or suggestions to the PMU through a variety of communication channels, including phone, regular mail, email, text messaging/SMS, or in-person. The appropriate addresses and phone numbers will be identified after the PMU has been established (within the first 6 months of its operation).

**(3) Processing complaints:** All grievances submitted to the PMU shall be registered and considered. A tracking registration number should be provided to all complainants. To facilitate investigation, complaints will be categorized into four types: (a) comments, suggestions, or queries; (b) complaints relating to nonperformance of project obligations and safeguards-related complaints; (c) complaints referring to violations of law and/or corruption while implementing project activities; (d) complaints against authorities, officials or community members involved in the project management; and (e) any complaints/issues not falling in the above categories.

**(4) Acknowledging the receipt of complaints:** Once a grievance is submitted, the designated official or the Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer at the PMU shall acknowledge its receipt, brief the complainant on the grievance resolution process, provide the contact details of the person in charge of handling the grievance (which should be said Safeguards Specialist at the CTF), and provide a registration number that would enable the complainant to track the status of the complaint.

- (5) Investigating complaints:** The Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer at the PMU will gather all relevant information, conduct field visits as necessary, and communicate with all relevant stakeholders as part of the complaint investigation process. The PMU should ensure that the investigators are neutral and do not have any stake in the outcome of the investigation.
- (6) Responding to complainants:** A written response to all grievances will be provided to the complainant within 15 working days. If further investigation is required, the complainant will be informed accordingly and a final response will be provided after an additional period of 15 working days. Grievances that cannot be resolved by grievance receiving authorities/office at their level should be referred to a higher level for verification and further investigation
- (7) Appeal:** In the event that the parties are unsatisfied with the response provided by the GRM, they will be able to submit an appeal to the PMU within 10 days from the date of decision. If the parties are unsatisfied with the decision of the appeal committee, the parties can submit their grievances directly to TNC, the GEF Agency or the Court of Law for further adjudication.
- (8) Monitoring and evaluation:** The Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer at the PMU will compile a quarterly report with full information on the grievances they received. The report shall contain a description of the grievances and their investigation status. Summarized GRM reports shall constitute part of the regular project progress reporting, and shall be submitted to the global TNC PMU, the PSC and WWF GEF Agency.

The GRM seeks to complement, rather than substitute, the judicial system and other dispute resolution mechanisms. All complainants may therefore file their grievance in local courts or approach mediators or arbitrators, in accordance with the legislation of Gabon.

## **2. TNC PFP-wide Grievance Mechanism**

After the project/country-level GRM, the next GRM available to complainants is the one established by TNC, as global PMU, which is applicable to all the PFP geographies under this project. It will operate as follows:

- 1. Disseminating information about the GRM:** All materials describing the GRM, once approved by the PMU and cleared by WWF US, will be made publicly available through posting them on the WWF/TNC websites and disseminated as part of the Project stakeholder engagement activities. The GRM will be communicated with all communities and stakeholders by the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer, whose responsibilities include safeguards duties, and who will also develop GRM materials (brochure, flyers, etc.). Materials will include basic information on GRM and contact information on all grievance uptake locations, including:
  1. Name of location/channel to receive grievance.
  2. Address of location.
  3. Responsible person.
  4. Telephone(s).
  5. Email.
  6. Days and hours for receiving verbal grievances.

The materials will also include a summary of the process for registering, reviewing and responding to grievances including the estimated response time. The information about the GRM will also be presented as a chart to make it easy for people to view. The materials will be produced in English and in French. the following languages:

2. **Submitting complaints:** Project affected people, workers, or interested stakeholders can submit grievances, complaints, questions, or suggestions to the TNC global PMU through a variety of communication channels, including phone, regular mail, email, text messaging/SMS, or in-person.
3. **Processing complaints:** All grievances submitted to the TNC global PMU shall be registered and considered. A tracking registration number should be provided to all complainants. To facilitate investigation, complaints will be categorized into four types: (a) comments, suggestions, or queries; (b) complaints relating to nonperformance of project obligations and safeguards-related complaints; (c) complaints referring to violations of law and/or corruption while implementing project activities; (d) complaints against authorities, officials or community members involved in the project management; and (e) any complaints/issues not falling in the above categories.
4. **Acknowledging the receipt of complaints:** Once a grievance is submitted, the M&E Officer at the TNC PMU shall acknowledge its receipt, brief the complainant on the grievance resolution process, provide the contact details of the person in charge of handling the grievance (which should be said M&E officer), and provide a registration number that would enable the complainant to track the status of the complaint. Please note that, although the personal identifiable information of the grievant should remain confidential to the M&E Officer in all cases, this anonymity should be furthered maintained by the M&E Officer if the complainant does not want to file a grievance with their identifying information.
5. **Investigating complaints:** The M&E Officer at the TNC global PMU will gather all relevant information, conduct field visits as necessary, and communicate with all relevant stakeholders as part of the complaint investigation process. The PMU should ensure that the investigators are neutral and do not have any stake in the outcome of the investigation.
6. **Responding to complainants:** A written response to all grievances will be provided to the complainant within 15 working days. If further investigation is required, the complainant will be informed accordingly and a final response will be provided after an additional period of 15 working days. Grievances that cannot be resolved by grievance receiving authorities/office at their level should be referred to a higher level for verification and further investigation.
7. **Appeal:** In the event that the parties are unsatisfied with the response provided by the GRM, they will be able to submit an appeal to TNC within 10 days from the date of decision. In the event that the parties are unsatisfied with the decision of the appeal committee, the parties can submit their grievances directly to the GEF Agency or the Court of Law for further adjudication.
8. **Monitoring and evaluation:** The M&E Officer at the PMU will compile a quarterly report with full information on the grievances they received across all PFPs. The report shall contain a description of the grievances and their investigation status. Summarized GRM reports shall constitute part of the regular project progress reporting, and shall be submitted to the PSC and WWF GEF Agency. These reports should also be available on the websites of TNC and WWF GEF Agency.

### **3. WWF GEF Agency GRM**

In addition to the project-specific GRM, a complainant can submit a grievance to the WWF GEF Agency. A grievance can also be filed with the Project Complaints Officer (PCO), a WWF staff member fully

independent from the Project Team, who is responsible for the WWF Accountability and Grievance Mechanism and who can be reached at:

Email: [SafeguardsComplaint@wwfus.org](mailto:SafeguardsComplaint@wwfus.org)

Mailing address:

Project Complaints Officer  
Safeguards Complaints,  
World Wildlife Fund  
1250 24th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20037

Stakeholder may also submit a complaint online through an independent third-party platform at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/59041/index.html>

#### **4. GEF Conflict Resolution Commissioner**

In addition to the country-level, PFP-wide and WWF GEF Agency GRMs, a person concerned about a GEF-financed project or operation may submit a complaint to the GEF Resolution Commissioner, who plays a facilitation role and reports directly to the GEF CEO. The Commissioner can be reached at:

E-mail: [plallas@thegef.org](mailto:plallas@thegef.org)

**Mailing Address:**

Mr. Peter Lallas  
Global Environment Facility  
The World Bank Group, MSN N8-800  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20433-002

Complaints submitted to the Commissioner should be in writing and can be in any language. The complaints should provide at least a general description of the nature of the concerns, the type of harm that may result, and (where relevant) the GEF-funded projects or program at issue.

#### **4.10. Budget**

The ESMF implementation costs, including all costs related to compensation to project affected people, will be fully covered from the project budget. It will be the responsibility of the Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer to ensure that sufficient budget is available for all activity-specific mitigation measures that may be required in compliance with the ESMF.

A full-time Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer will be employed and 100% of their time will be dedicated to ensuring the ESMF implementation.

Budget for capacity building on ESMF/PF/IPPF implementation, travel costs and workshops and meetings for safeguards monitoring (including travel, workshops and meetings) will be included in the overall monitoring and evaluation budget.

**ANNEX 1. SAFEGUARD ELIGIBILITY AND IMPACTS SCREENING**

This screening tool needs to be filled out for each activity or category of activities included in the annual work plan and budget. In addition, the screening tool needs to be completed whenever management measures or management plans are developed and/or when project intervention areas are determined.

The tool will be filled out by the Safeguards Specialist and reviewed by the M&E Officer. The decision on whether a Site-Specific Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) or Livelihood Restoration Plan (LRP) are required shall be made by the Safeguards Specialist in consultation with the WWF GEF Agency Safeguards Specialists and [insert relevant other title/body], based on the information provided in this screening form, as well as interviews with the PMU/CTF staff, local communities, and any other relevant stakeholders.

**Part 1: Basic Information**

1	<b>Activity Name</b>	
	<b>Description of Activity (“sub-activities”)</b>	
2	Type of Activity:	New activity <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation of activity <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Activity location:	
4	Total size of site area	
5	Activity implementation dates	
6	Total cost	

(Move to Part 2 after filling in all information in the table above)

**Part 2: Eligibility Screening**

No.	Screening Questions: <i>Would the project activity</i>	Yes	No	Comments/ Explanation
1	Lead to land management practices that cause degradation (biological or physical) of the soil and water? Examples include, but are not limited to: the felling of trees in core zones and critical watersheds; activities involving quarrying and mining; commercial logging; or dredge fishing.			
2	Negatively affect areas of critical natural habitats or breeding ground of known rare/endorsed species?			

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No.	Screening Questions: <i>Would the project activity</i>	Yes	No	Comments/ Explanation
3	Significantly increase GHG emissions?			
4	Use genetically modified organisms or modern biotechnologies or their products?			
5	Involve the procurement and/or use of pesticides and other chemicals specified as persistent organic pollutants under the Stockholm Convention or within categories IA, IB, or II by the World Health Organization?			
6	Develop forest plantations?			
7	Result in the loss of biodiversity, alteration of the functioning of ecosystems, and introduction of new invasive alien species?			
8	Involve the procurement or use of weapons and munitions or fund military activities?			
9	Lead to private land acquisition and/or the to physical displacement and voluntary or involuntary relocation of people, including non-titled and migrant people?			
10	Contribute to exacerbating any inequality or gender gap that may exist?			
11	Involve illegal child labor, forced labor, sexual exploitation or other forms of exploitation?			
12	Adversely affect indigenous peoples' rights, lands, natural resources, territories, livelihoods, knowledge, social fabric, traditions, governance systems, and culture or heritage (physical and non-physical or intangible) inside and/or outside the project area?			
13	Negatively impact areas with cultural, historical or transcendent values for individuals and communities?			
Please provide any further information that can be relevant:				

If all answers are “No”, project activity is eligible and move to Part 3

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If at least one question answered as “yes”, the project activity is ineligible and the proponent can reselect the site of project activity and do screening again.

**Part 3: Impacts screening**

Answer the questions below and follow the guidance to provide basic information regarding the suggested activity and describe its potential impacts.

No.	Would the project activity:	Yes/No	Provide explanation and supporting documents if needed
<i>Environmental Impacts</i>			
1	Result in permanent or temporary change in land use, land cover or topography.		
2	Involve clearance of existing land vegetation		If yes, number of trees to be cut down: Species of trees: Are the trees protected: Total land area of vegetation cover removed: Estimated economic value of the trees, crops and vegetation to be cut down / removed and any replacement costs (e.g., fees, registration, taxes): Provide additional details:
3	Involve reforestation or modification of natural habitats? If yes, will it involve use or introduction of non-native species into the project area?		
4	Will pesticides be used? If so, are they on the list of those excluded by the Stockholm Convention?		
5	Result in environmental pollution? This may include air pollution, liquid waste, solid waste, or waste as the result of earth moving or excavation for example.		
6	Trigger land disturbance, erosion, subsidence and instability?		
7	Result in significant use of water, such as for construction?		
8	Produce dust during construction and operation?		



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9	Generate significant ambient noise?		
10	Increase the sediment load in the local water bodies?		
11	Change on-site or downstream water flows?		
12	Negatively affect water dynamics, river connectivity or the hydrological cycle in ways other than direct changes of water flows (e.g. water filtration and aquifer recharge, sedimentation)?		
13	Result in negative impacts to any endemic, rare or threatened species; species that have been identified as significant through global, regional, national, or local laws?		
14	Could the activity potentially increase the vulnerability of local communities to climate variability and changes (e.g., through risks and events such as landslides, erosion, flooding or droughts)?		
15	Based on the results of the questions above, what are the potential cumulative environmental effects to the given landscape?		
<b>Socio-Economic Impacts</b>			
16	Negatively impact existing tenure rights (formal and informal) of individuals, communities or others to land, fishery, and forest resources		
17	Operate where there are indigenous peoples and their lands/territories/waters are located?  OR  Operate where any indigenous communities have close cultural/spiritual or land use relationships? If yes to either, answer questions:		
	a. Has an FPIC Process been started?  b. Will any restrictions on their use of land/territories/water/natural resources be restricted?		
18	Restrict access to natural resources (e.g., watersheds or rivers, grazing areas, forestry, non-timber forest products) or restrict the way		

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	natural resources are used, in ways that will impact livelihoods?		
19	Restrict access to sacred sites of local communities (including ethnic minorities) and/or places relevant for women's or men's religious or cultural practices?		
20	Operate where there are any cultural heritage or religious or sacred sites that may be impacted by the project?		
21	Undermine the customary rights of local communities to participate in consultations in a free, prior, and informed manner to address interventions directly affecting their lands, territories or resources?		
22	Based on the results of the questions above, what are the potential cumulative socio-economic effects to the given communities?		
<b><i>Labor and Working Conditions</i></b>			
23	Involve hiring of workers or contracting with labor agencies to provide labor? If yes, answer questions a-b below:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Are labor management issues prevalent in the landscape?</li> <li>b) Are illegal child labor issues prevalent in the landscape?</li> </ul>		
24	Involve working in hazardous environments such as steep, rocky slopes, areas infested with poisonous animals and/or disease vectors?		
<b><i>Indigenous and Vulnerable or Minority Groups</i></b>			
25	Negatively affect vulnerable groups (such as ethnic minorities, poorer households, migrants, and assistant herders) in terms of impact on their economic or social life conditions or contribute to their discrimination or marginalization?		
26	Negatively affect the livelihoods and/or customs and/or traditional practices of indigenous groups?		

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27	Stir or exacerbate conflicts among communities, groups, within families or individuals? Also considering dynamics of recent or expected migration including displaced people, as well as those who are most vulnerable to threats of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment.		
28	Based on the results of the questions above, what are the potential cumulative effects to the given communities?		
<b>Occupational and Community Health and Safety</b>			
29	Involve any risks related to the usage of construction materials, working high above the ground or in canals where slopes are unstable or there is a risk of drowning?		
30	Generate societal conflicts, increased risk of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment or pressure on local resources between temporary workers and local communities?		
31	Expose local community to risks related to construction works or use of machinery (e.g., loading and unloading of construction materials, excavated areas, fuel storage and usage, electrical use, machinery operations)		
32	Expose the local community or project workers to health risks, including COVID-19		
33	Work in areas where forest fires are a threat? If yes, how recently was the last one?		
34	Work in areas where there the presence or history of vector-borne diseases (some examples include malaria, yellow fever, encephalitis)		
<b>GBV/ SEAH Risks</b>			
35	Is there a risk that the project could pose a greater burden on women by restricting the use, development, and protection of natural resources by women compared with that of men?		
36	Is there a risk that persons employed by or engaged directly in the project might engage in		

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	gender-based violence (including sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment)? The response must consider risks not only at the beneficiary level, but also to workers within all the organizations receiving GCF funding.		
37	Does the project increase the risk of GBV and/or SEAH for women and girls, for example by changing resource use practices or singling out women and girls for training without complimentary training/education for men? The response must consider all workers within the organizations receiving GCF funding.		
38	Does any mandated training for any individuals associated with the project (including project staff, government officials, park rangers and guards, other park staff, consultants, partner organizations and contractors) cover GBV/SEAH (along with human rights, etc.)?		
<b>Conflict Sensitivity and Risks</b>			
39	Are there any major underlying tensions or open conflicts in the landscape/seascape or in the country where the landscape/seascape is situated?  If yes, answer a-d below:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Is there a risk that the activities interact with or exacerbate existing tensions and conflicts in the landscape/seascape?</li> <li>b) Do stakeholders (e.g. implementing partners, rights holders, other stakeholder groups) take a specific position in relation to the conflicts or tensions in the landscape/seascape or are they perceived as taking a position?</li> <li>c) How do stakeholders perceive WWF-Pakistan and its partners in relation to existing conflicts or tensions?</li> <li>d) Could the conflicts or tensions in the landscape/seascape have a negative impact on the activities?</li> </ul>		

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40	Could the activities create conflicts among communities, groups or individuals?		
41	Are some groups (stakeholders, rights holders) benefiting more than others from the activities? And if so, how is that affecting power dynamics and mutual dependencies?		
42	Do the activities provide opportunities to bring different groups with diverging interests positively together?		
43	Based on the results of the questions above, what are the potential cumulative effects of conflict (increasing or decreasing) in the given landscape on the relevant communities?		

List of documents to be attached with Screening form:

1	Layout plan of the activity and photos
2	Summary of the activity proposal
3	No objection certificate from various departments and others relevant stakeholders

**Screening Tool Completed by:**

Signed:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Screening Conclusions [TO BE COMPLETED BY Safeguards Specialist]**

i. Main environmental issues are:

ii. Permits/ clearance needed are:

iii. Main social issues are:

iv. Further assessment/ investigation needed and next step.

a. Need for any special study:.....

b. Preparation of ESMP (main issue to be addressed by the ESMP):.....

c. Preparation of LRP (main issue to be addressed by the LRP):.....

d. Any other requirements/ need/ issue etc:

**Screening Tool Reviewed by:**

Signed:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Exclusion list**

The following practices and activities will not be supported by the project:

1. Land or water management practices that cause degradation (biological or physical) of the soil and water.
2. Activities that negatively affect areas of critical natural habitats or breeding ground of known rare/ endangered species.
3. Actions that represent significant increase in GHG emissions.
4. Use of genetically modified organisms, or the supply or use of modern biotechnologies or their products in crops.
5. Introduction of crops and varieties that previously did not grow in the implementation areas, including seed import/transfer.
6. Actions resulting in loss of biodiversity, alteration of the functioning of ecosystems, and introduction of new invasive alien species.
7. Procurement of pesticides or activities that result in an increase in the use of pesticides.
8. Activities that would lead to physical displacement and voluntary or involuntary relocation.
9. Activities that do not consider gender aspects or contribute to exacerbating any inequality or gender gap that may exist.
10. Child Labor.

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11. Activities that would adversely affect IPs' rights, lands, natural resources, territories, livelihoods, knowledge, social fabric, traditions, governance systems, and culture or heritage (physical and non-physical or intangible) inside and/or outside the project area.

12. Activities that would negatively impact areas with cultural, historical or transcendent values for individuals and communities.