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Combined Project Information Documents / Integrated Safeguards Datasheet (PID/ISDS)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 31-Aug-2020 | Report No: PIDISDSA28013



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country Central African Republic	Project ID P171723	Project Name Integrated Natural Resources Management in the Ngotto Forest and Mbaéré-Bodingué National Park	Parent Project ID (if any) P161973
Parent Project Name Natural Resources Governance Project in CAR	Region AFRICA WEST	Estimated Appraisal Date 02-Dec-2020	Estimated Board Date 17-Mar-2021
Practice Area (Lead) Environment, Natural Resources & the Blue Economy	Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation	Implementing Agency Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries (MWFHF), Ministry of Mines and Geology (MMG)

GEF Focal Area

Multi-focal area

Proposed Development Objective(s) Parent

The project will aim to improve governance and strengthen capacity in the forest and mining sectors in the Central African Republic.

Components

Component 1 - Institutional support: Strengthen the fiscal and governance framework of the forest sector
 Component 2 - Local development: Support forest communities in planning and financing their development priorities
 Component 3 - Technical assistance to improve mining sector policies and institutional governance
 Component 4 - Local development -Formalization of the Artisanal Mining Sector
 Component 5 - Project management, including contingencies and overheads
 Project Preparation Advance for the development of the safeguards instruments

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	7.61
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Total Financing	7.61
of which IBRD/IDA	0.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	7.61
Global Environment Facility (GEF)	7.61

Environmental Assessment Category

B-Partial Assessment

‘Have the Safeguards oversight and clearance function been transferred to the Practice Manager?’ No

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

B. Introduction and Context

- Approval of the Board is sought to provide Additional Financing (AF) in the amount of US\$7.61 million to the Central African Republic (CAR) for the Natural Resources Governance Project (NRGP, P161973).** The AF is a grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) whose project concept was approved by the GEF Council in June 2019 as a child project within the context of CAR’s participation in the GEF Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP). The objective of the CBSL IP is to catalyze transformational change in conservation and sustainable management of the Congo Basin through landscape approaches that empower local communities and forest-dependent people, and through private sector partnership.¹ The CBSL IP engages six Congo Basin countries² with a focus on dense rainforest in transboundary landscapes. It CBSL IP also includes regional coordination led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) that will act as a single platform to feed innovations and policies developed in participating country projects, including CAR. It will transfer knowledge between regional and global organizations working on forest conservation and sustainable land-use.
- The NRGP is funded by a US\$10 million grant from the International Development Association (IDA). It was approved on March 12, 2018 and became effective on July 27, 2018.** The project development objective (PDO) is “to improve governance and strengthen capacity in the forest and mining sectors in

¹ More information available at:

https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/gef_impact_program_congo_2020_04.pdf

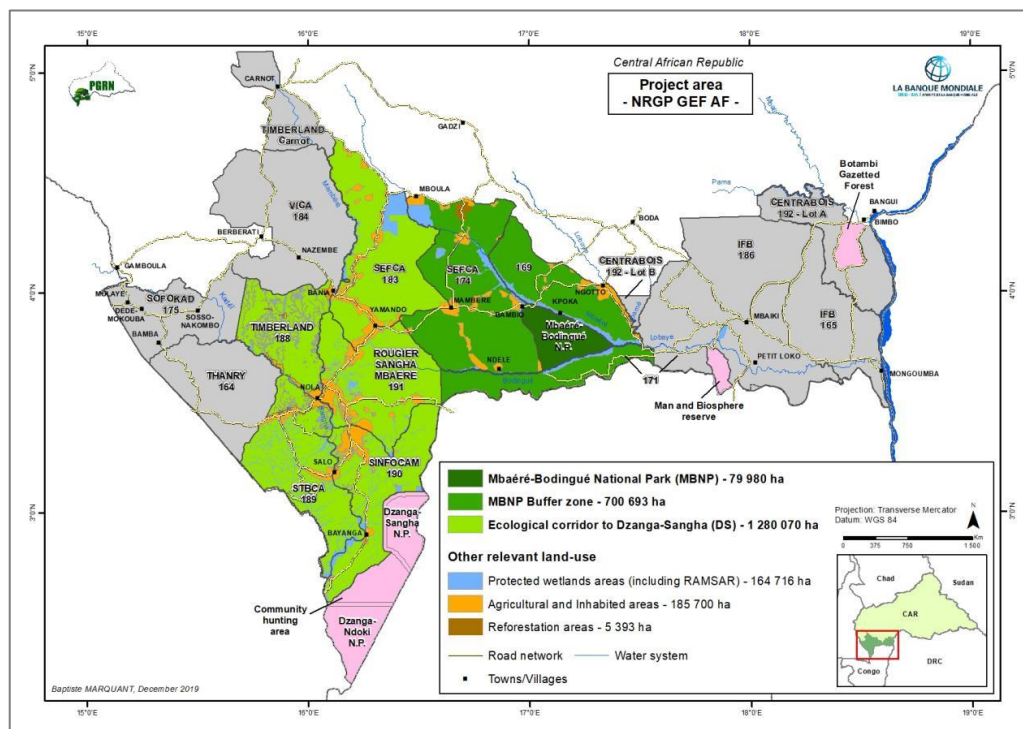
² Other country participants that received GEF grant financing include Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Republic of Congo.



the CAR". Project components include 1) Institutional support to strengthen policy and governance in the forestry sector; 2) local development planning and financing for forest municipalities in Southwest CAR; 3) institutional support to strengthen policy and governance in the mining sector; 4) support to artisanal miners' cooperatives in southwest CAR; and 5) project management, monitoring, and evaluation.

3. **The proposed GEF AF will scale-up and expand parent project activities to strengthen sustainable management of forest natural resources in CAR and enhance project impact on community livelihoods, resilience, and global environmental benefits.** The GEF AF targets a specific landscape within the parent project area covering the forest continuum spreading from the Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas (DPSA) up to the Mbaéré-Bodingué National Park (MBNP) and surrounding Ngotto forest (see Map 1). Despite the ecological potential of its dense and humid forest recognized as Ramsar wetlands of major international importance, the MBNP area remains isolated from the DPSA which limits continuity with the biological richness of the Sangha Trinational (TNS) transboundary landscape.³ The dependence of communities on natural resources and isolation of the area lead to much poaching and overexploitation of natural resources which severely threatens the MBNP and livelihoods in the Ngotto forest.

Map 1: GEF AF area



Source: World Bank.

4. **The PDO "to improve governance and strengthen capacity in the forest and mining sectors in the CAR" remains unchanged.** The overall goal of the GEF AF is to improve integrated natural resources management and sustainable rural livelihoods in the Ngotto Forest landscape and Mbaéré-Bodingué

³ TNS is a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2012.



National Park. The project's closing date is proposed to be extended by one year from June 30, 2023 to June 30, 2024 due to implementation challenges of the parent project (including delayed launch and COVID-19 disruptions) and ensure alignment with the GEF AF timeline (3 years). The safeguard category is maintained at B (Partial Assessment).

5. **The NRGP has just started its third year of implementation and is considered Satisfactory on progress towards PDO and Moderately Satisfactory on overall implementation progress.** The NRGP was approved on March 12, 2018 and became effective on July 27, 2018. Setting-up operational arrangements with the central fiduciary agent (TTFP PIU) required the entire first year of implementation which significantly delayed effective launch of project activities. The Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries (MWFHF) and Ministry of Mines and Geology (MMG) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with TTFP PIU in July 2018. However, further discussion between the TTFP PIU and other projects of the portfolio prevented immediate implementation of the MoU agreed terms.⁴ TTFP PIU only started delivering effective fiduciary services to the project in March 2019. This allowed the project to complete recruitment for the NRGP TU and expedite procurement for priority activities.
6. **Project disbursement is 23 percent as of July 2020. Activities in all components have been launched with the following results in process:**
 - (a) **Component 1: Operational support to the forest administration (MWFHF) has been deployed across the four Southwestern Prefectures.**⁵ This includes transport (motorcycles), energy (solar panels and batteries), and communication means (VSAT). The office of Berbérati is renovated and equipped. Improved operational capacity has allowed MWFHF agents to increase field oversight and control, including in the application of sustainable management plans by forest concessionaires (+71 percent control visits on year 1) and anti-poaching monitoring exercises (+54 percent field missions and +33 percent infractions registered). At the central level, a working group was established to prepare and guide upcoming efforts to improve CAR's forestry tax system and develop a national information system for forestry market data and issuance of tax notice.
 - (b) **Component 2: Support to forest municipalities on local development planning has been launched.** An initial socio-economic diagnostic was finalized in the Lobaye Prefecture by technical assistance operator Terea and their local partners. The diagnostic in Mambéré-Kadéï has been suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions. In the meantime, local NGOs have been recruited for the next phase (2020-2021) which will consist of supporting 11 municipalities to establish Local Development Committees (LDCs) and Local Development Plans (LDPs).⁶ The Network of Indigenous and Local Populations (REPALCA) will provide specific expertise on aspects related to Indigenous Populations. Beneficiary municipalities will also receive financing to implement some of the development priorities identified in LDPs.

⁴ Main discussion point was TTFP PIU's compensation for increased workload.

⁵ Lobaye, Mambéré-Kadéï, Nana-Mambéré, and Sangha-Mbaéré.

⁶ There are 21 forest municipalities in southwest CAR, including 10 supported by the South West Regional Development Project (SWRDP) of the French Development Agency (AFD) and 11 supported by the Bank's NRGP.



- (c) **Component 3: Several major activities to improve mining sector policies and institutional governance are about to commence**, although work will partially be done remotely for the time-being. This includes updating of the Ministry's mining policy, supporting the ongoing revision of the 2009 Mining Code with other development partners, the functional review of the Ministry, and the scoping of the database for mining. The latter will lay the ground for building a national GIS-based mining cadaster encompassing all licenses issued in the country (artisanal mining, semi-mechanized, exploration, and mining concessions).
- (d) **Component 4: The baseline for assistance to mining cooperatives was completed in April 2020 by the delegated implementing body TetraTech and local partners.** Eight beneficiary mining organizations were selected in Sangha-Mbaéré and Lobaye (two solely of women; two including women) to receive capacity building and financial incentives to formalize their status and comply with national and international standards and practices. Commencing technical assistance defined by the established baseline is now suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions.
7. **Under the baseline scenario, the parent project focuses on enhancing CAR's sectoral governance in forestry and mining. The parent NRGF does not specifically support cross-sectoral efforts to address integrated natural resources management in policy reforms (forestry-mining-agriculture nexus). It also does not support local communities and private operators on the ground with adoption of more sustainable land-use practices.**⁷ NRGF mostly supports local communities in Southwest CAR with key organizational aspects. This includes the establishment and/or revitalization of LDCs in supported municipalities and the development of LDPs defining their development priorities in the next 10 years. Artisanal miners are supported in formalization activities, including the establishment of cooperatives and/or associations with related capacity building (e.g., revenue management, commerce, inclusion of vulnerable groups, etc.). NRGF financing will also be available to help municipalities for priority projects (LDPs) expected to focus on social services.⁸
8. **However, unsustainable land-use practices prevailing in Southwest CAR lead to significant overexploitation and environmental degradation which in turn also pose a risk on community resilience and sustainability.** Land-use planning issues, especially conflict between land allocation and land-use, are exacerbating environmental degradation. Poor coordination between national and local institutions and sectoral policies jeopardizes a common understanding of challenges posed by the sustainable exploitation of natural resources.
9. **Along the Lobaye river, diamond and gold mining is very extensive. With new deposits being discovered regularly, mining may also develop quickly along the Mambéré and Bodingué rivers bordering the MBNP.** River diversions, pollution from sludge particles, and silting from diamond exploitation are changing the quality of water in the area and could have an impact on fishery resources in the medium term. Mining also has a high ancillary impact on poaching for meat to feed the labor force.

⁷ These include itinerant slash-burn agriculture practices, anarchic (semi-)artisanal mining operations, uncontrolled expansion of felling, and poaching.

⁸ Per recent experience under the Southwestern Regional Development Project (SWRDP) financed by the French Development Agency (AFD), municipalities use available project resources towards investment in basic services (e.g., schools, health centers, water wells etc.)



The pressure exerted on the PNMB area and on wildlife particular reflects the absence of alternative income opportunities for the local population and the difficulty in accessing other sources of protein.

10. **Unsustainable agriculture practices also dominate and proliferate in the area, leading to an increased degradation of forest cover.** Poor land management based on slash-and-burn systems requires households to clear new forested areas every two to three years due to lower fertility, weed infestation, and disease reducing crop yields. This limits the ability of communities to invest in agricultural value chains. In addition, transhumance pastoralism is increasingly shifting southwards in search of better pastures use fire to burn primary forests to open them up and use marshes and other grassland patches for grazing. A lot of herding occurs in the project area.
11. **Finally, forest concessionaires, although operating under sustainable management plans, practice selective logging which causes degradation of forest cover and biodiversity habitat.** Labor influx also adds pressure on biodiversity in the area, especially bushmeat.
12. **Rapid change in land-use and encroachment on previously remote rainforest habitats are also drivers of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases⁹ in the sub-region, including Ebola virus disease (EVD).**
13. **The GEF AF targets a specific landscape within the parent project area covering the forest continuum spreading from the Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas (DPSA) up to the Mbaéré-Bodingué National Park MBNP and surrounding Ngotto forest.** Despite the ecological potential of its dense and humid forest recognized as Ramsar wetlands of major international importance, the MBNP area remains institutionally isolated from the DPSA which limits continuity with the biological richness of the Sangha Trinational (TNS) transboundary landscape.¹⁰ The dependence of communities on natural resources and isolation of the area lead to much poaching and overexploitation of natural resources which severely threatens the MBNP and livelihoods in the Ngotto forest.
14. **Against this backdrop, the GEF AF brings incremental resources to support integrated natural resource management in CAR through:**
 - Strengthening the governance and management frameworks of MBNP to enable landscape integration with DPSA.
 - Promoting management models and economic activities in the MBNP periphery and ecological corridor to DPSA that contribute to the sustainable use and regeneration of natural resources.
 - Improving policy frameworks and cross-sectoral coordination to enhance integrated land-use and natural resources management in CAR.
15. **CAR's participation in the GEF-7 CBSL Impact Program will allow the parent project to achieve longer-term and larger-scale change on livelihoods and global environmental benefits.** The GEF CBSL regional project (UNEP) will allow CAR and other TNS countries to increase engagement and collaboration on landscape-level, transboundary issues. This change of scale in a major forest landscape of the sub-region

⁹ Richardson et al., 2016 "Drivers for Emerging Issues in Animal and Plant Health." 10.2903/j.efsa. 2016.s0512.

¹⁰ TNS is a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2012.



will reduce the vulnerability of the Congo Basin forest to pressures and threats from the North. While the project's interventions mainly focus on the MBNP and its buffer zone, ecological connectivity with the broader DSPA and TNS landscape will be strengthened through i) WWF's involvement under Component 1 leveraging their experience co-managing the DSPA (since 1989) thereby ensuring consistency in conservation approaches with MBNP; ii) Capacity strengthening provided to the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MESD) agents to oversee impacts of economic activities in the DSPA/MNBP corridor (Activity 1.2); iii) Capacity strengthening provided to the MWFHF agents under the parent project (Component 2) to oversee the forest concessions' sustainable management plans and monitor anti-poaching in the DSPA/MNBP corridor; and iv) close coordination with other projects bringing co-financing to the GEF AF and promoting sustainable governance of natural resources in the targeted broader landscape, including the EU-funded DSPA programs in DSPA and USAID's Artisanal Mining and Property Rights (AMPR). Annex IV of the Project Paper presents the theory of change of GEF support and how the components contribute to both the PDO of the parent project and objectives of the GEF CBSL IP. As designed, the AF contributes to GEF-7 focal area objectives for Biodiversity (BD 1.1, 2.7), Land degradation (LD1.1, LD 1.4) and Climate Change (CC 2.7) through an integrated multifocal area landscape approach.

16. **Integrated landscape management presents an opportunity to scale and leverage interventions such that the whole is greater than the sum of individual interventions in terms of ecological and economic gains.** The GEF AF, complementing the NRGp parent project, as well as co-financed interventions, collectively promote integration and ecological connectivity across sectors and land-uses (forestry, biodiversity, mining, etc.) within the landscape through. Connectivity between forested areas and biodiversity-rich protected areas is increased, and wildlife management, governance, and management effectiveness of existing protected areas are improved in collaboration with local communities and forest-dependent peoples. Sustainable forest-related value chains are promoted by empowering local communities, forest dependent people, and partnering with the private sector. Interventions improve national and regional inter-agency coordination on efforts to maintain forest resources, protect biodiversity, enhance forest management, and restore forest ecosystems through enhanced knowledge and financing (See Annex IV of the Project Paper for details).
17. **To help meet these goals, and to bring the benefits of the parent project further to rural communities and the environment, the AF will scale up the successes and complement these achievements with innovations aimed at sustaining project benefits.** The AF will support the government's broader vision of creating a network of protected areas in the Southwest involving communities at the center. Stakeholders in the landscape from underfunded local organizations, artisan miners, and other stakeholders will all be supported broadly. The project will invest in people and communities with an emphasis on women and girls and their access to basic services and connectivity. The GEF AF is fully aligned with the government's Strategy for Peacebuilding (RCPCA) (2017-2021) which supports the development of natural resources sectors in CAR while limiting impacts on forest ecosystems and improving livelihoods. The project addresses the Bank's corporate climate change commitment including the Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience and the upcoming Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) 2021-2025. Climate-smart practices promoted by the GEF AF will help ease pressure on forest ecosystems and natural habitat while also improving food security and resilience for forest-dependent people, including the most vulnerable such as indigenous populations.



C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

18. **The proposed GEF AF seeks to scale up NRGPs activities to strengthen sustainable management of forest natural resources in CAR and enhance project impact on community livelihoods and resilience.** As detailed below, this will contribute to better achieving the PDO of the parent project, as well as the broader objectives of the GEF CBSL Impact Program. In addition, it will support CAR's vision of a network of protected areas in its Southwestern forest as a driver of sustainable development, with positive impacts on livelihoods, governance, and security.
19. **The PDO remains unchanged.** The project development objective (PDO) is *"to improve governance and strengthen capacity in the forest and mining sectors in the CAR"*. The overall goal of the GEF AF is to improve integrated natural resources management and sustainable rural livelihoods in the Ngotto Forest landscape and Mbaéré-Bodingué National Park. The project's closing date is proposed to be extended by one year from June 30, 2023 to June 30, 2024 due to implementation challenges of the parent project (including delayed launch and COVID-19 disruptions) and ensure alignment with the GEF AF timeline (3 years). The safeguard category is maintained at B (Partial Assessment).
20. **CAR's participation in the GEF-7 CBSL Impact Program will allow the parent project to achieve longer-term and larger-scale change on livelihoods and global environmental benefits.** The GEF CBSL regional project (UNEP) will allow CAR and other TNS countries to increase engagement and collaboration on landscape-level, transboundary issues. This change of scale in a major forest landscape of the sub-region will reduce the vulnerability of the Congo Basin forest to pressures and threats from the North. Annex IV presents the theory of change of GEF support and how the components contribute to both the PDO of the parent project and objectives of the GEF CBSL IP. As designed, the AF contributes to GEF-7 focal area objectives for Biodiversity (BD 1.1, 2.7), Land degradation (LD1.1, LD 1.4) and Climate Change (CC 2.7) through an integrated multifocal area landscape approach.



D. Project Description

CHANGES TO COMPONENTS AND COSTS

- L. A summary of allocations under the parent project and GEF AF for each component are presented in Table 1 below. Detailed budget is included in Annex II of the Projet Paper. As designed, the GEF is integrated within the parent project structure to build on the strong baseline and is lending support to components 1, 2, and 5 only. Activities are clearly defined in line with the CBSL IP within each component.

Table 1: Component Costs and Financing (US\$ million)

COMPONENT	IDA (NRPG)	GEF AF	Total Amount
Component 1: Institutional support (forest)	1.36	2.58	3.94
Component 2: Local development (forest)	2.42	4.43	6.85
Component 3: Institutional support (mining)	1.81	0.00	1.81
Component 4: Local development (mining)	1.98	0.00	1.98
Component 5: Project Management	2.22	0.60	2.82
TOTAL PROJECT	9.79	7.61	17.40
Project Preparation Advance/Grant	0.21	0.18	0.39
TOTAL	10.00	7.79	17.79

PROJECT COMPONENTS

Component 1. Institutional support: Strengthening the governance and management frameworks for the Mbaéré-Bodingué National Park (MBNP) and corridor to the Dzanga-Sangha Protected Areas (DSPA) (US\$2.58 million).

22. The project aims to improve governance of targeted conservation areas with an updated MPNB Management Plan and identify future intervention strategies by establishing an ecological, socioeconomic, and operational inventory in the MBNP and DSPA/MBNP corridor. This component also aims at improving the analytical base and policy dialogue on key issues affecting integrated natural resources management in CAR.

Activity 1.1. Establishing a baseline state (ecological, socioeconomic, operational) and resuming MBNP operations (US\$ 2.09 million)

23. **Ecological data (wildlife population, forest cover, assessment of forest carbon stock, HCVs) and socioeconomic data will be gathered to establish an inventory of MBNP and its buffer zone.** Furthermore, current decentralized staff under MWFHF and newly recruited staff from local and



indigenous communities will receive training for field surveying with assistance from experts from the DSPA conservation program and WWF regional monitoring expert.

24. **Generated data and results will be used to update the 2011-2020 MBNP Management Plan.** The Management Plan, initially developed in 2011 with support from ECOFAC IV (2007-2010),¹¹ will also include strategies for various intervention components, business plans, and a zoning plan of the buffer area which sets out the population's diverse land-use systems in and around the Park. Restitution and national workshops will be organized involving key stakeholders such as the municipalities covered by the MBNP periphery. A monitoring and evaluation system will be established for assessing the effectiveness of the management of MBNP and its periphery (Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool).
25. **To strengthen ecological monitoring and anti-poaching operations in MBNP and its buffer zone,**¹² training will be provided to officers and eco-guards operating under MWFHF. As a participatory approach, members of local and indigenous populations will be tasked to reinforce the monitoring teams with eco-surveillants.¹³ The sub-component will also support the acquisition of essential equipment and vehicles (motorcycles and speedboats) for surveillance and patrolling.
26. **The project will finance light renovation of two essential base stations in Bambio and Ngotto and two outposts, Kpoka and Ndélé** (see Map c. in Annex XVI). The base stations are maintained and in good condition even after the recent military-political crisis. To facilitate access to project sites for monitoring teams, minor infrastructure, including trails and bridges, may be renovated or maintained.
27. **To ensure sustainability of activities and outcomes of the project,** the component will also support CAR and its technical and financial partners to define a long-term strategy and roadmap for the management and funding of the targeted area. The project will support the MWFHF and stakeholders in the development of a strategic plan accompanied by a financial model consisting of one or potentially several business plans. A roadmap will also be proposed to the government for the implementation of the strategic plan.

Activity 1.2: Operational support to the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MESD) for monitoring the impacts of economic operators in the project area (US\$0.10 million)

28. **The Directorate General of the Environment (DGE) at MESD is responsible for monitoring the environmental and social impacts and its associated mitigation measures of economic activities,** as per regulatory decrees stated in CAR's Environmental Code. In 2019, the MESD deployed agents at the regional level for the first time to meet this mandate, though with limited operational means.
29. **This activity will support MESD field agents in RD1 and RD2 in their ESMP monitoring activities**¹⁴ in

¹¹ Regional support program for the preservation of biodiversity and fragile ecosystems in Central Africa (ECOFAC).

¹² The project intervention area covers two DRs: DR2 covers the Sangha-Mbaéré, Mambéré-Kadéï, and Nana-Mambéré prefectures while DR1 covers the Lobaye and Ombella-Mpoko prefectures. (see Map c. in Annex XVI for more details). DRs 1 and 2 of the MEFCP are already supported by the parent project for their forest governance control activities in the three prefectures of Lobaye, Mambéré-Kadéï, and Sangha-Mbaéré.

¹³ Eco-surveillants are not police officers and are not entitled to carry weapons.

¹⁴ The regulations in force do not specify the frequency at which the monitoring of ESMPs must be carried out by the MESD.



relation to forestry firms present in the MBNP periphery. Considering MESD agents' priority needs to fulfill their mandates, the activity will provide support for the acquisition of vehicles (motorcycles); IT; and telecommunications equipment (mobile phones, laptops, internet) and essential equipment (as GPS, compasses, camp beds, camp cooking utensils) to facilitate inspection activities. Mission allowances will also be covered for the mobilization of five agents to the field (two Regional Directors; three Inspectors) as well as the support of agents from the MESD central administration with regular field visits to oversee the DR1 and DR2 field agents in fulfillment of their mandates.

Activity 1.3: Supporting national and landscape-level policy development and cross-sectoral coordination (US\$0.39 million)

30. **This activity will support the national dialogue on policy developments of relevance to the project's objectives and activities and which have undergone limited progress over the past years due to the successive political crisis, capacity constraints, and/or the lack of cross-sectoral coordination.** Strengthening CAR's enabling environment for community-based natural resource management will be an area of focus. Specific policy items to advance this agenda include participatory, sustainable management of NTFPs; inclusion of Community Wildlife Zones (CWZs) in the draft Code on Management of Wildlife and Wildlife Protection Areas (2006) (and road-tested under Component 2); and supporting governance of land and resource rights for indigenous people (not recognized in CAR's land-use and forest legislation). Depending on the status of related regulatory developments at the outset of the project, the project may support inputs and consultation from technical experts and studies to support the adoption of the draft law or the development of its implementing regulations and also provide capacity building. In addition, the project will support the establishment of a national cross-sectoral platform on integrated natural resources management (i.e., forest, environment, mining, agriculture, land-use, etc.) and facilitate its meetings and technical discussions. The platform will also reflect on lessons learned from field activities conducted under the project and other programs.
31. **CAR's engagement with the regional component of the GEF CBSL Impact Program will help build capacities and address issues related to transboundary landscape management, particularly regarding the TNS.** This component will allow CAR to deepen the work on some of these issues at the national level and strengthen engagement with neighboring TNS countries, Cameroon and Republic of Congo. Depending on priorities under the CBSL IP, regional program activities may include sharing on biodiversity, ecological, and socio-economic data; aligning methodologies and analytical tools to support integrated landscape management; and strengthening related transboundary agreements at the TNS level (e.g., data exchange protocols etc.).

Component 2 – Local development: Promoting management models and economic activities that contribute to the sustainable use and regeneration of natural resources in the MBNP buffer zone and corridor to DSPA (US\$4.43 million)

32. With a focus on the six municipalities surrounding the MBNP and its buffer zone,¹⁵ this component will emphasize community-based management by the creation and/or revitalization of community-based organizations and provide technical assistance to develop Simple Management Plans (SMPs). The implementation of the SMPs will be supported through initial investments and provision of inputs (e.g.,

¹⁵ Moboma, Lobaye (Ngotto), Mbaéré, Boganda, Senkpa Mbaéré, Basse Mambéré.



purchase of improved seedlings, processing equipment, etc.), payment for results (e.g., maintenance of plantations, fire management, etc.), and capacity building (e.g., technical itineraries, processing techniques, etc.). Improving the management of the ecological corridor between MBNP and DSPA is crucial to achieving long-term sustainability of the two protected areas. Given the prevalence of natural resource extraction in the area, involving forest concessionaires is key to improving prevailing practices and overall impact on the landscape.

Activity 2.1: Community-based land-use and resource planning in Logging and Management Permits (LMP)¹⁶ (US\$1.07 million)

33. **In the forest massif of Southwestern CAR, almost all 3.8 million hectares have been allocated to industrial logging concessions and protected areas, leaving the communities without ad hoc plots for their management.** The Forest Code states that forest management plans of logging concessions must define AHOZs. They represent areas in LMPs dedicated to community use as opposed to production. However, the legal framework for the arrangement of management committees in AHOZs as defined in the Forest Code is weak. Moreover, there is no obligation to plan or manage these spaces. The lack of a sustainable management framework contributes to the degradation of forest cover inside and outside of the AHOZs and limits the ability of concerned family farms to invest in agricultural value chains. In addition, the ongoing unsustainable exploitation of natural resources in the AHOZs is exacerbated by human pressures linked to large positive migratory flows resulting from military-political conflict for diamond and gold rushes.
34. **From 2009 to 2010, ECOFAC IV undertook a significant analysis of the concept of the Community Wildlife Zone¹⁷ (CWZ) related to structuring hunting activities in the periphery of the MBNP (see Map f. in Annex XVI).** This allowed for creating an informal surveillance network to support anti-poaching activities of MWFHF agents and eco-guards.¹⁸ The CWZ model, however, has no legal nor operational framework in CAR to formalize its constituency, mandate, and functioning.
35. **The activity will support participatory land-use planning in target areas of AHOZs of the Ngotto, Bambio, and Mambéré supply basins.** This includes creation or revitalization of AHOZs management structures with prior stakeholder mapping and engagement at the municipality level through Local Development Committees (LDCs); definition of legal and organizational aspects that support the management of the AHOZ, including governance framework and rights for each party; mapping and related awareness raising for communities on the AHOZ spatial limits; and development of SMPs based on an inclusive process.
36. **Similar activities to target areas of AHOZ will be undertaken in CWZ.** This includes developing inventory management structures in the MBNP buffer zone and engagement with related municipalities through their LDCs;¹⁹ revitalization and/or establishment of management structures, including relevant

¹⁶ Permits d'Exploitation et d'Aménagement.

¹⁷ From a spatial perspective, CWZ is defined as a group of hamlets and villages voluntarily constituted to ensure good governance of local resources. From a strategic perspective, CWZ conveys the idea of mobilization, structuring, and involvement of actors at various levels (hunters, gatherers, fishers, etc.) for establishing participative management. CWZs are introduced in the draft Code on Management of Wildlife and Wildlife Protection Areas which is still pending for adoption by the National Assembly.

¹⁸ Plan de Gestion du Parc National Mbaéré-Bodingué (MBNP) - 2011-2020. Volume 2 de 2 : Stratégie. 2010.

¹⁹ Municipalities include Moboma, Lobaye (Ngotto), Mbaéré, Boganda, Senkpa Mbaéré, Basse Mambéré.



stakeholder organizations (hunters, gatherers, fishermen, community anti-poaching units, artisanal miners, etc.); development of SMPs, including participatory mapping, delineating each CWZ, and determination of rules for the management of natural resources (resource inventories and quotas, sustainability thresholds, etc.); determination of governance provisions; and establishment of a statutory/regulatory founding framework for CWZs with competent authorities. In the absence of formal legislation, proposals could be made by the project to inform the related policy and/or regulatory work and capacity building on eco-surveillance for members of CWZ management structures.

Activity 2.2: Supporting income and rural livelihoods diversification (US\$2.96 million)

37. **Investment support in AHOZs (“Agriculture SMPs”) will mainly be dedicated to agroforestry systems which are inspired by the technical itineraries developed in the sub-region** (especially in DRC²⁰). This includes savanna food systems to ease pressure on adjacent forests and mixing short-cycle crops (e.g., maize, peanuts) with perennial crops (e.g., palm trees, acacias, or fruit trees such as safou or avocado). A different combination of products (i.e., agricultural and NTFPs) will be promoted to maximize profit and revenues based on market opportunities. The GEF AF will also implement Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) on highly degraded areas (“exclosures”) and promote improved fire management with forest dependent communities taking part and being incentivized through a payment-for-results mechanism. This allows for continuing slash-and-burn farming once the forest has reestablished (Mampu models in DRC).
38. **Investment support in CWZs (“Natural Resources SMPs”). In CWZs, the project will promote the domestication of NTFPs,²¹ following priority needs expressed by CWZ committees and market opportunities.** NTFPs producers in the area lack techniques for sustainable collection, processing, and preservation of products. The project will support sustainable management and domestication of NTFPs in CWZs through capacity building to producers to promote the rational use of NTFP resources, improved organization, marketing, and commercialization network; provision of harvesting, processing, and conservation equipment (e.g., koko, gnetum, honey, nuts, caterpillars, mushrooms, essang (njansang), pepper, shea); and provision of equipment for NTFP domestication (e.g., improved hives) to enhance production qualitatively and quantitatively. Depending on CWZ committees’ priorities, the project may also support value chain development of fisheries as the abundance of fish population is high in the Mbaéré and Lobaye rivers.
39. **The implementation of planned SMP investments will directly benefit 2,647 households (about 15,882 people).** Households benefiting from agricultural investment support in the supply basins of Ngotto, Bambio, and Mambéré are expected to see an average increase of 20 percent in related annual income (US\$ +183). Over the long run (i.e., five years onward), agroforestry plantations are expected to start production (e.g., fruits, palm oil, coffee, firewood) bringing income gain at +47 percent (US\$ +433). Households benefiting from natural resources investment support in other areas of the MBNP buffer zone are expected to see an average increase of 12 percent of their related income (US\$ +110).
40. **To ensure the sustainability of the project’s outcome, the GEF AF will also support upstream and**

²⁰ DRC Improved Forested Landscape Management (P128887), including the Integrated REDD+ Mai-Ndombe project.

²¹ Article 65 of CAR’s Forest Code (2008) defines NTFP as any product of biological, animal, or vegetal origin other than timber from renewable resources of forest biomass, intended for human or industrial consumption.



downstream value chain actors and promote direct relationships with farmer beneficiaries. Input suppliers and agro-multipliers will be put in direct contact with supported producers for a market-based approach. Storage and processing techniques will be promoted for a range of agricultural and NTFP products. Marketing support will help to address prevalent information gaps, knowledge, and access to markets outside communities.

41. **Technical services of the decentralized administration will be fully engaged in activities.** While the implementation of activities will mostly rely on non-government operators to ensure efficiency in execution and effective results, one key objective will aim to enable the active involvement of relevant services of the administration (particularly Agriculture, Forest, Mining and Environment). Their agents will participate in management committees established/revitalized under Activity 2.1 which will oversee the initial programming of activities. They will also receive relevant training and the means required to monitor the implementation of activities.
42. **As the MBNP area and correspondent CSPA has been classified as a UNESCO World Heritage in 2012, the ecotourism value of CAR's Southwestern forests has gained increasing recognition.** The abundant wildlife and cultural presence of indigenous communities offer nature-based tourism opportunities which are currently undervalued. Historically, tourist activities in the MBNP area have been linked to safari hunting in partnership with CWZs. This sub-activity will support prospective activities aimed at understanding the potential for developing ecotourism in the target area, including: developing a participatory inventory and catalogue of sites with tourism potential and cultural activities in the area in partnership with social actors with local knowledge and authorities; developing DSPA-MBNP joint collaboration reflecting MBNP's added value to the DSPA and how to showcase it; and identifying collaboration opportunities with private investors and CWZs for developing wildlife observation and/or cultural tourism.

Activity 2.3: Supporting forestry operators to improve their environmental practices (US\$0.40 million)

43. **The project will support forest concessionaires to implement sustainable practices that directly and indirectly impact biodiversity and habitat preservation.** Following WWF experience with concessionaires in the DSPA periphery, cooperation protocols will be established between the project and operators. Examples of technical assistance include capacity building and tools for identifying and monitoring high conservation value forests; development of systems for monitoring and managing bushmeat hunting in concessions; and awareness and educational activities for workers and local populations on sustainable bushmeat management. An initial assessment will be undertaken to determine the scope of support depending on the firms' needs and level of preparedness. Some operators are advanced in complying with sustainable requirements under CAR's legislation or are currently completing their sustainability programs (including community activities) to be implemented alongside operation. This enables timely technical support by the project.

Component 3 – Institutional support (mining): No additional resources programmed under the GEF AF

Component 4– Local development (mining): No additional resources programmed under the GEF AF

Component 5 – Project management including M&E and knowledge management (US\$0.60 million)



44. **Implementation arrangements are detailed in Annex V.** In July 2020, former NRGF TU with technical oversight over the project became a fully-fledged NRGF Coordination Unit (NRGF) with fiduciary responsibilities. Additional staff including an Administrative Manager, a Senior Procurement Specialist and an Administrative Assistant were recruited with IDA funds.
45. **Project management.** The GEF funds will mostly be used to recruit a Senior Biodiversity Expert who will coordinate GEF AF activities from the field and contribute to the project's governance framework, including safeguards supervision.
46. **A Local Steering Committee will be created to convene stakeholders representing the MBNP area and specifically monitor GEF AF activities.** The Local SC will meet annually and facilitate exchanges between actors and for resolution of any conflicts. The NRGF Steering Committee (SC) established in December 2018 will remain in charge of ensuring overall supervision of project implementation and approving Annual Work Plans and Budgets.
47. **GEF AF will also support M&E and knowledge management activities.** KM activities will cut across the project to contribute to the overall project strategy. They will be dealt with under different components to make sure these are focused on, and directly contribute to, the expected outcomes related to each of the components. KM activities can include: an overview of existing lessons and best practice that informed the project's approach; plans to learn from relevant projects, programs, initiatives, and evaluations; proposed processes to capture, assess, and document information, lessons, best practices, and expertise generated during implementation; proposed tools and methods for knowledge exchange, learning, and collaboration; proposed knowledge outputs to be produced and shared with stakeholders; a discussion on how knowledge and learning will contribute to overall project impact and sustainability; and plans for strategic communications. Component 1 will include KM activities that will address targeted analytical gaps and contribute to promoting conservation approaches and related tools (natural capital accounting, business models for protected areas etc.). The emphasis of Component 2 will be on community-based natural resources management and sustainable value chains. The dedicated knowledge management budget will also enable CAR's participation in global and regional learning activities organized by the GEF-7 CBSL regional coordination project. It will allow for more effective knowledge dissemination in-country to reach broader stakeholders. As designed, the GEF AF will take advantage of global knowledge resources on forests and biodiversity to ensure the use of best practices, and to create and contribute to regional and global partnerships, joint research and strategic knowledge management. The M&E plan of the project will support M&E functions and deploy geospatial M&E solutions as initiated under the parent project to ensure monitoring and supervision activities run smoothly despite prevailing logistical and security constraints in the project area (see Annex V). These activities are fully budgeted (see Annex II of the Project Paper).

E. Implementation

48. **Implementation and fiduciary arrangements are strengthened, leveraging the foundations built and experience gained under the parent project.** The existing Project Implementation Manual (PIM) will be updated prior to effectiveness of the GEF AF.
49. **As initially envisaged under the parent NRGF to gradually build capabilities within the MWFHF and MMG, fiduciary responsibilities have been transferred from the CEMAC TTFP PIU to a newly**



established NRGP Coordination Unit (NRGP CU). The NRGP CU consists of the former NRGP TU, whose Project Management had been rated Satisfactory since inception, further reinforced with 2 senior fiduciary staff recruited in July 2020. An addendum to the Financing Agreement was signed thereafter to reflect the new fiduciary arrangements. This was in line with the CMU's decision to enhance delivery effectiveness at the portfolio level.

50. **Key interventions of the GEF AF will be implemented through delegated management.** Experience with delegated management under Component 4 of parent NRGP (TetraTech) has proven positive in enhancing implementation effectiveness and mitigating related risks. Delegated management helps address constraints in technical and fiduciary capabilities and increases field presence especially considering the isolation and low connectivity of the project area. Two other Delegated Implementing Agencies (DIAs) are expected to be involved in the implementation of some GEF AF activities.

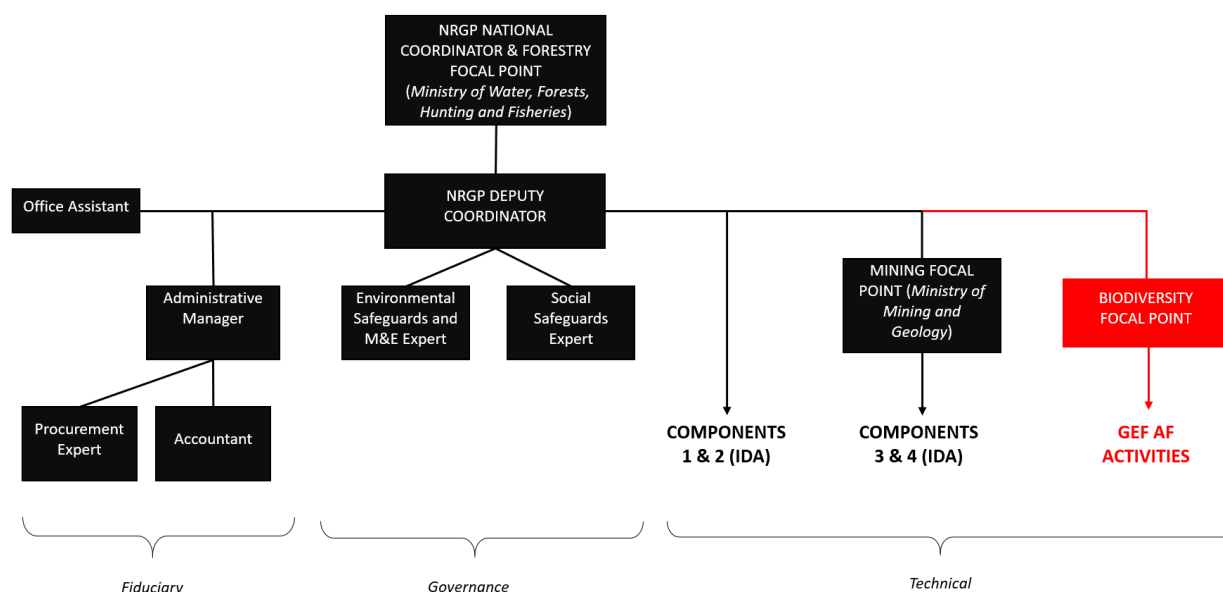
Institutional arrangements

51. **The MWFHF remains responsible for the overall implementation of the project.** The MMG cooperates with the MWFHF daily to better inform all the decisions related to the mining sector. An MMG Focal Point has been appointed for that purpose.
52. **The NRGP Steering Committee was set up in December 2018 as per Decree No.056/MEFCP/CN-PGRN.** The SC convenes at least once a year to ensure overall supervision of project implementation and approve Annual Work Plans and Budgets (AWPB). It is co-chaired by the MWFHF and MMG and include representatives from other administrations, including the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MESD). Are also represented officials from the 4 prefectures covered by the project activities (i.e. Lobaye, Mambéré-Kadéï, Nana-Mambéré and Sangha-Mbaéré) and the civil society.
53. **A Local Steering Committee is proposed to be established for the GEF AF.** It will bring together the stakeholders representing the MBNP area and specifically monitor GEF AF activities. The Local SC will meet once a year and facilitate exchanges between actors and the project. More details on the responsibilities of the Local Steering Committee will be specified in the PIM.

Implementation arrangements

54. **Overall responsibility for project management and implementation will fall under the NRGP CU.** The NRGP CU includes a National Coordinator (MWFHF), a Deputy Coordinator, a Mining Focal Point (MMG), an Environmental Safeguards Expert also in charge of Monitoring and Evaluation, a Social Safeguards Expert and an Accountant. In addition, a Senior Biodiversity Expert will be recruited to coordinate the GEF AF activities. The expert will be based in the field (GEF AF area) and will report to the NRGP Deputy Coordinator. See the organigram of the NRGP CU in Figure 1.
55. **The NRGP CU will also assume fiduciary responsibilities.** Inter alia, the NRGP CU will arrange and manage all the contracts, prepare unaudited interim financial reports and the procurement plan, manage the designated account and direct payments and arrange for independent audits. Additional staff will be recruited including an Administrative Manager, a Senior Procurement Specialist and an Administrative Assistant.

Figure 1: Organigram of the NRGP Coordination Unit



56. As shown in Table 2 below and further detailed in Annex II, two new DIAs are expected to be involved in the implementation of some project's GEF AF activities:

- **WWF will manage conservation-related technical assistance activities benefitting central and local authorities as well as local communities and forestry firms in the project area.** WWF has been co-managing the DSPA since its inception in 1989 through a public-private partnership with the Government of CAR. As explained in Annex IV, WWF, working with national and local NGOs, also implements other donors' programs in the project area including on anti-poaching and ecological monitoring, reduction of illegal wildlife trade, promotion of indigenous rights, and technical assistance to forest concessionaires in the DSPA periphery. GEF AF activities implemented by WWF will include: Activity 1.1 on Established a baseline state and resuming MBNP operations (except Sub-activity 1.1.3 on Operational support to MWFHF and Sub-activity 1.1.4 on Rehabilitation of the MBNP infrastructure and Sub-Activity) (US\$ 1 million); Sub-activity 2.2.2 on Assessment of MBNP's ecotourism potential in synergy with the products of the DSPA (US\$0.12 million); and Sub-activity 2.3 on Supporting forestry firms to improve their environmental practices (US\$0.4 million).
- **A DIA to be recruited competitively will manage activities related to plan-use planning and revenue-generating activities** benefitting local communities and local authorities (technical assistance), including Activity 2.1 on Community-based land-use and resource planning in LMP (US\$1 million) and Activity 2.2 on Supporting income and rural livelihoods diversification (except Sub-activity 2.2.2) (US\$2.5 million). The TORs of the DIA will include specific requirements to involve relevant local NGOs in the implementation of activities.

Table 2: Implementation arrangements per activity

Project Activities and Sub-Activities	Implementation Arrangements
Component 1	
1.1.1	Delegated Management with WWF (DIA)

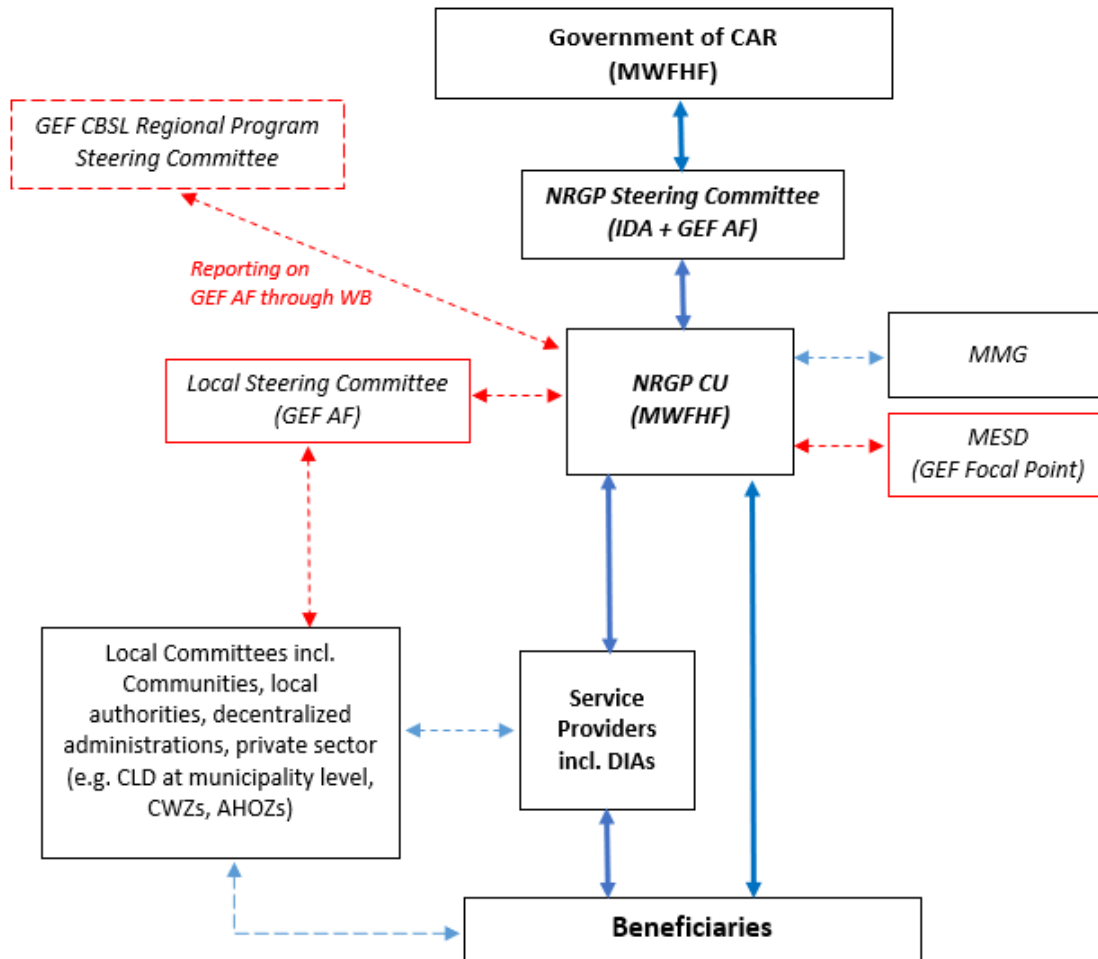


1.1.2	
1.1.3	PIU with MWFHF
1.1.4	PIU with private sector (construction firm)
1.1.5	Delegated Management with WWF (DIA)
1.2	PIU with MESD
1.3	PIU with MESD and other relevant Ministries
Component 2	
2.1	Other DIA to be recruited competitively
2.2.1	
2.2.2	Delegated Management with WWF (DIA)
2.3	

57. **Partnership Agreement with DIAs.** The proceeds of the GEF grant will be made available to the DIAs according to the scope of activities above described under partnership agreements signed with MWFHF under terms and conditions approved by the World Bank as further described in the PIM (“Partnership Agreement”). CAR’s government through the NRGU CU shall exercise its rights under the Partnership Agreement to protect the interests of the government and the World Bank and to accomplish the purposes of the Grant. Except as the World Bank shall otherwise agree, the government shall not assign, amend, abrogate, or waive the Partnership Agreement or any of their provisions. In case of any conflict between the terms of the Partnership Agreement and the terms of this Agreement, the terms of this Agreement shall prevail.
58. **Consultants’ services.** The FA will contract various service providers (NGOs, consultants, etc.) to: (i) implement all activities considered as technical assistance under the components one and two; and (ii) prepare the strategies and modalities of interventions which will govern investments supporting local development in the field (components two and four).
59. **Other expenditures.** Procurement of goods, works, non-consulting services, operating costs, and training will also be handled by the FA in accordance with the annual work programs and discussed with the NRGU PIU.
60. **Local community committees, local authorities, and decentralized administrations.** As a rule, the project will leverage existing local committees to identify the services, goods, and infrastructure and be provided and to support the beneficiary targeting process. This will be done with the active involvement of local authorities, including decentralized administrations, as they maintain institutional responsibility over local public affairs and policies. Where such committees do not exist, the project will support the establishment of new committees following best practices.
61. **Sub-projects.** The project through the NRGU UC and/or DIAs will make sub-grants available to beneficiaries (Component 2) in accordance with eligibility criteria and procedures acceptable to the World Bank described in the PIM of NRGU. Further details are included in Annex 4, Section 3 of the PIM. Sub-grants include obligations to respect the project’s environmental and social safeguard frameworks, anti-corruption measures, procurement and financial management provisions, and reporting requirements.
62. **Performance-Based Incentives and Investments.** Part of the proceeds of the sub-grants available to communities (Component 2) will be provided under Agreements for Performance-Based Incentives and Investments. The PIM will be revised accordingly to include a specific section describing “Agreements for

Performance-Based Incentives and Investments”.

Figure 2: Institutional and Implementation Arrangements



Monitoring and Evaluation

63. **The M&E function of the project will facilitate the accountability towards achievement of the objective, activities and outputs based on the Theory of Change and Results Framework (see GEF Data Sheet).** The M&E system will allow for ongoing learning and feedback through the planning and implementation stages of the project activities and will also play a crucial role for evaluation at mid-term review and at completion. The M&E Plan is fully budgeted at US\$ 191,880 under Component 5. This budget covers the activities described in this section, with a focus on updating the GEF-7 Core Indicators and, monitoring & reporting on the Results Framework.
64. **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the GEF AF indicators will be conducted by the NRGPS CU, supported in the field by the DIAs.** NRGPS CU will assume overall responsibility for project M&E using the project’s results framework to issue quarterly updates on overall project implementation. The NRGPS CU will revise the existing M&E system to include GEF activities and indicators. The NRGPS CU will be



responsible for operationalization of the Results Framework for monitoring and evaluating the project at a consolidated level. To monitor and track progress on indicators, the DIAs and other contractors selected to facilitate project implementation will work closely with the NRGU CU to link their monitoring system to that of the project. Every effort will be made to disclose information that is accessible and comprehensible to local communities.

65. **Geo-spatial Monitoring and Evaluation solutions.** Given the prevailing logistical and security challenges in the CAR that limit effective on the ground access in some of the selected project zones, solutions in the field of remote sensing and geospatial analysis will be leveraged for monitoring and evaluation purposes when feasible. The NRGU will continue ongoing effort, supported by the Bank's Geo-Enabling Initiative for Monitoring and Supervision (GEMS), to leverage these tools most effectively (Kobo Toolbox). Geospatial capabilities will be integrated and applied to project implementation, namely: (i) geographic targeting; (ii) prioritization of project zones; (iii) community level surveys and baseline data collection; (iv) security monitoring; (v) third party implementation supervision; and (vi) coordination with stakeholders and partners.
66. **Periodic review of the Results Framework and intermediate outcomes.** This will be a necessary part and parcel of the project's flexible, progressive and adaptable approach to implementation to progressively monitor and evaluate results and draw lessons that would inform implementation of subsequent activities. Sequencing of activities in a structured way would be key. GEF-7 Core indicator sheet will be tracked and monitored for the LD and CC focal areas. BD METT Tracking tool will be developed and monitored throughout the project duration with reporting at approval, midterm, and end of project.
67. **Data collection.** The NRGU CU, working with the DIAs and other implementing partners, will establish a data collection system to obtain data from the project area and carry out community-level surveys on a periodic basis to record baseline data in line with the indicators included in the project results monitoring framework. Data collected will be used to update baselines, presenting and targeting indicator values for all sub-components and results reporting on a quarterly basis.

F. Project location and Salient physical characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis (if known)

Some project activities (strengthening institutional capacity, and reforming legal frameworks) are soft activities that may be considered as having an impact at the national level, whereas others (support to forest communities, artisanal miners and small-scale operators) will be implemented in the field, in the South-West of CAR (Lobaye, Sangha-Mbaere, and Mambere-Kadei departments), precise location of which will be identified over the course of the project implementation.

G. Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists on the Team

Richard Everett, Social Specialist

Joelle Nkombela Mukungu, Environmental Specialist

Yves Bertrand Koudjou Tatang, Social Specialist



SAFEGUARD POLICIES THAT MIGHT APPLY

Safeguard Policies	Triggered?	Explanation (Optional)
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	Yes	As the parent project, the AF project is classified as EA category B project. This policy is triggered because some activities to be financed might generate potential risks and impacts to the environment. This includes among others, support the upgrade and rehabilitation of MBNP infrastructure to facilitate access and implementation (component 1: Institutional support), Promoting management models and economic activities that contribute to the sustainable use and regeneration of natural resources in the MBNP buffer zone, and corridor to DSPA (component 2). To mitigate potential risks and impacts that would emerge from the implementation of the project's activities, the PIU has updated the parent project's Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) consulted upon, to consider activities and locations related to the AF, considering new location as well. The ESMF provides guidance for the environmental and social screening of site-specific activities. It has been reviewed and approved by the World Bank and disclosed within the country on 07/09/2020 and on the World Bank external website on 07/09/2020.
Performance Standards for Private Sector Activities OP/BP 4.03	No	This policy is not triggered. The project does not involve private sector activities.
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04	Yes	The Project will operate in natural habitats but will not include activities that involve significant conversion or degradation of natural habitats. Instead, the Project activities are designed to reduce pressures on natural habitats and improve their conservation. Potential impacts and proposed mitigation measures are included in the updated ESMF.
Forests OP/BP 4.36	Yes	The project will operate in forested areas but will not involve the conversion or degradation of critical forest areas. Agroforestry and other activities on Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) under the Project will be designed to prevent and mitigate



		potential threats to biodiversity, including threats related to the introduction of invasive species. Potential impacts and proposed mitigation measures are included in the updated ESMF.
Pest Management OP 4.09	Yes	The Project will promote management models and economic activities that contribute to the sustainable use and regeneration of natural resources in the MBNP buffer zone and corridor to DSPA. This might include support to agriculture and agroforestry activities developed by communities, private sector companies, local NGOs and farmer's organizations. The use of pesticides is not common in the region. In case pesticides will be used, the parent project's Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPMP) has been updated to ensure that environmentally friendly methods for pest control are applied, such as biological control, cultural practices, and the development and use of varieties that are pest and disease resistant or tolerant. It has been approved by the World Bank and disclosed publicly in the country on 07/09/2020 and at the World Bank external website on 07/09/2020. It provides guidance on the safe selection, handling and disposal of pesticides.
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11	Yes	Project activities might be located in, or in the vicinity of, physical cultural resources, notably sacred sites of local communities. The identification of possible physical cultural resources will be conducted on-site with relevant experts and project-affected groups.
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10	Yes	The Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) was updated and consulted upon, considering that some investments and activities that will lead to poverty alleviation by supporting communities and the private sector could impact on indigenous peoples' lands and livelihoods. Specific Indigenous Peoples Plans (IPPs) might be prepared and implemented, as required under individual projects.
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12	Yes	The investments and activities that will lead to poverty alleviation by supporting communities and the private sector are unlikely to lead to involuntary resettlement but an Involuntary Resettlement Framework was developed, and updated for the AF, with a goal of preventing any future physical or economic displacement. The project will ensure that



		procedures and capacity are always in place to ensure the effective implementation of this framework. Some activities that will lead to poverty alleviation by supporting communities and the private sector may reduce access to natural resources for some households, such as measures to strengthen conservation areas. As a result, a Process Framework was developed and updated to include Mbaéré-Bodingué National Park (MBNP) targeted under the AF.
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37	No	Neither the project nor related investments will involve the construction of dams and so this policy is not triggered.
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50	No	Neither the project nor related investments will be located on international waterways so this policy is not triggered.
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60	No	Neither the project nor related investments will be located in disputed areas so this policy is not triggered.

KEY SAFEGUARD POLICY ISSUES AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

A. Summary of Key Safeguard Issues

1. Describe any safeguard issues and impacts associated with the proposed project. Identify and describe any potential large scale, significant and/or irreversible impacts:

No activity supported by the Natural Resources Governance Project is expected to have significant negative social and/or environmental impacts on the targeted areas. Indeed, activities aim to formalize and expand the capacity of forest and mining sectors to boost fiscal revenues while strengthening environmental and social norms in both sectors. Likewise, for the AF positive environmental impacts include the improved living environment and improved management of natural resources with climate Co-Benefits. Positive social impacts include job creation and poverty reduction, development of commercial and income-generating activities, and improved livelihoods, especially for women, youth, and indigenous people whose specific needs will be considered in the various planned investments. However, environmental and social risks exist, ranging from contamination of soil, groundwater, and surface water to non-inclusive investment practices and deterioration of rural livelihoods among forest communities.

Regarding the AF, minor temporary indirect environmental impacts on natural resources use may occur as a result of the anticipated repairs and small civil works of essential facilities in MBNP area (mostly during construction). These include loss of plant species, various forms of soil, surface water and air pollution, disturbance of the ecological environment, noise nuisance, and the risk of accidents and contamination. No logging of primary forests is expected to occur as a result of the project. In particular, Activity 2.3 supporting forestry operators, and implemented in partnership with WWF, will focus on technical assistance to promote sustainable practices that directly and indirectly impact biodiversity and habitat preservation (e.g. capacity building and tools for identifying and monitoring high conservation value forests; development of systems for monitoring and managing bushmeat hunting in concessions;



and awareness and educational activities for workers and local populations on sustainable bushmeat management). The updated ESMF includes lists of potential impacts and mitigation measures that could result from the parent project and AF investments. Investments will be further screened and reviewed during implementation, in order to include specific mitigation measures in planning and design phases to ensure environmental and social sound designs, as well as during construction and operation phases to avoid or minimize to the maximum possible any adverse impacts.

The project is not expected to require land acquisition or involuntary resettlement of people as the AF will not finance infrastructure construction. For activities that result in reducing access to natural resources or potentially create some restriction of access for some households the RPF and/or PF will be applied.

Particularly, potential conflicts may arise over land related to the promotion of agricultural investment or forest boundaries resulting from land-use planning. The land-use plans promoted under the AF will be based on a participatory and inclusive process. They will be based on a collective analysis of the current land-use systems, drivers of deforestation, and land and environmental degradation. Local management committees will be established/revitalized to develop, validate, and monitor plans in a participatory manner with specific emphasis on integrating women and indigenous communities who represent most of the workforce for agriculture and forest-related products. In line with the decentralization process in CAR, the municipality level – especially the Local Development Committees (LDCs) supported under the parent project – and decentralized technical services will always be associated. The AF will expand the parent project's engagement with the Network of Indigenous and Local Populations of CAR (REPALCA) on community development planning (LDCs) to ensure appropriate consultation and participation of IPs (in line with the Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) requirements in ILO 169) and that they receive fair and culturally appropriate benefits. A new result indicator on increased monetary income and non-monetary benefits is disaggregated accordingly. In addition, a sub-indicator "share of women represented in decision-making committees" (with a 50% target) is added to capture and monitor the project's contribution to enhancing women's voice and agency in natural resources management.

The land-use plans will aim to reduce the impact of traditional agriculture on forest cover (slash-and-burn system) and other land use (e.g. mining) and to increase the annual income of households from developing alternative, sustainable small-scale agriculture, and forest-related value chains. To address land insecurity under the project, the nature and location of the supported investment activities will be concerted and decided upon at the level of i) the LDCs of the municipalities (supported by the parent and AFD projects) and ii. local management committees established/revitalized under the AF (i.e., village groups level) alongside the development of the land use plans. Any prospective investment will be subject to an agreement with the lineage and/or the clan having customary rights over the land considered. This agreement will be in written form and obtained in the presence of local authorities. The agreement may also include non-rights holders (i.e., outside the clan/lineage), including indigenous peoples, and will define related modalities (leasing and/or compensation, benefit-sharing, etc.). If appropriate, the land and related agreement may be recorded in a register at the municipality or prefecture-level. The formalization of the project's approach to addressing tenure insecurity will be based on a timely assessment of short to long-term risks (e.g., clan conflicts, etc.) and be considerate of modalities defined under the forthcoming decentralization law and other relevant regulation (land, forest code, wildlife code, etc.).

The AF will provide further expert advice and analytical support as technical input to cross-sectoral issues underpinning the policy dialogue on natural resources management in CAR and of relevance to the project's objectives and activities. In particular, this activity will aim to strengthen CAR's enabling environment for community-based natural resource management, focusing on policy items such as participatory, sustainable management of NTFPs; Community Wildlife Zones (CWZs) as defined in the draft Code on Management of Wildlife and Wildlife Protection



Areas (initiated in 2006) (CWZs will be road-tested under Component 2); and governance of land and natural resource rights for indigenous people in land-use and forest policy and legislation and the draft law on the promotion and protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). This activity will not support legislation drafting but only technical studies/analysis and related consultation and dissemination events. Any technical advice provided in support of the above will need to comply with the Bank's safeguards policies, be underpinned by adequate social assessment, and supported by appropriate stakeholder engagement.

Access restrictions to natural resources in the project area for local communities may be caused by strengthened monitoring and implementation of strategies to regulate the use of natural resources within the MBNP protected area and buffer zone according to the MBNP management plan whose update will be supported by the AF. The risk of social conflict between MBNP staff (including six administrators and 10 eco-guards who are employed by MWFHF, local communities, and indigenous peoples is mitigated through the project's strong focus on community-based, inclusive conservation. All conservation activities will be implemented by the conservation technical assistance (WWF) in partnership with MBNP staff, local communities, and indigenous populations. Project activities will not support or promote people's displacement from the protected area. A code of conduct with a related training plan will be established for MBNP staff (MWFHF) and all other operational partners (local NGOs etc.). The implementation of these measures will be assured through the multi-stakeholder Local Steering Committee and the local presence of the GEF AF coordinator and WWF staff.

Sexual exploitation and abuse or sexual harassment (SEA/SH) as a result of power imbalances may arise from the economic empowerment of men and women beneficiaries participating in project activities. The project will design activities toward enhancing women's access to and control over natural resources, improving women's participation and decision-making in governance structures related to the management of natural resources and enhancing women's access to socio-economic benefits and services. This includes activities to raise awareness around the prevalence of gender-based violence and develop strategies to mitigate, prevent, and respond to GBV. The GRM of the parent NRGF was established in June 2019 and revised in January 2020 based on the Bank's review, including to better consider Gender-Based Violence aspects.

Other social risks include increased conflict if local workers are not employed by the project contractors although these impacts are likely to be site-specific, low in scope and time, and easily manageable. AF activities will put a strong focus on local staffing. For example, members of local and indigenous populations will reinforce the project teams with eco-surveillant to perform ecological monitoring and anti-poaching operations in MBNP and its buffer zone. Significant collaboration with local NGOs, building on the experience/network of WWF in the neighboring DSPA and as initiated under the parent project, will help mitigate this risk. The proposed Local Steering Committee (in addition to the existing national one) will convene stakeholders of the MBNP area and facilitate exchange, information sharing, and conflict resolution.

Cash-for-work incentives will be one key modality for delivering project activities and provide communities with alternative income for ecosystem services. Payments will mostly provide immediate benefits (e.g., communities supporting ecological monitoring in the Park, trail rehabilitation, agroforestry plantations) and may also be based on results (e.g., communities supporting the maintenance of plantations or fire breaks). Payments will serve individual or community needs. Elite capture of cash-for-work incentives is also a risk, which could lead to further disfranchised vulnerable communities. The type of work, payment modalities, and benefit-sharing are specified in contracts that are signed between the project and communities (e.g., through their LCD and other local management structures).

The project is designed to mitigate environmental and social risks with specific mitigation measures to address



potential negative impacts. For that reason, the project has been rated as an Environment Assessment Category B project, and triggers seven safeguards policies: OP/BP 4.01 (Environmental Assessment), OP/BP 4.04 (Natural Habitats), OP/BP4.36 (Forests), OP4.09 (Pest Management), OP/BP4.11 (Physical and Cultural Resources), OP/BP4.10 (Indigenous Peoples), and OP/PB 4.12(Involuntary Resettlement). No large-scale or irreversible adverse impact is expected.

2. Describe any potential indirect and/or long term impacts due to anticipated future activities in the project area:

The proposed project is expected to have a positive impact by improving forestry and mining sector management and performance by addressing regulatory gaps, strengthening institutional capacity, and support artisanal and small-scale operators in targeted areas. The AF activities are expected to improve the living environment and management of natural resources with climate Co-Benefits, create jobs, reduce poverty, improve livelihoods, especially for women, youth, and indigenous people whose needs will specifically be considered. Long-term impacts expected from the implementation of activities to be financed under this project including the AF are limited. Long-term environmental risks include the conversion of high-value forested landscapes leading to biodiversity losses due to poor quality land use plans as a result of an inappropriate land-use planning exercise. Strong technical support from the project operator and NGO partners as well as a participative and inclusive process will help ensure a strong quality (e.g. definition of spatial limits, land-use change, etc.) and local ownership for the land-use plans. Overall sustainability will be enhanced by the project engagement at the municipality level through the established Local Development Committees (LDCs), the creation/revitalization of local management structures with strong organizational and governance frameworks, and the AF investment support to implement the land-use plans. Other risks to consider and address lie in conservation areas such as MBNP often facing several challenges to their long-term integrity and sustainability, including weak institutions and capacity to enforce forest and wildlife laws and to engage with local communities, insufficient human capacity and significant skills gaps, lack of financial sustainability that pose a risk to the sustainability of the system, human encroachment, and poverty around protected areas. In addition to significant stakeholder engagement and capacity building supported by the AF as previously mentioned, to ensure the sustainability of activities and outcomes the AF will also support CAR and its technical and financial partners to define a long-term strategy and roadmap for the management and funding of the MBNP area. The project will support the MWFHF and stakeholders in the development of a strategic plan accompanied by a financial model consisting of one or potentially several business plans. A roadmap will also be proposed to the government for the implementation of the strategic plan.

3. Describe any project alternatives (if relevant) considered to help avoid or minimize adverse impacts.

NA.

4. Describe measures taken by the borrower to address safeguard policy issues. Provide an assessment of borrower capacity to plan and implement the measures described.

As a mitigation strategy, the recipient has updated the parent project's Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), which includes specific sections addressing the requirements of the safeguards policies triggered in particular OP/BP 4.04 (natural habitats), OP/BP 4.36 (forests), OP/BP 4.10 (Indigenous Peoples), OP/BP 4.11 (Physical Cultural Resources), OP/BP 4.09 (Pest Management), and OP/BP 4.12 (Involuntary Resettlement). An Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF), an Integrated Pest Management Framework (IPMF), a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF), and a Process Framework (PF) have been updated as well.

The overall responsibility of safeguards processing relies on the Project Coordination Unit (NRGP CU) working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Mines and Geology, and other technical administrative bodies involved in the project (Environment, Agriculture, etc.). Their capacity to assess



and address safeguards compliance has been enhanced through a capacity building process during the project implementation.

The NRGPU is responsible for following up all safeguards concerns and would also ensure that all safeguard screening and mitigation requirements for each subproject are applied.

5. Identify the key stakeholders and describe the mechanisms for consultation and disclosure on safeguard policies, with an emphasis on potentially affected people.

The key stakeholders are the Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries (MWFHF), the Ministry of Mines and Geology (MMG), the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MESD), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), including their decentralized services in the project area, which will benefit from the technical assistance of the project and will also support the NRGPU in the monitoring of activities; ii) local communities and indigenous populations that will engage in land-use planning and income-generating activities; iii) diverse local NGOs which will take part in or implement activities with technical partners (e.g., WWF); and private operators including forestry firms, mining cooperatives and farming associative structures also engaged at various levels. Public sessions (small group discussions, workshops, etc.) have been held with stakeholders to validate the different stages of the production process of the expected safeguards frameworks and plans.

Steering Committee annual meetings will be critical for sharing information and collecting feedback from beneficiaries and authorities at the national and local levels. In addition, and as per stakeholders' requests during the consultation on the GEF AF, a Local Steering Committee (in addition to the existing national one) will be created to convene stakeholders of the MBNP area and facilitate exchange, information sharing, and conflict resolution. Moreover, the GEF AF will leverage the Local Development Committees (LDCs) established in targeted municipalities as the official gateway to engaging with stakeholders on the implementation of GEF AF activities.

As per the parent NRGPU, communities and individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by GEF activities may submit complaints to the existing project-level grievance redress mechanism (GRM) or the WB's Grievance Redress Service (GRS). The NRGPU GRM was established in June 2019 and its latest version (January 2020) is accessible online to the public. It was also translated to local language for deployment in the field and easing access to potential grievants. In the period from June 2019 to June 2020, two grievances were received and resolved to the satisfaction of complainants. It is managed by the NRGPU CU and includes three levels for complaint collection and treatment: village, municipality, and prefecture. At each level, complaint committees include representatives of elders, indigenous peoples, women's and youth associations, etc. The initial selection of the complaint committees was done by local authorities in consultation with the NRGPU CU and the constitution of the committees will be refined as community mobilization activities are rolled out in the field (e.g. establishment of Local Development Committees in Municipalities under the parent project, the establishment of the Local Steering Committee under the GEF AF, etc.). Various channels can be used to communicate complaints (e-mail, telephone, forms, meetings, etc.). The NRGPU GRM committees in Prefectures will be informed of GEF activities. The GRM will also be deployed in municipalities and villages not covered by the parent NRGPU.

The establishment of a local office for the NRGPU TU in the area targeted by GEF activities (Bambio or Ngotto) will facilitate day-to-day communication with stakeholders and beneficiaries. Regular supervision missions involving authorities (MWFHF, MESD, MMG), NRGPU CU, and World Bank will provide additional oversight and capacity building regarding stakeholder engagement and communication. Given the prevailing logistical and security challenges in CAR, and current COVID-related constraints, that may limit effective on the ground access in some of the selected project zones, solutions in the field of remote sensing and geospatial analysis are being leveraged for supervision purposes



when feasible. The NRGPU will continue the ongoing effort, supported by the Bank's Geo-Enabling Initiative for Monitoring and Supervision (GEMS), to leverage these tools most effectively with partners in the field (i.e. contractors, local NGOs) and more systematically apply geospatial capabilities to project implementation and monitoring.

B. Disclosure Requirements (N.B. The sections below appear only if corresponding safeguard policy is triggered)

Environmental Assessment/Audit/Management Plan/Other

Date of receipt by the Bank	Date of submission for disclosure	For category A projects, date of distributing the Executive Summary of the EA to the Executive Directors
12-May-2020	09-Jul-2020	

"In country" Disclosure

Central African Republic

09-Jul-2020

Comments

Link: <https://www.mepc.cf/projet-de-gouvernance-des-ressources-naturelles-pgrn-2020/>

Resettlement Action Plan/Framework/Policy Process

Date of receipt by the Bank	Date of submission for disclosure
11-Jun-2020	09-Jul-2020

"In country" Disclosure

Central African Republic

09-Jul-2020

Comments

Link: <https://www.mepc.cf/projet-de-gouvernance-des-ressources-naturelles-pgrn-2020/>

Indigenous Peoples Development Plan/Framework

Date of receipt by the Bank	Date of submission for disclosure
30-Jun-2020	09-Jul-2020

"In country" Disclosure

Central African Republic

09-Jul-2020



Comments

Link: <https://www.mepc.cf/projet-de-gouvernance-des-ressources-naturelles-pgrn-2020/>

Pest Management Plan

Was the document disclosed prior to appraisal?	Date of receipt by the Bank	Date of submission for disclosure
Yes	04-Jun-2020	09-Jul-2020

"In country" Disclosure

Central African Republic

09-Jul-2020

Comments

Link: <https://www.mepc.cf/projet-de-gouvernance-des-ressources-naturelles-pgrn-2020/>

If the project triggers the Pest Management and/or Physical Cultural Resources policies, the respective issues are to be addressed and disclosed as part of the Environmental Assessment/Audit/or EMP.

If in-country disclosure of any of the above documents is not expected, please explain why:

N/A

C. Compliance Monitoring Indicators at the Corporate Level (to be filled in when the ISDS is finalized by the project decision meeting) (N.B. The sections below appear only if corresponding safeguard policy is triggered)

OP/BP/GP 4.01 - Environment Assessment

Does the project require a stand-alone EA (including EMP) report?

No

OP/BP 4.04 - Natural Habitats

Would the project result in any significant conversion or degradation of critical natural habitats?

No

If the project would result in significant conversion or degradation of other (non-critical) natural habitats, does the project include mitigation measures acceptable to the Bank?

Yes

OP 4.09 - Pest Management

Does the EA adequately address the pest management issues?



Yes

Is a separate PMP required?

Yes

If yes, has the PMP been reviewed and approved by a safeguards specialist or PM? Are PMP requirements included in project design? If yes, does the project team include a Pest Management Specialist?

Yes

OP/BP 4.11 - Physical Cultural Resources

Does the EA include adequate measures related to cultural property?

Yes

Does the credit/loan incorporate mechanisms to mitigate the potential adverse impacts on cultural property?

Yes

OP/BP 4.10 - Indigenous Peoples

Has a separate Indigenous Peoples Plan/Planning Framework (as appropriate) been prepared in consultation with affected Indigenous Peoples?

Yes

If yes, then did the Regional unit responsible for safeguards or Practice Manager review the plan?

Yes

If the whole project is designed to benefit IP, has the design been reviewed and approved by the Regional Social Development Unit or Practice Manager?

NA

OP/BP 4.12 - Involuntary Resettlement

Has a resettlement plan/abbreviated plan/policy framework/process framework (as appropriate) been prepared?

Yes

If yes, then did the Regional unit responsible for safeguards or Practice Manager review the plan?

Yes

Is physical displacement/relocation expected?

No

Is economic displacement expected? (loss of assets or access to assets that leads to loss of income sources or other means of livelihoods)

No

OP/BP 4.36 - Forests

Has the sector-wide analysis of policy and institutional issues and constraints been carried out?

Yes

Does the project design include satisfactory measures to overcome these constraints?

Yes



Does the project finance commercial harvesting, and if so, does it include provisions for certification system?

No

The World Bank Policy on Disclosure of Information

Have relevant safeguard policies documents been sent to the World Bank for disclosure?

Yes

Have relevant documents been disclosed in-country in a public place in a form and language that are understandable and accessible to project-affected groups and local NGOs?

Yes

All Safeguard Policies

Have satisfactory calendar, budget and clear institutional responsibilities been prepared for the implementation of measures related to safeguard policies?

Yes

Have costs related to safeguard policy measures been included in the project cost?

Yes

Does the Monitoring and Evaluation system of the project include the monitoring of safeguard impacts and measures related to safeguard policies?

Yes

Have satisfactory implementation arrangements been agreed with the borrower and the same been adequately reflected in the project legal documents?

Yes

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