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Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 30-Jan-2023 | Report No: PIDA34066

**BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Project Data**

Country Congo, Republic of	Project ID P177786	Project Name Climate-Resilient and Inclusive Livelihoods Project (ProClimat Congo)	Parent Project ID (if any)
Region WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date 24-Jan-2023	Estimated Board Date 23-Mar-2023	Practice Area (Lead) Environment, Natural Resources & the Blue Economy
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Republic of Congo - Ministry of Economy and Finance	Implementing Agency Republic of Congo - Ministry of Planning, Statistics, and Regional Integration	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To strengthen landscape management and increase the use of improved livelihood activities in targeted communities

Components

Strengthening Capacity of Institutions and Promoting Social Cohesion
Strengthening Investments in Sustainable and Resilient Agriculture and Natural Capital Management
Promoting Inclusive, Climate-resilient Livelihoods and Value Chains
Project management, monitoring, and evaluation
Contingent emergency response

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)**SUMMARY**

Total Project Cost	82.00
Total Financing	82.00
of which IBRD/IDA	70.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS



World Bank Group Financing

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	70.00
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Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	12.00
Global P'ship for Sust. and Resilient Landscapes - PROGREEN	12.00

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Substantial

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. **The Republic of Congo is a lower-middle-income country in Central Africa with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of US\$2,214 (2021).** Congo's economic activity has been picking up in 2022 but has yet to recover from the fallout of the recent crises, illustrating the vulnerability of its undiversified economy to external shocks. As a commodity exporter, Congo is currently benefiting from higher oil prices linked to the war in Ukraine. The resulting increase in government revenues together with a moderation in public spending led to a fiscal surplus estimated at 1.4 percent of GDP (compared to a deficit in 2020). Higher oil prices, improved debt management, and debt restructuring agreements with two of Congo's three largest oil traders helped restore debt sustainability in the second half of 2021 as public debt fell sharply from 113.2 percent of GDP in 2020 to 102.2 percent of GDP in 2021. However, GDP contracted sharply in 2020 (by 7.9 percent) due to the COVID-19 pandemic and is estimated to have contracted further in 2021. The socioeconomic challenges that households and businesses face in Congo have been exacerbated by the economic contraction, especially in the rural areas. With real GDP per capita falling by an estimated 4.6 percent in 2021, the poverty rate is estimated to have further increased, reaching 52 percent in 2021. Inflation remained contained in 2021, but disruptions in global supply chains and high international commodity and agricultural prices exerted inflationary pressures on domestic food prices, which increased by about 3.4 percent, particularly affecting the poor. With the war in Ukraine, food prices have risen further in 2022, exacerbating food insecurity. Inequality levels also remain high by global comparison: non-inclusive growth has contributed to high inequality as seen in Congo's Gini coefficient of 0.489.¹ Although the overall number of poor people decreased from 1.8 million in 2005 to 1.6 million in 2011, it rose in rural areas from 795,000 to 951,000 where the poverty headcount increased from 64.8

¹ Data from the World Bank World Development Indicators, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=CG>, accessed October 2022.



percent to 69.4 percent.² The dynamics of exclusion go beyond the spatial disparities between urban and rural areas and they are exemplified in the divide between population groups and among ethnic lines, with women, youth, persons with disabilities, and indigenous people (IP) being the most excluded groups nationally. In the Pool Department, cyclical fragility and violence hinder Congo's efforts to build a more resilient and inclusive society.

2. Climate change is increasingly affecting Congo and the country has only very low capacity to adapt to these impacts. Congo has experienced significant climate variation over the past century.³ Mean annual temperature has increased by 0.6°C, and both average maximum temperatures and average minimum temperatures have increased (+0.76°C and +0.69°C, respectively). Mean annual precipitation has decreased between the 1950s and 1980s, and greater fluctuations in intra-seasonal precipitation patterns have been observed in recent years. Congo has also seen more erratic and extreme rainfall. Projected climate changes foresee increased heat and continued erratic rainfall. Temperature projections under the high-emission Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) 8.5 scenario of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicate an increase of 0.5°C to 1°C by 2020 for Congo, around 1.5°C by 2040, and from 2°C to 3.5°C by 2070.⁴ By the middle to the end of the twenty-first century, the mean annual precipitation is expected to increase under all emissions scenarios.⁵ The impacts of climate change will exacerbate the socioeconomic challenges that Congo is facing and require a multisectoral response that encompasses approaches to agriculture and natural capital management that reduce climate vulnerability and build people's resilience while leveraging additional development benefits. Climate change is expected to threaten livelihoods, heighten levels of exclusion, and increase the high levels of fragility in Congo, with a disproportionate effect on the poorer and more vulnerable sections of society. For example, an increase in extreme weather events can have a crippling effect on people's food security, aggravating existing inequalities and intensifying social tensions. The compounding effects of climate change and fragility can heighten insecurity overall and be exploited by violent groups. As climate change affects the livelihoods of the poor, particularly through its impacts on the agriculture sector, and as natural capital management can play an important role in reducing vulnerability and supporting carbon sinks, multisectoral action is key.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

3. Climatic change is projected to have a heavy impact on Congo's agriculture and ecosystems, with negative consequences for its people already materializing. Projected impacts include elevated flood risks, increased vulnerability of rain-fed agriculture (due to more erratic rainfall), and changes in pest and disease vectors (due to rising temperatures). In the Bouenza, Niari, and Pool Departments of

² World Bank. 2019. *Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for the Republic of Congo for the Period FY20–FY24*, Report No. 126962-CG. Washington, DC: World Bank.

³ The World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal describes the climate variability observed between 1901 and 2016 at <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/congo-republic/climate-data-historical>.

⁴ IPCC. 2013. "Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis." In *Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, edited by T. F. Stocker, D. Qin, G.-K. Plattner, M. Tignor, S. K. Allen, J. Boschung, A. Nauels, Y. Xia, V. Bex, and P. M. Midgley. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA, 1535.

⁵ Note that far southern Congo shows little change in precipitation in these projections as the oceanic climate seems to have a mitigating impact.



southern Congo—specifically in the environs of the urban areas of Mindouli, Madingou, Nkayi, and Dolisie, areas with the highest levels of interannual variability in rainfall and some of the lowest seasonal rainfall in the country—increased risk of drought, associated with an increase in temperatures, is likely to increase the risk of forest fires, which will contribute to intensifying erosion pressures. In central and northern Congo, climate change is threatening communities with rising temperatures, increased number of days of extreme heat, and extreme weather events such as more frequent and severe droughts and more intense rainfall. This may translate into lower water availability, more variable and shorter growing seasons, and reductions in production potential. In the far north of Congo, heavy rainfall caused extreme flooding in 2019 and 2020, which affected approximately 170,000 people in the Sangha Department and 200,000 in the Likouala Department, as well as many in the Cuvette and Plateaux Departments. In 2021, about 72,000 people were affected in these departments. The floods devastated a large part of agricultural production, contributing to a significant increase in food prices and making emergency humanitarian assistance from the United Nations necessary. In 2022, maize yields were negatively affected by below-average rainfall. Extreme-weather events have direct negative impacts on ecosystems just as they have on crops, particularly in already degraded areas. Flora and fauna may face additional pressure when disaster-affected people need to compensate for harvest losses through increased hunting and gathering and expansion of agricultural lands.

4. Climate impacts on agriculture would undermine a sector that, together with forestry and fishing, is of major importance to the economy yet remains far below its potential and has come under pressure from recent crises. The sector is a major source of employment in Congo, providing about 40 percent of jobs⁶ but contributed only an average of 9 percent to GDP in 2020.⁷ Low population density in rural areas (56.5 percent of the population lives in urban areas) and a lack of mechanization hamper productivity.⁸ The country produces only 30 percent of its national food needs and only 2 percent of arable land is cultivated. Agricultural exports are stagnant, and the country suffers from a rapidly deteriorating trade balance for food. Food imports amount to nearly US\$2 billion annually, 80 percent of which correspond to animal products as local livestock production is limited due to a lack of animal feed.⁹ The COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have been exacerbating food insecurity by reducing the supply of grain (both for human consumption and animal feed) and inputs such as seedlings, fertilizers, and pesticides. A May 2022 assessment by the United Nations estimated that grain prices increased by 40 percent due to the disruption of imports from the Russian Federation.¹⁰ At the same time, the local production of food crops is expected to decline by 0.2 percent and 0.4 percent in 2023 and 2024, respectively.¹¹ Households are facing increasing food prices and the Government is increasing its expenditures for subsidies. In July 2022, the Government adopted a Resilience Plan on the Food Crisis 2022–2023 to tackle the food insecurity in the country. Financial resources and technical support to increase food production are urgently needed to meet short-term consumption needs and increase the country's food production in the medium and long term. Factors that could contribute to such a structural transformation in an equitable manner include (a) improved access to rural finance (including long-term

⁶ World Bank. 2019. *Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for the Republic of Congo for the Period FY20–FY24*, Report No. 126962-CG. Washington, DC: World Bank.

⁷ Ministry of Planning, Statistics, and Regional Integration (*Ministère du Plan, de la Statistique et de l'Intégration Régionale*, MPSIR). 2021. *Rapport d'évaluation du PND 2018–2022*.

⁸ MPSIR. 2021. *Rapport d'évaluation du PND 2018–2022*.

⁹ Figures based on World Bank calculations and data from the National Statistics Institute.

¹⁰ United Nations. 2022. *Effets socio-économiques de la guerre ukrainienne sur l'économie congolaise*.

¹¹ World Bank estimate based on data from the National Statistics Institute.



finance for producer groups/cooperatives), (b) access to improved inputs, (c) strengthened technical capacity on agricultural practices, (d) better organization of farmers and integration into value chains, and (e) improvements to infrastructure and facilities to reduce post-harvest losses.

5. **The poor and marginalized groups are particularly vulnerable to climate-related shocks as they rely heavily on agriculture and ecosystem services.** About 27 percent of the population lives in a household whose head works in agriculture, a segment that has Congo's highest poverty rate. Most of Congo's poor are either unemployed or rely on agriculture and the informal sector for their livelihoods. About 38 percent of the population is undernourished and hunger is at a serious level of 30.3 percent according to the 2021 Global Hunger Index, a figure that is high compared to middle-income peers.¹² The situation is even more dire among IP. About three out of four IP households surveyed in the departments of Kouilou, Lékoumou, La Likouala, Plateaux, and Sangha are food insecure. Only 17.8 percent of IP households are food secure, while 40.3 percent are moderately food insecure. IP in this latter category have significant food consumption gaps or are only marginally able to meet their minimum food requirements without engaging in irreversible coping strategies.¹³

6. **While women play a critical role in agriculture, they face gender-specific barriers that limit their economic productivity and put them at a higher risk of vulnerability to climate change.** More than 41 percent of women ages 15–30 rely on agricultural income (for men, it is 28 percent), however, they tend to be concentrated in subsistence livelihoods groups with low productivity. While national data is scarce, consultations indicate that women dominate over 70 percent of informal livelihoods groups. However, this number decreases to as low as 10 percent when it comes to participation in large cooperatives and/or formalized groups involved in commercialization. Desk research and additional consultations conducted in rural areas in the Congo show that factors of low productivity of women are multifold: *at the economic level*, rural women tend to concentrate in small livelihoods groups that lack access to assistance to formalize their groups, learn new agriculture techniques, and improve their agriculture yields. This is driven by the lack of child care which limits women's economic participation, the concentration of women in food crops limiting their opportunities to move toward formalized and established cooperatives to participate in value chains, and limited access to improved and diversified skills to improve their yields, in addition to limited ownership of assets such as land.¹⁴ *At the social level*, women have limited power in households and communities and lack bargaining power for local decision-making, which often excludes them from benefiting from local investments. A recent survey conducted by the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Integration of Women in Development finds that women are underrepresented in important decision-making positions: only 25.6 percent of women are holding such positions in the public and private sector.¹⁵ Incidents of gender-based violence (GBV) are high, reaching up to 40 percent, and these numbers have been reported to be higher during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the context of increased risks of climate change, the impacts not only affect women's health, productivity, and development but also contribute to intensifying gender gaps. Furthermore, global evidence¹⁶ shows that during climate-related disasters, women face additional risks, due in large part to gender inequities that

¹² <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/congo.html>, accessed in October 2022.

¹³ International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs April 2022.

¹⁴ World Food Programme 2019. Congo Country Strategic Plan 2019–2023.

¹⁵ Country Policy Institutional Assessment, World Bank 2021.

¹⁶ Hallegatte, Stephane, Mook Bangalore, Laura Bonzanigo, Marianne Fay, Tamaro Kane, Ulf Narloch, Julie Rozenberg, David Treguer, and Adrien Vogt-Schilb. 2016. *Shock Waves: Managing the Impacts of Climate Change on Poverty. Climate Change and Development*. Washington, DC: World Bank.



result in women bearing a disproportional brunt of disaster impacts. Women in poverty are most reliant on natural resources for their livelihoods and have fewer resources to cope and adapt to climate shocks and natural hazards such as hurricanes, food shortages, droughts, and landslides.

7. **High unemployment rates and exclusion from the country's political, social, and economic opportunities put Congolese youth (mainly young men) at risk of being drawn into violence and crime and make them more vulnerable.** The population under age 30 accounts for nearly 50 percent of the total population. Latest surveys¹⁷ conducted highlighted that 54 percent of youth under 20 are no longer enrolled in the education system. This survey also reflected the worrying situation for youth employment, which is characterized by mass and long-term unemployment. One of the main drivers of unemployment among youth is the mass rural exodus trend that pushes young people towards cities and exacerbates subsequently urban unemployment. Youth unemployment has therefore increased over the years and has reached around 42 percent.¹⁸ Frustrated youth who have less voice and limited access to economic opportunities are even more vulnerable to getting mobilized by criminal gangs, putting additional strain on the fragility of the country.

8. **Climate-smart natural capital management is a necessity to take full advantage of the opportunities that Congo's natural assets can provide to the economy and the population.** Congo's per capita wealth in renewable natural capital amounted to US\$7,093 in 2018,¹⁹ which corresponded to 16 percent of total wealth, covering particularly timber (US\$2,178), ecosystem services (US\$2,542), agricultural land (US\$1,710), and protected areas (US\$619).²⁰ Natural capital secures the livelihoods of many and serves as a safety net particularly for the poorest. For example, an estimated 575,000 Congolese live in forest areas, which house a diverse range of biomes, ecosystems, and habitats, including evergreen, semi-deciduous, and alluvial and mangrove forests, as well as a rich fauna. Congo's IP depend almost exclusively on natural resources found in forests for their livelihoods and nutrition. In areas with few formal income sources, local communities conduct slash-and-burn agriculture, engage in artisanal timber extraction, and hunt both legally and illegally. Many of these practices are unsustainable and growing human populations in areas with fragile ecosystems pose challenges to sustainable production and biodiversity conservation, requiring new approaches to agriculture, governance of natural resources, and access to alternative livelihoods. Climate change can further increase the pressure on ecosystems, be it directly through extreme weather or indirectly by inducing people to cultivate new land. This can negatively affect ecosystem services that are crucial for livelihood diversification and for agricultural productivity and resilience, such as moisture retention, temperature regulation, and soil stabilization. Conservation is thus an important element of climate-smart natural capital management and can build on Congo's existing network of protected areas as over one-tenth (13.2 percent) of Congo's land area is protected, including four national parks. This opens up opportunities to sustainably increase the value derived from Congo's biodiversity to promote economic diversification and local livelihoods in a changing climate. Ecotourism (that is, sustainable, nature-based tourism) has significant growth potential as a high-value niche market. The country is home to forest elephants, gorillas, chimpanzees, and other species that would be of interest to tourists, yet the sector is not sufficiently organized and regulated. Over the last

¹⁷ International Labor Organization, *l'Enquête sur la transition vers la vie active (ETVA) 2016*

¹⁸ The World Bank, 2019, Country Partnership Framework For The Republic Of Congo For the Period FY20-FY24

¹⁹ This amount is similar to the value of nonrenewable natural capital, which amounted to US\$7,577 per capita.

²⁰ World Bank. 2021. *The Changing Wealth of Nations 2021: Managing Assets for the Future*. Washington, DC: World Bank.



five years, growth in the tourism sector has always remained below 5 percent of GDP.²¹ Ecotourism is constrained particularly by insufficient tourism infrastructure and services, logistical challenges, and a low international profile. To drive tourism growth, the country will need to safeguard its abundant biodiversity resources, empower local communities, develop accessible tourist experiences, and improve marketing.

9. **As co-benefit, reconciling agricultural development and natural capital management will also be imperative to avoid dangerous climate change globally.** Making up 12 percent of the Congo Basin's forest complex, the country's natural forests are the third largest expanse of tropical rainforest in Africa, covering 23.5 million ha (69 percent of its land area). Given the significance of the Congo Basin as a carbon sink, the sustainable management of Congo's forests is necessary to avoid undermining global and national efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and ensure conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+²²). Despite Congo's deforestation rate—0.052 percent per year from 2000 to 2012—being among the lowest annual net deforestation rates in Africa, land-use change and forestry (LUCF) contributed 83 percent of the total 2017 emissions of 48.39 million tCO₂e, presumably due to low levels of industrialization and thus low emissions from other sectors.²³ In the absence of mitigating measures, current trajectories and development plans indicate that the country's LUCF emissions may rise in the future.

10. **A landscape approach that harmonizes economic development needs and conservation while building people's resilience is a way forward to building a sustainable and inclusive economic pathway and managing climate risks in Congo.** Landscape approaches recognize the interdependence of human and natural systems and produce sustainable landscapes that promote prosperity. A variety of stakeholders at different levels need to work together to increase synergies between different, and often competing, sector-focused goals, for example to avoid agricultural encroachment on protected areas. Integrated landscape management offers a multisectoral approach to addressing complex environmental and development challenges. It seeks to sustainably manage multiple land uses across landscapes, considering both the natural and human systems that depend on them and achieving impact at scale considering social, environmental, and economic factors. The proposed Climate-Resilient and Inclusive Livelihoods Project (ProClimat) will adopt such an approach.

11. **Within Congo's subnational government system, a landscape approach needs to be cognizant of all stakeholders to ensure mobilization and ownership of development activities.** Congo's subnational government has deconcentrated and decentralized functions that work in parallel. Departments are led by a *préfet* and have dual organization for decentralized and deconcentrated functions. On the deconcentrated side, line ministries have representatives at the department and district levels. They report to the central government while they serve as technical advisers to the *préfet*. Each district is governed by a *sous-préfet* who reports to the *préfet*. On the decentralized side, villages in the rural areas are organized into municipalities under an elected mayor who represents the State and the municipality. Within this complex system, fiscal decentralization remains minimal, and roles and responsibilities of functions of councils at the department and municipal levels are unclear. Learning from the existing World Bank and other donor projects, developing a project with a landscape approach and strong community

²¹ United States Forest Service. 2022. *Mission d'appui à l'élaboration d'une stratégie nationale de l'ACFAP sur la promotion de l'écotourisme dans les aires protégées du Congo*.

²² REDD+ = Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.

²³ Data from World Resources Institute's ClimateWatch, <https://www.climatewatchdata.org/countries/COG>.



ownership would require building capacity of the various deconcentrated and decentralized services and ensuring their meaningful engagement and participation.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

12. The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to strengthen landscape management and increase the use of improved livelihood activities in targeted communities.

Key Results

13. The proposed PDO-level indicators are as follows:

Strengthen landscape management

- Area under agroecological practices (hectares (ha)) (Climate Indicator)
- Land area under sustainable landscape management practices (ha) (Corporate Results Indicator (CRI); Climate Indicator)

Increase the use of improved livelihood activities in targeted communities

- Beneficiaries using improved livelihood activities supported by the project (number) (Gender Indicator)
 - a. of which women
 - b. of which ex-combatants
 - c. of which IP
 - d. of which youth
 - e. of which people with disability.
- MSMEs reporting an increase in profit of 20% or more from grants supported by the project (number) (Gender Indicator)
 - f. of which women-led

D. Project Description

14. The beneficiaries of ProClimat will be rural communities in three distinct landscape areas in the north, center, and south regions. The three landscape areas were selected using the following criteria: (a) presence of legally identified protected areas given their conservation value; (b), relevant parts of districts close to protected areas that may exert pressure on the areas' natural capital (for example,



through agricultural encroachment and poaching); and (c) districts close to protected areas that suffer from high levels of fragility and exclusion, notably in the Pool and Lékoumou Departments. It is important to note that certain districts or villages along the borders of these three landscapes might be added or removed based on proximity to other beneficiaries of the project; increased exposure to climate risks and fragility; and/or the potential for successfully promoting sustainable and resilient agriculture and natural capital management.²⁴

15. **The project is expected to reach approximately 562,000 beneficiaries in addition to benefiting department, district, and local governments.**²⁵ Activities will be tailored to the respective landscape. For example, agriculture will only be supported in degraded or savanna areas and crops and value chain assistance will be adjusted accordingly. This will entail a stronger coordination mandate and presence at the local level through multi-stakeholder platforms. In the Pool Department with its situation of fragility, the project will prioritize areas with high concentration of ex-combatants to support their livelihoods activity and promote social cohesion. Given Congo's weak institutional capacity, analytical work will be conducted during early project implementation to identify a landscape governance approach suitable for this context.

16. **The project's components will be closely integrated to support a landscape approach that will ensure that the activities in each intervention zone address economic development needs, sustainable use of natural resources, and conservation simultaneously.** The focus will be on empowering communities to create and improve resilient livelihoods. The project will be divided into four main components that will complement and be closely linked to each other, thus providing comprehensive assistance for landscape management and livelihood support; it includes a fourth component for emergency response. Component 1 will focus on improving the capacity of institutions that are key for landscape management and supporting communities to lay the foundation for their effective inclusion in project activities. Component 2 will finance sustainable and resilient agriculture infrastructure prioritized by communities under Component 1. It will also support infrastructure investments in areas that provide ecosystem services for agriculture and in protected areas, guided by analytical work developed under Component 1. Component 3 will finance investment plans developed under Component 1 through livelihood grants accompanied by capacity support, leveraging the infrastructure investments financed under Component 2. Component 4 is dedicated to project management and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The project includes a Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC) as Component 5.

17. **To support agriculture-based livelihoods in line with its objective, the project will adopt an approach to sustainable and resilient agriculture that draws on the priorities of the CSAIP.** These include, for example, agroforestry systems for cassava, maize, bananas, and cocoa; improving soil fertility and

²⁴ For purpose of the project, resilience is understood to include (i) economic resilience through increasing income-earning opportunities for beneficiaries, and (i) social resilience through improving social networks and ties. The project will follow a resilience model that seeks to enhance the absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities of its beneficiaries. For example, reducing the exposure of communities and vulnerable areas to flooding, drought, and erosion will mitigate or even prevent the negative impacts of these hazards, improving absorptive capacity. Providing new and improved livelihood opportunities based on agricultural and environmental best practices can help people adjust to potential future impacts from hazards, thus increasing the adaptive capacity. Improved planning as well as conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems are examples of how transformative capacity can be improved by creating new systems to avoid negative impacts from hazards. More information on the resilience model is available in: World Bank. 2017. *Operational Guidance for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in Climate and Disaster Resilience-Building Operations*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

²⁵ This figure corresponds to the population of the three target areas as of the last available census data (2007).



restoring degraded lands; promoting aquaculture; and providing irrigation kits. Deforestation-free agriculture supply chains are emphasized to avoid conversion of natural forests. If requested by communities, the project may also finance activities outside the CSAIP if they are conducive to meeting the PDO and pass a climate change screening based on criteria that will be defined in the Project Implementation Manual (PIM). Guiding principles of agroecology will be applied to implement the approaches and techniques prioritized in the CSAIP. As a holistic and integrated approach, agroecology simultaneously applies ecological and social concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable agriculture and food systems.²⁶ For the sake of this Project Appraisal Document, the concept of agroecology will be operationalized to explicitly take into account climate change considerations. Agroecology's focus on optimizing the interactions between plants, animals, humans, and the environment while also addressing the need for inclusive food systems will be conducive to implementing the project's people-centered landscape approach.

18. The project activities are designed with a focus on inclusion to ensure sustainability and ownership. Integrated landscape approaches require a high degree of collaboration and trust-building among all stakeholder to ensure local ownership of activities and sustainability of the landscape. This is even more important in an FCV context such as in Congo. Therefore, the different project activities are designed to build trust between different levels of the government (national, departmental, and local), and promote close collaboration with various stakeholders to jointly define the potentials and limitations of the resources in each landscape, the different needs and interests of the groups involved, and how the resources in each landscape are to be used. Project activities are intended to also address drivers of fragility identified above and to ensure a participatory approach that targets certain traditionally excluded groups. The results framework of the project will be disaggregated, where applicable, by target group to allow for inclusion monitoring during project implementation.

19. The project addresses multiple gender gaps through its design. As identified above, there are social and economic barriers that contribute to women's lower productivity and which the project will aim to address. These barriers combined prevent women-led livelihoods groups from formalizing, accumulating profit, and graduating into cooperatives and MSMEs that are viable and capable to participate in value chain and commercialization activities. The project will adopt a multi-fold approach to address these gaps. First, the project will address limited participation of women in local decision-making by designing and implementing trainings on leadership and participation that specifically target women to support their agency, promote their participation in local project investment plans, and ensure their full integration in the various investments of the project. The indicator used to measure the outcomes of this activity is *"Beneficiaries reporting that Project Investment Plans reflect their needs"*, which will be disaggregated by the various target groups of the project given the broader focus on inclusion. The target value for women is 70%, meaning that 70% of the beneficiaries reporting on the indicator should be women. The second gender gap that will be addressed is the concentration of women in non-formal livelihoods groups, which limits their opportunities to move toward formalized and established cooperatives to participate in value chains, and the limited access to improved and diversified skills to increase profit. The project has a dedicated sub-component to work with livelihoods groups that are dominated by women to offer social and economic packages and to support them in formalizing and increasing profitability. The indicator used for these activities is *"Livelihoods groups reporting an increase*

²⁶ Definition provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO as per <https://www.fao.org/agroecology/overview/en/> (accessed on November 11, 2022).



in profit of 20% or more due to grant support or training provided by the project”, with a target value of 60% of these being led by women. The project also includes other activities targeting women to facilitate their participation in the activities described above, such as psychosocial support, support to acquire identification documents to participate in livelihoods, and others as outlined in the component descriptions below.

20. Citizen engagement (CE) is an integral part of ProClimat, with people being at the center of its implementation. The project aims to strengthen citizen engagement through bottom-up and top-down means. Community members will be empowered to participate in decision making and planning. Local authorities will be supported to include community members in planning and execution of project activities. Specifically, the project will use the following citizen engagement mechanisms:

- *Grievance Mechanism:* The project will develop a robust local Grievance Mechanism (GM) to allow beneficiaries and other stakeholders to share concerns and feedback. The GM will ensure that queries or clarifications about the project are responded to in a timely manner and that grievances are addressed efficiently and effectively.
- *Consultations:* Meaningful and inclusive consultations will be conducted throughout project implementation. The project will make sure the process of mobilization and planning is inclusive and participatory so that the voices of disadvantaged groups are expressed and all social groups, including women, IPs, ex-combatants and youth, are involved.
- *Participatory planning:* As part of strengthening citizen participation in the project activities, the project will support a participatory process at the level of each village, bringing together community leaders, women, youth, and other vulnerable and marginalized groups, in addition to local authorities and NGOs operating in the area, to develop Project Investment Plans (PIPs). These plans will be consulted on widely and will be approved by the communities and local district and departmental stakeholders.
- *Capacity building for Citizen Engagement:* As part of the community engagement process to develop the PIPs and to support social inclusion and climate resilience, the project will finance leadership and empowerment trainings, dialogue sessions, mentorship programs, and mental support for beneficiaries to ensure their full participation in the drafting of local development plans and to strengthen their participation in local decision-making.
- *Citizen satisfaction survey:* To ensure satisfaction of the communities and solicit periodic feedback of beneficiaries, the project will conduct beneficiary perception surveys on an annual basis.
- *Participatory decision making:* With the project adopting a Community Driven Development (CDD) approach, the project will put beneficiaries in the driver’s seat at the department, municipal, and district levels. It will promote inclusive participation of all stakeholders, including vulnerable groups, in local decision making.

The project will measure CE-specific indicators through the Results Framework: Intermediate indicators will include (i) Beneficiaries reporting that Project Investment Plans reflect their needs, (ii) Beneficiaries reporting improved participation in local decision making because of project activities, and (iii) Grievances registered related to delivery of project benefits that are actually addressed through the project Grievance Mechanism.

Component 1: Strengthening Capacity of Institutions and Promoting Social Cohesion (US\$11.5 million)



21. The component will finance activities supporting institutional and community capacity to build inclusive livelihoods in a changing climate and ensure inclusive participation in such processes.

Subcomponent 1.1: Building Institutional Capacity on Sustainable and Resilient Agriculture and Natural Capital Management at the national, departmental, and local levels (US\$5 million)

22. **The subcomponent will strengthen the capacity of ministries, their deconcentrated structures, and decentralized structures relevant for sustainable and resilient agriculture and natural capital management.** It will finance technical assistance to these different stakeholders to participate in the project, build their knowledge on the proposed landscape approach and technical issues, and ensure their ownership of project activities. A focus will be on improving stakeholder capacity to collaborate effectively to implement a landscape approach. To the extent needed for the implementation and monitoring of the infrastructure and livelihood activities of the project, key stakeholders, most notably departmental and local public administrations for agriculture and forest economy, will be provided with additional office and logistical equipment.

23. **Additionally, this subcomponent will finance analytical work and advisory services to facilitate the implementation of subsequent project activities.** Based on stakeholder consultations during preparation, activities would likely include the following:

- Landscape Management: (a) developing a conceptual model for institutionalizing a landscape approach suitable for Congo's context, taking into account models tested in other countries, for example Mozambique and Madagascar; and (b) establishing and supporting multi-stakeholder platforms (for example, strengthening existing committees at the department level to ensure coordination among all relevant line ministries as well as district and local authorities).
- Climate Change: (a) identifying the differential impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations in the project area, including women, youth, and IP, to help improve targeting of project beneficiaries; (b) identifying bottlenecks and opportunities to improve meteorological early warning and response for rural communities; (c) providing advisory services to support Congo's Government in its strategic priority to operationalize the Blue Fund for the Congo Basin, which is intended to be hosted by the Development Bank of the Central African States; (d) providing advisory services on implementing Congo's NDC in alignment with the NDP; and (e) provide assistance for climate-sensitive reforms of policies, laws, and regulations.
- Sustainable and Resilient Agriculture: (a) identifying agroecology approaches suitable for Congo's context and complementary to the CSAIP; (b) conducting organizational and technical assessments of producer groups, cooperatives, and enterprises in the target areas; and (c) identifying agricultural crops adapted to different agri-ecological zones, taking into account climate change, food security, and income diversification.
- Natural Capital Management: (a) identifying hotspots of land degradation and interventions suitable for restoring these areas; (b) identifying and quantifying ecosystem services of particular local or global importance, including in terms of importance for sustainable and resilient agriculture, carbon storage, and conservation value; (c) assessment of zoonotic risk and corresponding mitigation measures for selected areas; (d) assessing the economic



impacts and potential of ecotourism as a source of capital for protected area management and developing an action plan for promoting ecotourism in line with the NDP, Congo's tourism policy/strategy, and the upcoming ecotourism strategy; (e) providing support to improve the legislative and policy framework for natural capital management; (f) assessing the effectiveness of management arrangements for Congo's protected areas; and (g) improving the Government's capacity to plan, operate and manage the national parks system, including through support to the Congolese Agency for Wildlife and Protected Areas based on a needs assessment.

- Women's economic empowerment: (a) developing a gendered assessment of women's barriers and opportunities for participating in economic activities in the targeted landscapes; and (b) mapping other projects in the targeted areas that support women's economic empowerment to ensure synergies and coordination.

Subcomponent 1.2: Promoting Social Cohesion and Inclusive Participation (US\$6 million)

24. **This subcomponent will finance activities at the village, municipal, and district levels for mobilization and inclusion of local communities.** This subcomponent will ensure inclusive participation of all individuals, especially women, youth, ex-combatants, IP, and people with disability, and promote their integration in local decision-making; create awareness and buy-in of project activities; put communities and stakeholders at the department, municipal, and district levels in the driving seat to identify their needs for the subsequent components through a consultative process and ensure their role and contribution for the sustainability of outcomes; and improve local communities' knowledge about climate risks and opportunities for resilience. These activities combined will ensure transparency and accountability for the implementation of the subsequent components of the project as well as the sustainability of activities. It is expected that the activities under the subcomponent will be implemented by one service provider per landscape area.

25. The service provider at the level of each landscape will be responsible for the implementation of a communication campaign to generate awareness about the overall project and ensure sensitization about the cross-cutting issues of climate change and social inclusion that the project addresses through its activities. The campaign will be designed at the department, municipal, and village levels and implemented in each of the targeted areas of the project to ensure the creation of an adequate enabling environment for implementation. Once the campaign is under implementation and creating an enabling environment for the project, the subcomponent will finance, at the level of each village, a participatory process bringing together community leaders, women, youth, and other vulnerable and marginalized groups in addition to local, district, and departmental governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the area to develop Project Investment Plans (PIPs). These plans will be consulted on widely, will be approved by the communities and local district and departmental stakeholders, and will form a road map of activities to be financed by the subsequent components. The PIPs will include (a) a community mapping to identify the most vulnerable households and ensure their full inclusion in the project activities; (b) a list of prioritized small infrastructure to support climate-smart livelihoods in the community, which will be financed under Component 2; and (c) a needs assessment for existing producer groups, cooperatives, and enterprises that will help inform the livelihoods packages under Component 3.

26. As part of the community engagement process to develop the PIPs and to support social inclusion



and climate resilience in the proposed activities, the service provider will conduct a series of capacity-building activities and dialogue sessions. These will include:

- Trainings and information sessions on climate impacts and opportunities for adaptation to improve overall knowledge and ensure that priorities of the PIPs reflect the climate change adaptation needs in the target areas and are aligned with the CSAIP and principles of agroecology;
- Trainings on the role of communities in operating and maintaining selected infrastructure;
- Leadership and empowerment training and dialogue sessions for women and people with disability to ensure their full participation in the local development plans and strengthen their participation in local decision-making;
- Psychosocial support provided by specialized service providers for ex-combatants and survivors of violence (including GBV) to support their agency and ensure their inclusion in the PIPs;
- Mentorship for youth and mediation sessions to address grievances on the community level and promote inclusion of vulnerable people; and
- Communication and behavioral change activities on social inclusion to foster positive norms around the activities of the project.

27. **To ensure participation of community members in these activities and dialogue sessions, a social cohesion fund will be established and managed by the service provider to provide targeted financial support and technical assistance to individuals who face specific challenges that impede them from participating in local development activities.** For example, financial support could be provided for translating documents into local languages and acquiring identification papers to participate in livelihoods activities. Technical assistance could be provided to support community solutions for childcare.

28. **This subcomponent will also finance the establishment of a local Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM).** The mechanism will ensure survivor-centered processes for GBV survivors. It is expected that the GRM will help link GBV survivors to existing services within the target areas. The subcomponent will therefore also finance GBV services mapping if such information does not already exist.

Subcomponent 1.3: Building a Community-based Early Warning and Response System (US\$0.5 million)

29. **Building on the activities of Subcomponent 1.2, this subcomponent will finance a community-based Early Warning and Response System (EWRS) for climate preparedness.** Climate change has affected the agricultural cycle, forcing farmers to adapt their planting calendar. Meteorological information is being collected and analyzed by the national agency for civil aviation (Agence Nationale de l'Aviation Civile ANAC), but the responsible agency does not have the systems in place to disseminate it at the local level where it is urgently needed. The EWRS will include (a) identification and training of farmers as 'early warners', (b) development of a system for reporting climate and harvest changes at the regional and national level (early warning component) using SMS-based technology, (c) diffusion of information from the national level to the 'early warners' for local dissemination to facilitate early response, and (d) training to farmers on the use of the information. The establishment of the EWRS will be carried out by the same service providers selected for the previous subcomponent, given their work at



the community level.

Component 2: Strengthening Investments in Sustainable and Resilient Agriculture and Natural Capital Management (US\$40 million)

30. This component finances infrastructure for sustainable and resilient agriculture and natural capital management. Investments will leverage nature-based solutions to maximize ecosystem services, for example, through stabilization and restoration of degraded areas, wetlands, mangroves, and riverbanks. Financed infrastructure will be subject to climate screenings and have Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) as well as plans for operation and maintenance.

Subcomponent 2.1: Improving Infrastructure for Sustainable and Resilient Agriculture (US\$20 million)

31. **This subcomponent will finance microprojects for agriculture infrastructure identified and prioritized in the PIPs developed under Subcomponent 1.2 to support livelihoods in sustainable and resilient agriculture and promote commercialization and sustainable value chains.** Priority will be given to projects under the CSAIP and could include (a) rehabilitating feeder roads (including small bridges and other river crossings); (b) improving access to public infrastructure needed for livelihoods (for example, off-grid electrification, water points, warehouses, and markets); and (c) providing infrastructure to manage drought and flooding, particularly pluvial flooding, as a key climatic risk for the population and critical assets. In areas prone to flooding, investments will include construction and enhancement of small dikes and small-scale irrigation and drainage systems. A refresher training for communities and relevant stakeholders on climate screenings, agroecology, and operations and maintenance will also be provided under this subcomponent, complementing activities done under Subcomponent 1.2. Additional eligibility criteria for selected investments and a list of ineligible activities will be included in the Project Implementation Manual (PIM).

32. **Each village will receive infrastructure support in two phases, the value of the works not exceeding US\$150,000 per phase.** Joint proposals for villages and municipalities will be encouraged to promote connectivity and access between villages. All construction and rehabilitation activities will be contracted by the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) to service providers and will prioritize the use of local labor and material. Emphasis will be placed on providing equal opportunities for ex-combatants, women, and youth, IP, and people with disability (including equal pay for equal work) and ensuring opportunities for all who want to participate in subproject construction.

Subcomponent 2.2: Improving Natural Capital Management (US\$20 million)

33. **The subcomponent will finance infrastructure and capacity building to better integrate different land uses, particularly by improving Congo's ability to preserve natural assets and the ecosystem services they provide (including carbon sinks of global significance) and leverage them for livelihood activities.**²⁷ The first focus of subcomponent activities will be on investments that preserve or increase

²⁷ Ecosystem services are the benefits that people derive from ecosystems. They can be organized into four types: (i) provisioning services, which are the products people obtain from ecosystems and which may include food, freshwater, timbers, fibers, and medicinal plants; (ii) regulating services, which are the benefits people obtain from the regulation of ecosystem processes and which may include surface water purification, carbon storage and sequestration, climate regulation, protection from natural hazards; (iii) cultural services, which are the nonmaterial benefits people obtain from ecosystems and which may



supporting ecosystem services for agriculture. The second focus of interventions will be on improving the management capacity of formally designated protected areas, which will particularly improve regulating ecosystem services.

34. **The subcomponent will invest in supporting ecosystem services for agriculture.** This will help improve the sustainability of agriculture beyond what can be achieved by improving agricultural infrastructure (Subcomponent 2.1) and practices (Component 3). To do so, the subcomponent will build on the ecosystem services assessment under Subcomponent 1.1 to provide more granular analytics for selected geographical areas, quantifying in further detail the environmental services provided to agricultural activities and recommending measures that would help preserve or even enhance the specific ecosystem services identified. The subcomponent will then finance the implementation of these measures, in alignment with the planning instruments and consultations under Subcomponents 1.1 and 1.2 and in synergy with the livelihood activities under Component 3. Supported activities are expected to include, for example, restoration of degraded land (particularly through re- and afforestation and including through assisted natural regeneration), soil stabilization, erosion control, protection of water catchments areas, bank stabilization, enrichment planting, selective felling, and fire management. The characteristics of the locations and their role in the landscape will determine the exact intervention to be supported. Areas for restoration will be coordinated with the Government's existing programs of relevance, for example on reforestation. The rural population will be actively engaged in implementation of these activities through incentive schemes and community work. Training in the supported practices and highlighting their benefits will assist in their long-term adoption.

35. **In addition, the subcomponent will invest in improving the management capacity of protected areas, thus helping protect the natural assets that are providing important regulating ecosystem services and that will be key for achieving the NDP's ambitions on ecotourism.** Congo's protected areas are being managed with widely varying degrees of effectiveness and the scale and nature of support through the project may vary accordingly. Activities will generally aim to help overcome the main challenges that protected areas in Congo are facing: (a) remote location and difficult access, (b) lack of park infrastructure and weak management capacities, (c) lack of capacity and infrastructure to create revenue, and (d) lack of engagement and benefit sharing with IPLCs. Support will focus on investments that can be expected to increase the respective protected area's score on the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), the most widely used protected area assessment system. This will include (a) developing or updating park management plans (including on specific strategic issues like managing zoonotic risk); (b) constructing and upgrading essential park infrastructure (including firebreaks, guard stations, and park boundary markers); (c) financing operational costs (including staffing); (d) providing and renewing essential equipment (including vehicles and office, surveillance, and patrolling equipment, including cameras); (e) improving wildlife surveillance capacity (including through aerial and/or unmanned aerial vehicle flyovers and satellite monitoring); (f) supporting restoration activities for conservation purposes (for example, for erosion control); (g) and training for park management staff in conservation (including nursery establishment for and replanting of indigenous tree species), management, and community engagement (to ensure participatory involvement of communities in determining how best to manage the park). The management plans are expected to sufficiently outline

include natural areas that are sacred sites and areas of importance for recreations and aesthetic enjoyment; and (iv) supporting services, which are the natural processes that maintain the other services and which may include soil formation, nutrient cycling and primary production. (World Bank. 2016. "World Bank Environmental and Social Framework." Washington, DC.)



capacity needs, operational costs, and surveillance costs related to the management of the park and its buffer zone, so that the project can support their implementation. In addition, the subcomponent will finance readiness assessments on ecotourism in selected areas and make corresponding pilot investments (infrastructure and capacity-building) in areas with demonstrated commitment and potential. The focus for these pilots will be on improving revenue streams for protected areas and developing a model approach on benefit sharing with communities. All investments in infrastructure within protected areas will be screened to ensure that they do not interfere with conservation goals. The support to protected areas will be closely coordinated with the infrastructure investments for sustainable and resilient agriculture under Subcomponent 2.1 and the livelihood activities under Component 3. This will help reconcile local development and conservation needs at the landscape level, improving relations with communities and actively engaging them in conservation and the resulting benefits. The specific protected areas to be supported will be agreed on in consultation with the Government based on criteria that will be defined in the PIM. These are expected to include the following: (a) completed legal designation of the protected area; (b) number of population in/around the protected area; and (c) existence of a management plan (or its equivalent based on sufficient stakeholder consultations).

Component 3: Promoting Inclusive, Climate-resilient Livelihoods and Value Chains (US\$23.5 million)

36. **This component will finance climate-resilient economic activities and provide value chain support to groups at different stages of professionalization.** For agriculture activities, the priority will be given to those aligned with the CSAIP. Activities of this component will build on (a) the capacity assessment (organizational and technical) of producer groups, cooperatives, and enterprises; (b) assessment of barriers and opportunities for women's participation in economic activities; and (c) participatory community mapping of vulnerable households conducted under Component 1. The component will finance diversified economic activities and value chains including sustainable and resilient agriculture (for example, agroforestry, market gardening, poultry, and fisheries), community forestry (through forest plantations, particularly for fuel wood) in line with the new Forest Code, NTFPs (for example, honey and mushroom production), and tourism (including hospitality and cultural activities). Beneficiaries and activities will be selected to maximize development benefits in terms of reducing poverty and fragility, minimize food insecurity, build resilience to climate change (for example, by supporting soil improvement and water conservation practices), restore degraded lands, and reduce degradation of protected areas. For example, agricultural activities could be supported either in zones of strategic importance to reduce Congo's reliance on food imports (including in the Protected Agricultural Zones that the Government intends to set up) and/or in the vicinity of protected areas to reduce pressure on natural ecosystems through hunting. Activities will be closely coordinated with relevant actors, including forest concession holders and protected areas management. Where relevant due to the proximity of humans and wildlife, activities will take into account diversifying sources of protein to help reduce zoonotic risk.

Subcomponent 3.1: Supporting Micro-, Small-, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) on Climate-resilient Livelihoods and Value Chains (US\$9.5 million)

37. **Building on the activities and lessons learned from PDAC, this subcomponent will support the competitiveness of MSMEs involved in agriculture, community forestry, and NTFPs, from input supply to the production, processing, and distribution of products, as well as the delivery of relevant services.** MSMEs in Congo face efficiency challenges linked to the cost of processing, packaging, and marketing



their products. Efficiency gains in operations will result in higher-quality agricultural products (compliant with nutritional and safety standards), jobs (full time, part time, and seasonal), and a secure market that rewards producers with quality produce with higher prices. This subcomponent will provide grants to MSMEs on a sliding scale maximum reaching US\$150,000 support, with targeted technical assistance to improve their skills and knowledge, improve the technology transfer (processing equipment) to increase their production, reduce their ecological footprint, and connect them to markets. Women-owned MSMEs will be offered additional technical assistance, including business leadership and entrepreneurship training, with additional mentorship and networking support to help them strengthen their presence and competitiveness in the market. To receive the grant, the MSME will need to submit a solid business plan which will include at least the following: a project description; a realistic assessment of the marketing prospects and post-grant sustainability; a complete financing plan including a financial contribution from the MSME; description of potential provisions for local employment (seasonal or full-time), and use of agroecological approaches and climate-smart technologies in their activities.

Subcomponent 3.2: Supporting Cooperatives on Climate-resilient Livelihoods and Value Chains (US\$7 million)

38. **The subcomponent will finance activities to improve capacity, production, and sustainability of cooperatives in agriculture, community forestry, NTFPs, and ecotourism.** Using the assessment completed under Component 1, cooperatives will be given a technical capacity-building package complemented with two grants spread over two years where each grant will have a ceiling of US\$60,000. These packages will aim to transition the cooperatives from traditional practices to more efficient and sustainable approaches (for example, from low-yield practices to agribusiness practices). The capacity-building package will cover: (a) training workshops to familiarize beneficiaries with the Uniform Act on cooperative societies of the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA), (b) cooperative management skills (including operations management, financial management (FM) governance, and partnerships), and (c) agricultural and environmental best management practices. Project support will also include technology support (for example, support on drought-resistant seed production through pilot farms, distribution systems, and technology transfer); production and supply of organic fertilizers; establishing connections with banks for loans and with other private sector partners; production; and commercialization of products.

39. **To receive each grant, a business plan will need to be developed, which will need to include a financial contribution from the cooperative, a commitment to deforestation-free supply chains, and an expectation to provide employment (seasonal or full-time) to the local community.** The business plan of the first grant will be used as a proof of concept for the proposed work of the cooperative, while the business plan of the second grant should include a proposed vision of the cooperative on how to sustain activities beyond the project. Activities financed under the business plan could include nurseries (for banana sprouts and fruit trees); vehicles (tractors and transport vehicles) in cases with particular value added; tools (for example, chainsaws, hoes, machetes, rakes, and wheelbarrows); small processing equipment (for example, rice husking machines, juice extraction machines, banana chips production machines, yoghurt preparation equipment, and *foufou* mills); and small infrastructure to support commercialization (for example, rural road maintenance, warehouses, and storage building for post-harvest). Support can also come in the form of skills development for access to jobs in ecotourism and conservation, including scholarships to attend vocational colleges on tourism, natural resource management, and conservation.



40. **This subcomponent will create enabling conditions toward formal win-win partnerships between the MSMEs and the cooperatives in the target landscapes and support the latter to move toward an enterprise model.** These win-win partnership agreements will help the cooperatives to secure market access, and to supply sustainable raw materials to MSMEs for processing, packaging, marketing, and so on. Thus, local value chains would be developed with visible positive impacts at the local level.

Subcomponent 3.3: Supporting Resilient Livelihood Groups and their Value Chains (US\$7 million)

41. **The project will also provide support for livelihoods groups, especially as they tend to be informal and dominated by women.** Through the activities of this sub-component, the project will help particularly women-dominated livelihoods groups to increase their profitability, move towards formalization, and eventually participate in value chains and commercialization activities. The financed activities under this subcomponent will support existing groups or help build new ones, depending on local needs. They will empower these groups to transition into formal registered cooperatives. In the Pool Department specifically, additional mentoring for livelihood groups and cooperatives that are led by or include ex-combatants will be provided in addition to support for mediation to clarify misunderstandings that might arise at the community level.

42. Training on sustainable and resilient agriculture practices, community forestry, NTFPs, and/or tourism will be provided to all livelihoods groups to guide them in understanding and adapting to specific challenges. Additionally, the groups will receive three packages for support.

- **Support for group norms and development.** Having identified the various producer groups, targeted activities will be conducted to strengthen their group norms. If new groups need to be developed, there will be targeted activities to do so. Working on group norms will help these groups move toward formalization and will entail training and participating in a set of five core group principles: regular meetings, regular savings, inter-loaning, timely repayment, and record keeping. These groups will integrate the dialogue sessions conducted under Component 1 to identify challenges faced by women producer groups, need for childcare, their adaptation to shocks (for example, climate and pandemic), security and safety issues (especially when it comes to protecting their areas of work), and opportunities to grow female-led and female-dominant livelihood groups. The service provider will work with these women groups to identify solutions for some of these issues, which could be financed under the grant packages mentioned in the next paragraph.
- **Life skills and business development packages.** These packages are intended to build the groups' agency and confidence and enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of their livelihood activities. Given that these groups are dominated by women, training topics will include literacy, business management, and financial literacy as well as group management, leadership, decision-making, communication, and business negotiations. Also, training for developing business plans and costing them, as well as required support for implementing them will be given to these groups to support their requests for the livelihood grants presented in the next paragraph.
- **Livelihood grant packages.** Each group will receive up to two grants with a ceiling of US\$20,000 over two years based on the business plans presented. Mentoring and support for implementing the business plans will be provided to the groups. Specific support will be



provided to women-led groups to help them take advantage of agriculture extension services, connect with existing formalized cooperatives, create bank accounts, and access digital services. Groups that receive a second grant will need to include in their business plans activities for formalizing their groups into cooperatives (in accordance with the OHADA Uniform Act on cooperative societies in the case of agriculture activities) and allocate funds for this. All business plans should be climate-informed and 100 percent of the grants will need to support climate-resilient/climate-smart livelihoods investments.

Component 4: Project management, monitoring, and evaluation (US\$7 million)

43. **This component will finance project management, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).** It will also provide support to capacity building for oversight and monitoring. The component will further finance an expert for independent third-party monitoring of project implementation once per year. It will fund environmental and social impact assessments, project management reporting, and administration and logistical support for project implementation, including knowledge and learning. Given the multi-sectoral approach of the project, the component will also support knowledge assessment and learning for government staff to improve multi-sectoral coordination and provide lessons on how to improve implementation of activities on a yearly basis for course correction. The component will also finance a geo-spatial platform for monitoring the activities of the project (number, type, and geo-location of infrastructure built; type, presence, and size of livelihoods activities, and so on). It will further finance the operational costs of the Steering Committee providing strategic guidance for the project.

Component 5: Contingent emergency response (US\$0 million)

44. **Designed as a mechanism to implement the Government's rapid response to an emergency, this component will allow the project to finance emergency recovery activities and reconstruction subprojects under an agreed manual.** It will enable the immediate disbursement of funds and allow the Government to request a reallocation of project funds to partially cover an eligible crisis or emergency. A crisis or emergency eligible for financing is an event that has caused, or is likely to imminently cause, a major adverse economic and/or social impact to the client, associated with a natural or man-made crisis or disaster. If no such event occurs during the lifetime of the project, the component will not be activated

Legal Operational Policies

	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	Yes
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts



45. **The main environmental risks include:** potential adverse environmental impacts such as air pollution, noise, soil pollution, waste and hazardous waste management, water pollution, occupational and community health safety, etc. occupational/community health and safety risks; and the main social risks and potential impacts include: economic displacement, and/or temporary impacts and restrictions on land use, social impacts such as damage to assets, labor influx which may arise from non-local workers, occupational health and safety issues, adverse impacts on impacts on community health and risk of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Harassment (SEA/SH), lack of accessible and comprehensive dissemination of information to stakeholders and inadequate stakeholder engagement, impacts on/inclusion of project benefits for vulnerable groups, and COVID-19 related risks of transmission.

E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

46. **The implementing agency will be the Ministry of Planning, Statistics, and Regional Integration (*Ministère du Plan, de la Statistique et de l'Intégration Régionale, MPSIR*).** It will coordinate the relevant line ministries, most notably, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (*Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Elevage, et de la Pêche, MAEP*); the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, and the Congo Basin (*Ministère de l'Environnement, du Développement Durable et du Bassin du Congo, MEDDBC*); the MEF; and the High Commission for the Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action). A preliminary technical assessment of the ministries found that implementation capacity is weak and that effective cross-ministerial collaboration for project implementation has been uncommon so far. It is therefore proposed that the project be implemented by a new PIU under MPSIR whose staff will be recruited competitively.

47. **The institutional and implementation arrangements will be developed at the national, regional, and local levels using the following principles:** (a) build institutional capacity by supporting existing government systems and mechanisms that have proven to be effective for approaches of similar projects, (b) ensure presence at the department and district levels, in line with the deconcentration and decentralization policies, and (c) support national coordination for the multisector approach of the project by engaging relevant government agencies in project implementation and supervision.

At the national level:

- **Steering Committee.** The high-level inter-ministerial Steering Committee (*Comité de Pilotage*) will provide strategic guidance and ensure consistency in and support for the multi-sectoral project activities. The Committee will be chaired by MPSIR and will include representatives from ministries involved in the project. The roles and responsibilities of the *Comité de Pilotage* will be elaborated in the PIM.
- **PIU.** A PIU will be established under the oversight of MPSIR to implement the multisectoral approach of the project. Technical staff will include, at a minimum, a project coordinator, an infrastructure specialist and a conservation specialist for Component 2, a rural livelihoods specialist who will lead supervision of Component 3 and build capacity of identified ministerial staff in this area, and a GBV specialist to ensure gender inclusion across the



implementation of project components. The PIU will also include a procurement specialist, an FM assistant, a social safeguards specialist, an environmental safeguards specialist, an accountant and at least one M&E specialist. The PIU staff will be recruited through a competitive process, or the positions will be filled by qualified civil servants seconded for this purpose. To ensure a smooth start of project activities, MPSIR will rely on the PIU of the Support to Enterprise Development and Competitiveness Project (P161590), with staff already familiar with World Bank procedures, until the ProClimat PIU has been recruited.

- **Technical Committee (TC).** Given the multisectoral nature of the project, a TC will be formed with technical focal points nominated by the core ministries participating in project implementation (MPSIR, MEF, Environment, and MAEP). The purpose of the TC will not be to oversee or direct the work of the PIU but rather to provide a forum for discussing implementation issues and solutions to roadblocks and challenges in a multisectoral way and notify the Steering Committee of actions that may be recommended. Representatives on the TC will be at the Director level. The core ministries may recruit technical consultants to support the Directors for improved coordination, technical backstopping, and capacity building. The TC will keep the relevant ministries apprised of project activities between the less frequent meetings of the Steering Committee. The TC will meet every other month during the first year of implementation (frequency may change based on need).

At the regional level:

- **Landscape Satellite Offices (LSOs)** will be established at the landscape level to ensure coordination and close follow-up of project activities. Each LSO will be led by a regional focal point supported by a safeguards specialist and an accountant. The LSOs will closely follow the implementation of project activities by the service providers (below), address bottlenecks, ensure coordination with decentralized and deconcentrated services, and harness synergies with the activities of other donors and the private sector in the landscape areas.

At the local level:

- **Service providers.** Service providers will be contracted by the PIU to support implementation of the different components. The service providers will work directly with the project beneficiaries and will support M&E of the project.

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