



Report Number : ICR00004458

1. Project Data

Project ID

P118018

Project Name

Cameroon:NGOYLA MINTOM PROJECT

Country

Cameroon

Practice Area(Lead)

Environment & Natural Resources

L/C/TF Number(s)

TF-11856

Closing Date (Original)

30-Jun-2017

Total Project Cost (USD)

3,462,644.60

Bank Approval Date

05-Apr-2012

Closing Date (Actual)

31-May-2018

IBRD/IDA (USD)
Grants (USD)

Original Commitment

3,500,000.00

3,500,000.00

Revised Commitment

3,500,000.00

3,462,644.60

Actual

3,497,989.75

3,462,644.60

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

According to the Financial Agreement (FA, Schedule 1, p6) and the Global Environmental Objectives in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD, pg. vii) the Project Development Objective (PDO) of this project was “to improve the conservation and management of the Core Area and improve access to income-generating activities for local communities in the project area.”



The 'Core Area' is defined on page 1 of the Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR) as an area of no less than 160,000 hectares within the Ngoyla-Mintom forest massif, identified by the Government with agreement of the World Bank.

- (i) to improve conservation of the Core Area;
- (ii) to improve management of the Core Area; and
- (iii) to improve access to income-generating activities for local communities in the project area.

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Project closing date was revised twice – the first, by nine months from June 30, 2017 to March 30, 2018 to accommodate completion of all activities under the third objective; the second by two months to May 31, 2018, to engage an external auditor. No other revisions were undertaken (ICR p9-10).

b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?

No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

Component 1 – Support for Participatory Planning and Management of Core Area (*Indicative Budget at appraisal: US\$1.571million Actual cost: US\$0.81 million*)

The objective of this component was to strengthen the capacity of the government and civil society to manage priority "core areas" with high biodiversity value for conservation and low impact community use. The focus was on participatory planning and management, to promote a sustainable conservation and management model that: avoids opportunity costs, reduces costs of management and policing by outsiders, and minimizes conflict between external managers and communities (PAD para 25).

This component had three subcomponents: i) strengthening government and community capacity to ensure participatory management and planning; ii) studies to understand the socioeconomic impact of the project on indigenous communities and confirm their acceptance of the classification of proposed areas for conservation management; iii) preparing proposals and plans for selected core areas and a subset of priority areas, including options for legal status that would accommodate community participation in management and use. The considerable reduction in project funds allocated to this



component (52% of planned) was due to some expenses being grouped under 'project management' in component 3 (ICR, p39).

Component 2 – Design and implement a Livelihood Support Mechanism (LSM) (*Indicative Budget at appraisal: US\$1.406 million. Actual cost: \$1.20 million*)

This component aimed to address the immediate social and development needs of the local communities and indigenous peoples, with priority given to those with traditional users and those who would stand to lose from reduced access to the forest as a result of future protection classifications. The LSM was to invest in micro-projects to increase economic alternatives that are conservation-compatible and assist transition to more sustainable resource-use patterns, including alternative crops and livestock husbandry, trade facilitation and basic social infrastructure establishment and maintenance (PAD, para 28).

The first of two subcomponents was to design and pilot the LSM, including outreach and training to access the LSM. The second was to evaluate the LSM with a view to developing scale-up recommendations.

This overall component was to be managed by an independent managing contractor, including locally specific Operating Procedures validated by the local communities. The managing contractor model however, was eventually dropped and management was brought in-house (into the Project Implementation Unit), due to procurement and financial management challenges (see Section 5 below).

Component 3 – Design and implementation of a long-term monitoring and evaluation system for the Ngoyla-Mintom Forest Massif; and project management. (*Indicative Budget for component at appraisal: US\$0.523 million. Actual cost: \$1.49 million*)

This component had two subcomponents. The first was to design and implement a long-term monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to monitor social economic and ecological information for communities in the larger Ngoyla Mintom forest massif but with data collection concentrated on the core areas. It focused on levels of participation and consensus during the preparation of management plans for the area, and number of beneficiaries and types of benefits delivered by the project in general and the LSM in particular. The second subcomponent was project management, including project level M&E (PAD, para 32).

The 180% increase in funds allocated to this component was due to component 3 covering some of the costs that were expected to be in-kind contributions from the GOC (ICR p39).

Note on Component Costs: The appraisal and actual costs for the three components above were obtained from Annex 3 of the ICR. As mentioned in that annex and in the PAD (Table 1) the Government committed US\$2.07 million to the project at appraisal and disbursed US\$1.11 million. It is



not known how the government's actual expenditures were distributed among the components and hence the Government's contribution is not included in the component costs.

e. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates

Project Cost: The appraised cost was US\$5.573 million (PAD, Table 1); the actual amount disbursed was US\$4.609 million (ICR, p2 and p39)

Financing: The Bank's financing from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was US\$3,497,990 disbursed compared with a planned amount of US\$3.5 million.

Borrower Contribution: The in-kind contribution of the Government of Cameroon (GOC) was estimated in the PAD (Table 1) to be US\$2.073 million in the form of Ministry staff time, office and accommodation construction and administrative services. At completion, the estimated GOC contribution was US\$1.11 million – 55 percent of that planned (ICR, p39).

Dates: The project closing date was extended twice. The first was by nine months from 9 May 2017 to 30 March 2018, requested by the GOC order to complete all planned activities under Component 2 (Design and implement LSM) (ICR, p9). The second extension was for an additional two months to allow for contracting of an auditor, as was already planned and budgeted for. No other revisions were undertaken (ICR p9-10).

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c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?
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3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

International and Country Context: As set out in the PAD, Cameroon's forest resources are recognized nationally and internationally as an asset not only for its own local communities, economy and biodiversity, but also for the biodiversity of three neighboring countries, and hence important to the international community working to address biodiversity degradation and loss. At appraisal Cameroon had been steadily increasing its protected areas and making efforts towards improving land use planning and management, including developing a Master Plan and new law (2011) for spatial development, and various initiatives to



strengthen institutional and regulatory frameworks, including for mining (PAD, p2). Sustainable forest management was an important part of addressing the country's widespread (and in some places, worsening) poverty (some 40 percent of the population) and boosting its weak annual growth (GDP at 3.3 percent and per capita GDP at 0.6 percent during 2003-2007). Nevertheless, there was a need to balance potential revenue from mining and forestry sectors and imminent planned investments in large energy and transport infrastructure, with local social dynamics and traditional uses of forest resources. It also required strengthening the relatively weak government and civil-society institutional and practical capacity to manage the multiple interests and stakeholders in a participatory manner (PAD, p2). The convergence of these issues made the project timely in helping to avoid irreversible forest and biodiversity loss, conflicts and economic inefficiencies.

Strategic Alignment: The first two parts of the PDO (improve (i) conservation and (ii) management of the Core Area) were well aligned with both the GOC's national development priorities outlined in the GOC's Vision 2030 and with the Bank Group's Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Cameroon for FY17-21. Most notably, there were tight links between PDO's Components 1 and 3, and CPF objective 11 *Improved regulatory and institutional framework for key sectors* and specifically through indicator 11.5 *Strengthened capacity in national programs for "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries" (REDD+) issues*. The project was also relevant overall to CPF Objective 12: *Increased citizen engagement at local level* (CPF, p64-65), given the project's emphasis on community participation in management and planning.

The relevance of the third part of the PDO (improving access to income-generating activities for local communities in the project area), was most clearly related to the higher-level 'pillar' of the CPF ["Focus area one: Addressing multiple poverty traps in rural areas (with a focus on northern areas)"]. Its alignment was therefore more loosely spread across several objectives of the CPF (see ICR, p11).

The PDO was highly relevant to the international and country context of conserving the regional environment and biodiversity as well as highly relevant to Cameroon's development strategy and the World Bank's partnership framework supporting that strategy.

There were no changes to the project's PDO or indicators during the five-year implementation period. The PDO remained highly relevant to the project's context, the Government's development strategies and alignment of the Bank's support for them. But the lack of a precise definition of the extent to which the improvements in natural resource conservation in the Core Area, or natural resource management in the Core Area were expected during the brief implementation period, undermined the relevance of the first and third parts of the PDO. The relevance of the PDO is therefore rated substantial.

Rating
Substantial

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)



Objective 1

Objective

Improve conservation of the Core Area

Rationale

According to the theory of change inferred from the PAD (p29-30), conservation of the core area would improve through: establishing legal classification of the Ngoyla Mintom forest as a "permanent forest" and wildlife reserve" which (a) had the support of a broad range of stakeholders; and (b) strengthened capacity of the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF) and civil society organizations to manage the area. The PAD identified legal classification as well as improved management as 'critical' to achieving socially, economically and ecologically sustainable use of the forests (para 9-10).

This would be done in the project by: (a) taking a participatory approach, using community consultations and reinforcing multi-stakeholder platforms; (b) carrying out socio-economic impact studies; (c) establishing a Technical Operations Unit (TOU) in MINFOF; and (d) drafting classification documents, which would be validated and submitted to the Prime Minister's Office.

Outputs

Key outputs for this objective were: preparing, validating a Draft Decree for Classification which was submitted by MINFOF to Prime Minister's Office for endorsement (PDO Indicator #2 – Target 100% achieved); creating Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve (RFNg) of 156,000 hectares. This was slightly smaller than intended (160,000 ha) because it was agreed through community consultations (ICR, p27) to create instead, an agroforest and pastoral area for agricultural activities and community forests.

Outcome

The indicator for this outcome was met and some positive outcomes related to improved conservation were generated beyond expectations of the project, [i.e. Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve was established in March 2015, 17 eco-guards were allocated to the reserve (ICR, p27) suggesting an ongoing commitment from MINFOF]. The ICR also describes (p12) ways in which the project strengthened institutional capacity and civil society: through establishing the Technical Operations Unit (TOU); using community-based consultations platforms to undertake extensive consultations, anti-poaching campaigns, raise awareness of the need for conservation; and draft documents necessary to achieve legal classification of the Core Area. The beneficiary survey reports 91 percent satisfaction with the notion that the classification of core areas will allow for better preservation of the forest and wildlife resources (ICR, para 23).

However, the indicator itself did not enable sight of actual 'improvements in conservation', particularly within the short timeframe of the project. Both the PAD (e.g. para 9) and the ICR (e.g. paras 18 and 24) acknowledge that legal classification was a necessary 'first step' for achieving the objective of 'improved



conservation', (along with sufficient institutional capacity for enforcement, time, stakeholder support, viable alternative livelihoods) but it is insufficient to show improvements in conservation. There is no direct evidence of improvements in conservation presented in the ICR.

Conclusion. Despite the lack of a precise definition of the nature of improvements in conservation expected in the Core Area, but in light of achieving the indicator the PAD defined to test achievement of this objective, and the reasonable expectation that (on the basis of this legal classification) there would be improvements in natural resource conservation over time (however small), the efficacy of this objective is rated substantial.

Rating

Substantial

Objective 2

Objective

Improve management of the Core Area

Rationale

The theory of change for improving management of the Core Area was clear and logical in both the PAD (p2-4) and the ICR (p5-7). It was closely linked to Objective 1 (improving conservation) and intended to be supported by Objective 3 (improving access to income-generating activities).

According to the theory of change inferred from the PAD (pp29-30), management of the Core Area would improve through: establishing a management plan for MINFOF that (a) provided for community-based, low impact use of forest resources, and that enforced the classification of the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve (RFNg) while benefitting local livelihoods and commercial interests; and (b) was validated by all stakeholders with a vested interest in the Ngoyla Mintom forest resources. The achievement of these changes would be measured by the establishment of a long-term M&E system to track changes and inform management practice.

The objective would be achieved by: (a) using multi-stakeholder consultation platforms for the above, and (b) establishment of a TOU in MINFOF to provide capacity for management and to facilitate a participatory approach to drafting the management plan (as for Objective 1 – improve conservation of the Core Area). The sustainability of changes in management practices of the Core Area would be supported through establishing a Livelihoods Support Mechanism (an output of Objective 3).

Outputs



Key outputs for this objective were: developing and validating a management plan for the RFNg, including a business plan, using a multi-stakeholder participatory approach. The final was submitted to MINFOF for adoption (Target 100% achieved). (ICR p27); initiating the process to create a community managed hunting zones (ZICGC) (ICR p34 & 44); 14 meetings with wide representation of all stakeholders with interests in the Ngoyla Mintom forest massif (Target 120% achieved) (ICR p28); and establishing long-term M&E system to track socio-economic and ecological changes in the project area (outsourced to IUCN) (Target 100% achieved) (ICR, p32).

Outcome

The METT score for RFNg management increased from a baseline of 26 to 50, exceeding the target score of 40, reported by MINFOF PIU in February 2018 (Indicator #1). The draft Management Plan was validated and submitted to MINFOF for adoption (Indicator #3 on 15 February 2018. At project closing, however, it was yet to be endorsed by the Prime Minister's Office (ICR, para 25).

The ICR also cites observable improvements in management: firstly in the form of 'enhanced communication, knowledge and collaboration' and strengthened 'networks and capacities' (ICR, para 26) although it does not provide specifics; secondly, as an extensive series of concrete project activities undertaken, such as a range of socio-economic and spatial studies were conducted, as well as monitoring and patrolling missions (ICR para 27), which resulted in the 125% increase in the METT score.

Conclusion. The objective of improving management of the core area was achieved, as indicated by an increased METT score and exceeded indicator target. Additionally, examples are given of broader observed improvements in management and capacity directly attributable to the project. On this basis, the overall extent to which this objective was achieved is rated high.

Rating
High

Objective 3

Objective

Improve access to income-generating activities for local communities in the project areas.

Rationale

The theory of change for this objective inferred from the PAD (p30 and p36) and set out in the ICR (para 12) is clear and logical. Improved access to income-generating activities for local communities would: (a) meet the immediate needs of local communities potentially negatively affected by intended changes in conservation classification and management of the Ngoyla Mintom forest massif (i.e. project objectives 1 and



2); (b) help secure support of local communities for conservation orientated classification and management (PAD, p37); (c) encourage adoption of conservation measures, particularly related to hunting and fishing practices; and (d) pilot alternative livelihoods for possible scale up in future.

In effect, Objective 3 underwrites Objectives 1 (improved conservation) and 2 (improved management) in the Core Area. This would be done primarily by establishing a Livelihoods Support Mechanism (LSM) to provide funding for micro-projects that would: support sustainable forest use (including local development plans); provide alternatives to harvesting natural resources from the Ngoyla Mintom forest massif; and provide basic social infrastructure (such as wells, latrines, housing) (PAD, p38).

Outputs

Design and Implement a Livelihood Support Mechanism (LSM)

The LSM had two main activity areas: (i) Income Generating Activities and (ii) Basic Social Infrastructure. Its indicator target (#4 – *Direct Project Beneficiaries (1,000 people (10% of population) are directly benefitting from the Project (primarily from Livelihood Support Mechanism). Sub-indicator: of which 50% are women and 30% are indigenous*) is divided between the two activity areas.

(i) Income-generating Activities - Outputs

The total beneficiary target of 500 people accessing this aspect of the LSM was exceeded, achieving 667, of whom 347 were women (exceeding 50% target of 250) and 199 were indigenous (exceeding 30% target of 150) (ICR, p31).

Key outputs of this activity were: awareness raising and capacity building to inform potential beneficiaries how to access and manage the LSM (no target assigned); 30 village-level Local Development Plans approved by local councils to guide the planning and implementation of LSM IGA and infrastructure projects (Target 100% achieved) (ICR, p30); 43 micro-projects were funded for alternative income-generating activities (see table below):

Ngoyla (22 projects)				Mintom (21 projects)				
	Agriculture	Livestock	Bee keeping	Fish breeding	Agriculture	Livestock	Bee keeping	Fish breeding
Phase I	1					5		
Phase II	4	2	1	3	11	3		1
Phase III	11				1			



Total	16	2	1	3	12	8	0	1
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Source: ICR p36

(ii) Income generating activities (IGA) – Outcome

While *beneficiary* targets were achieved, actual *benefits* derived from the IGA to the local community or to the project's other objectives of 'improving conservation and management', are not apparent from the ICR. Benefits cited are limited to grants of approximately 1 year's income for cocoa growers (US\$340 per beneficiary – ICR, para 49). The beneficiary survey reported that 'women were satisfied' with their micro-project and 'optimistic' it will improve their livelihood (ICR, para 33). No other feasible measures of benefits were used, e.g. changes in quality of life, income generated, or behavior change in relation to forest use. In fact, the ICR appropriately notes that some beneficiaries may have experienced an immediate loss and that future attempts at developing alternative livelihoods may fail (ICR, para 49).

The ICR describes the 'true impact' (ICR para 34) of the income-generating activities, as being the increased capacity for collaboration and management at the community level – e.g. how to implement micro-projects, establish and run small-scale community ventures and 'shared team spirit'. It is plausible that these were indeed more significant impacts of the LSM, but evidence is not provided of who learned these lessons or how contributed the project's objectives. This makes it difficult to see the outcome of this activity going beyond supplementing 1 year's income for local forest residents.

Given, however, that this was a pilot, it is commendable that the ICR is up front in several places (e.g. paras 23, 31, 49,) about the lessons learned through the income generating activities: its early failures related to unsuccessful livestock breeding attempts and the resulting changes made; the likelihood of a return to bush hunting (something the project was trying to avoid); and the 'over-ambitious' goal (ICR, para 34) of making the LSM self-sustaining (micro-financing for future income-generating activities stopped at the end of the project (ICR, Annex 1)).

While *access* targets to income generating activities were achieved during the project, the lack of evidence for specific positive effects or likelihood of these activities to generate income in the future, suggest that this activity was unsatisfactory against the stated intention of generating viable alternative incomes and therefore, of supporting the long-term success of the first and second objectives (ICR, para 30, p14).

(ii) Construction of basic and social infrastructure – Outputs

The target of 500 people benefitting from this aspect of the LSM was exceeded, achieving 586, of which 347 were indigenous (exceeding 30% target of 150) (ICR, p32).

Key outputs of this activity were: construction of 1 Baka Student Home in Mintom with a capacity of 40 places; 3 blocks of 2 classrooms each, with a secretariat and office for the director, equipped with benches and tables; 34 social housing units for Baka populations in Assoumdélé and Mabam; 15 human powered wells in various locations; and development and equipping of the Mintom Baka Community Home.



(ii) Construction of basic and social infrastructure – Outcome

According to the ICR, the rationale for basic and social infrastructure as part of the LSM was that such investments are “fundamental to improving the livelihoods of local communities and their engagement in alternative income generating activities” (Annex 1, p28). The PAD stated that the investments would be “widely considered to be essential to secure community support for future classification and conservation” (para 29). These investments could also be relevant to higher-level goals such as Pillar 1 of the CPF (Addressing Rural Poverty Traps), but this connection was not made in the ICR.

Although construction targets were clearly met, there is no evidence or discussion in the ICR of how or whether access to basic infrastructure contributed to the objective of 'income-generating activities'. The ICR cites anecdotal evidence that waterborne diseases decreased as a result of access to potable water and sanitation (para 35) but does not link this back to the project objectives nor highlight any other indications that quality of life or livelihoods improved. It should be noted that the results framework did not call for evidence or indicators on this front. Nevertheless, this review concludes that the contribution of basic social infrastructure to Objective 3 is tenuous.

Conclusion. This review rates the achievements of Objective 3 as modest because, while targets were met, there is very little evidence that the LSM activities did or would generate additional income. Nor was there evidence of a link between construction of basic social infrastructure with achieving the objective. As such, it is unlikely this objective would support the other parts of the PDO as intended (i.e. by mitigating potential negative consequences of changes in legal classification and management practices of the forest - see PAD, p30).

Rating
Modest

Rationale

Objective 1 (improved conservation) established the expectation of an association between the legal classification of the Ngoyla Mintom forest as a wildlife reserve and future improvements in conservation of the environment in the Core Area although there was no direct evidence whether or not improved conservation had been achieved during the project's implementation. Objective 2 (improved management) demonstrated a very clear line of sight between the outputs and outcomes through the evidence of the METT score which indicated clearly that the management of the environment had improved during the project's implementation. With respect to Objective 3 targets were met, but the provision of basic social infrastructure was not clearly linked by evidence to achieving Objective 3 (increased access to income-generating activities). Because most of the targets were met or exceeded the overall efficacy with which this project achieved its objectives is rated substantial.



Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

Economic analysis: The PAD (p18) and ICR (p17) noted that there were no standard financial and economic analyses undertaken at appraisal 'due to the nature of the project and the difficulty in monetizing the impacts in the project's short time frame (5 years) as a basis for longer term projections for an economic analysis. It was therefore, difficult to assess the project's economic efficiency based on costs and project outcomes. Costs by component (not including the Government's contribution) and staff time and costs are the only figures provided (ICR, p38-39). The PAD did make a strong case for the environmental, social and economic costs (though not monetized) of *not* undertaking the project, based on the loss of biodiversity, natural resources, as well as likely increased and uncontrolled exploitation of the forest resources for Cameroon, including mining. These costs would affect local communities and risk leading to conflicts (PAD, para 56). The PAD also highlighted the project's underwriting of two other important projects in the area (World Wildlife Fund and 'TRIDOM' focused on other aspects of conservation and management in the area - PAD, p83-84), through its establishment of a technical support unit in MINFOF.

Overall Staff Time and Cost amounted to 8.46% of the total project cost which suggested an efficient administration.

There are three areas related to efficiency in the ICR which would have benefitted from further discussion/explanation in order to justify a rating.

1. Borrower contribution shortfall. At project closing, the contribution of the Government of Cameroon (GOC) to the total cost was 54% of the planned amount (Annex 3). The Bank's project team advised IEG that "The shortfall in counterpart contribution was caused in part by a delay and in part by an over commitment. The GOC was responsible for erecting office space and accommodation for the project team in the field. This activity was much delayed. The GOC completed it's obligations for less than the amount committed". The ICR also noted that "the project covered some of the costs that should have been covered by the in-kind contribution from the GOC, though it does not seem to have taken away from the realization of other planned project activities" (Annex 3).

2. LSM management change – The ICR states that changes in the responsibility for managing the LSM from the managing contractor (as intended in the PAD and arranged) to the PIU unit "did not seem to have impacted the achievement of project objectives negatively" although it caused delays with some savings (para 65). While it is true that the indicator target for Outcome (iii) (number of people directly benefitting from the project, primarily the LSM) was exceeded, this outcome also experienced the most problems (which are clearly acknowledged in the ICR, e.g. significant implementation delays, financial management and



procurement challenges, failure of early micro-projects, poor leveraging of GOC funds, need for extra expert project staff and financial management arrangements). Further, the LSM was not deemed as sustainable as had been envisaged (the ICR points primarily to inadequate local community capacity as the reason for this on page 24), potentially undermining the development efficiency of the other outcomes in the longer term. Given the changes in the responsibility for managing the LSM and the subsequent challenges faced by the PIU, it could have been useful for the ICR to assess whether retaining the managing contractor model, could have mitigated any of the efficiency, efficacy or sustainability challenges.

3. Collaboration with other projects – At appraisal, the project set out to collaborate specifically with two existing projects and organizations in the area (PAD p10 and ICR p12) and build on 20 years of the Bank's engagement. It would have been helpful in assessing efficiency, if the ICR had indicated how and whether this collaboration contributed to efficiency.

Issues in the Efficiency Analysis in the ICR.

1. Social Benefits. Claims to having "delivered social benefits" (para 50, p17) are weak. The ICR is appropriately careful to say that the project's contribution to improved access to water, housing and education *may* translate into better productivity and health (para 50). But 'social benefits' are not defined nor given indicators and accordingly, there is no evidence of them being directly delivered by the project. Neither is "access to education" (ICR para 50) strictly defensible since the project only contributed school buildings, not education services. It is beyond the scope of the project to measure impacts in these areas.

2. Efficiency in achieving improved conservation and management. The ICR also claims that "with modest resources", the project has "achieved conservation and management" (ICR para 48) of the relevant area, arguably overstating what the project itself set out to achieve, would be able to achieve or did achieve. The text in the Lessons and Recommendations section of the ICR (p24-25) is presented much more appropriately, characterizing the project's achievement of 'legally safeguarding' the area as an important first step in conservation, which is itself a long-term venture".

3. Economic potential of LSM. The ICR does, however, provide a realistic and fair description of the positive and negative economic potential of the alternative livelihoods activities (ICR, para 49). It notes that a "real opportunity to enhance livelihoods" was presented by the project (Objective 3) but in the short term, there was no estimates of the rate of return on investments in alternative crops but there were some losses of livelihoods due to "restricted forest access" (ICR, para 49) resulting from legal changes in the conservation and management of natural resources in the classified Core Area introduced by the project (Objective 1).

Conclusion. There were no cost overruns of grant funds but the Government's contribution to project costs was about 54 percent of the expected amount. It is difficult to make a clear assessment of this project's efficiency since there is very little information on the cost of specific activities (e.g. the long term M&E system). Further, as the ICR noted, project benefits such as improved conservation and management (major parts of the PDO) along with some social benefits (ICR, para 50) are difficult to assess in economic terms beyond the project's closing date (para 47). At the same time, there were delays in design and implementation, contracting and procurement, government contributions, and fiduciary compliance. The LSM design was also not fully realized since its implementation was delayed extending the project closing by 9



months. There was also no economic analysis of the LSM in the ICR such as examples of income generation sub-projects financed for typical farms or enterprises. Based on these shortcomings in evidence this project's efficiency is rated modest.

Efficiency Rating

Modest

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome

The project's broad objectives to improve the conservation and management of the Core Area and improve access to income-generating activities for local communities in the project area were highly aligned with Government development goals and the World Bank's support of those goals. But the lack of a precise definition of the extent to which either improvements in natural resource conservation in the Core Area, or natural resource management in the Core Area, were expected during the brief implementation period undermined the **relevance** of the PDO. The overall relevance of the PDO was therefore assessed as substantial. The **efficacy** of the achievement of objectives of improving conservation and management of natural resources was, respectively, "substantial" and "high" on the basis that the performance indicators were met. While activities intended to achieve the objective of income generation for local communities through a livelihood support mechanism were implemented during the project, there was no evidence that they actually had a positive effect on incomes for communities in the project area. The project's **efficiency** was rated modest since there was very little analysis or information presented on which to base an assessment of efficiency.

Conclusion. This review concludes that this project's overall achievements had moderate shortcomings and its outcome is therefore rated moderately satisfactory.

a. Outcome Rating

Moderately Satisfactory



7. Risk to Development Outcome

Stakeholder ownership: Given the uncertain benefits arising from the alternative livelihoods projects (such as alternative crop trials), it is questionable whether the local communities will continue to support efforts towards more sustainable use of the forest resources. Further, because the LSM did not secure further funding or local management options, there are limited opportunities for the project to demonstrate the viability or desirability of developing alternative livelihoods, leaving a strong chance that many of those reliant on the forests for livelihoods will return (as some already had) to their traditional but less sustainable forms of hunting and other natural resource use.

Governance: The practical application of the legal protections achieved, and effective management of the Core Area may well be undermined by (a) the absence of viable livelihood alternatives and (b) the capacity of the government (although indications of its commitment were fair) to enforce the changes. Local government capacity to manage the basic infrastructure provided by the project sustainably is also questionable. This may also result in the long-term deterioration of the facilities and therefore, limited benefits available from them over time.

Social: Conflicts may arise if competing interests, such as increased private sector or illegal resource exploitation and local alternative livelihood sources, cannot be managed sustainably. This requires a combination of capacity to implement the legal protections and development/continuation of meaningful alternative livelihood generation – both of which are subject to some uncertainty.

Based on these assessments this review rates the risk to development outcome as substantial.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

This project was closely aligned with Cameroon's priorities and the Bank's experience and strengths and remained so throughout. The assessment of risks and context in the PAD was thorough. The PDO and Theory of Change in the ICR were clearly described. The lack of definition regarding expected 'improvement' within the project timeframe for the PDO detracted from the quality at entry, although the project met or exceeded most of its targets.

The project's design was internally consistent. It recognized the likely socio-economic impacts of the project's conservation objectives on the local communities and sought to balance these and underwrite the conservation objectives through an explicitly participatory approach to alternative livelihood generation through component 3 (LSM).



However, despite clear identification of local capacity and institutional risks at appraisal, there was an overestimation of (a) MINFOF follow through on in-kind contributions to get the project started resulting in significant delays; (b) the project's ability to build the capacity of MINFOF and local communities to take on management of the project's activities, (c) the viability of the LSM for the local community, particularly without a managing contractor to establish or implement it. These undermined sustainability of the project's outcomes overall. The project was well advanced at project closure and did not require any restructuring.

For the reasons enumerated above this review rates the project's quality at entry as Moderately Satisfactory.

Quality-at-Entry Rating Moderately Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

According to the ICR (para 90), the Bank provided timely and adequate guidance to the project through bi-annual supervision missions and a mid term review. All Bank task team leaders (TTLs) were based in Yaoundé, Cameroon and provided regular assistance to the PIU through training in safeguards, financial management and procurement, and facilitated other technical support missions. Three TTL change overs were managed smoothly. The ICR noted, however, several times that greater candor in reporting on project and implementation progress in implementation status and results reports (ISRs) would have been beneficial (e.g. ICR, para 92).

The Bank did not adequately consider the local cultural and traditional context in relation to funding for micro-projects. Hence there were early failings which provided lessons for subsequent funding rounds. Given that the management arrangement for the LSM changed from a managing contractor to the in-house PIU and that there were difficulties with the implementation of this part of the project, there is a question as to whether the Bank was properly equipped to supervise the implementation this aspect of the project without the specific expertise of a managing contractor.

Based on the assessment above this review rates supervision performance as Moderately Satisfactory.

Quality of Supervision Rating Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating Moderately Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization



a. M&E Design

Overall design: The results framework was generally adequate for the assessing the project's own outputs but some indicators were not well suited to assessing the objectives (see Results Chain discussion below). The descriptive rationale for the Theory of Change (ICR p6) was clear, logical and appropriately modest, with a useful summary of the basis on which the project was being undertaken, those it intended to benefit and through what actions.

M&E was not only conducted for the project itself but was also an actual output (*Design and implement long-term M&E system* – Component III under LSM), making it a central consideration of the project. The integration of the long-term M&E system with three other projects in the area through IUCN strengthened the potential for the longevity of M&E and suited the nature and small scale of the project well.

Results Chain: In the Results Chain which depicts the theory of change (ICR, Figure 1, p7) the relationship between the activities and outputs is clear. Specific indicators in the results framework (see below) are well defined and aligned to the outputs and targets, but much less so to the outcomes themselves. This gives rise to some questionable leaps of attribution between the outputs and outcomes. These leaps also appear perpetuated at other points in the ICR, such as some in claims in the efficacy and efficiency sections (see ICRR sections 4 and 5 above). That said, in other parts of the ICR, attribution issues were frankly and appropriately tempered (e.g. in Lessons Learned ICR, para 98).

Indicators: In this case, a few adjustments would have ensured clarity and avoided an overstatement of project achievements and expectations as follows:

Indicator **#1** (GEF METT score) was a useful, measurable indicator of 'improved management' (Objective 2). In relation to the **PDO**, a definition of 'improvements' for Objective 1 (conservation) and 2 (management) and of the expected benefits of 'access' to income-generating activities would have made it easier to assess success against the project's objectives.

Indicators **#2** (Conservation and Management of Core Area (Classification)) and **#3** (Conservation and Management of the Core Area (Management)), were both clearly achieved in the form of drafting, validating and submitting draft classification and management documents, but were not clear indicators of improvements in conservation or management. The ICR itself clearly acknowledged this in several places (e.g. paras 24 and 73).

Indicator **#4** was defined as 'number of people directly *benefitting from* the project'. While this is an appropriate measure of 'improved access to income-generating activities', it does not indicate *benefit* in the sense of positive change, as a result of increased access. A definition of 'benefit' would have been useful.

The inclusion of community consultations platforms and surveys were useful M&E design elements for assessing efficacy.



b. M&E Implementation

According to the ICR, all planned beneficiary surveys, community consultations, socio-economic and biological surveys were undertaken, including internal and external (World Bank and GOC MINFOF) monitoring (ICR p13, 21). Data from these surveys, however, were very sparsely represented (e.g. see ICR, para 23) and not annexed to the ICR. Therefore, it is not clear to what extent the socio-economic and biological survey data were useful – either for evaluating outcomes or monitoring the project itself. This adds to reasons to temper claims of ‘benefit’ to the communities.

It is clear that community consultation overall was a central part of the project, including for implementing M&E at the local level and for providing feedback to the project implementation unit. The ‘assumption of community participation and engagement’ (Figure 1) is a large one on which much of the project is based (given the focus on participatory management). The Final Stakeholder Workshop (Annex 5, ICR p44-45) notes though, that stakeholder collaboration was too ad hoc and there was difficulty in mobilizing local communities to participate. There were also monitoring difficulties acknowledged (ICR p16), due to the remote site location.

c. M&E Utilization

Results from M&E activities were shared with a range of implementing stakeholders both in the Bank and in country. There is good evidence that some data collected were used to adjust the project directions, particularly to component 3 (LSM). Examples include: changes to the types of micro projects funded under the income-generating activities component, from funding phase 1 to 3; management changes to the PIU in the form of two additional technical experts to assist with implementing the micro-projects and establishing independent oversight of aspects of financial management; community consultations resulted in inclusion of an agroforestry land strip to mitigate negative effects of restricting certain uses in forest (ICR p22).

The M&E tool implemented as an activity of the project was also used to track forest cover and quality and safeguards (ICR para 79). The results are not presented in the ICR, nor is there any comment on the expected effectiveness or otherwise of the tool in the longer term term. The theory of outsourcing M&E arrangements connected with two other local projects is strong, but there is no specific comment on its effectiveness in practice.

M&E is rated Modest on the basis that it was generally well designed but there were considerable shortcomings in PDO indicators.

M&E Quality Rating

Modest



10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was classified as a safeguards category B – partial assessment, and triggered 7 operational safeguard policies: OP 4.01 Environmental Assessment; OP 4.04 Natural Habitats; OP 4.09 Pest Management; OP 4.10 Indigenous Peoples; OP 4.11 Physical Cultural Resources; OP 4.12 Involuntary Resettlement; and OP 4.36 Forests. There were no modifications to the physical components of the project and therefore, no new or changed environmental assessments.

According to the ICR, measures to mitigate negative effects of restricting access to forest resources (the traditional livelihood sources) were agreed and implemented, such as the addition of a strip of agroforestry land and access to alternative livelihood options (LSM – Component 3). The ICR (p22) and PAD (p22) state that the restricted access was part of the voluntary, consensus-based action towards classification of the Core Area (ICR para 82).

All micro-projects were reported as being in full compliance with the Bank's safeguard policies. Complaints received were processed through what the ICR described as a 'functional' grievance redress mechanism (ICR para 83). The ICR does not provide any information on the extent to which such complaints were satisfactorily resolved, but the Bank task team provided some examples to IEG which are recorded below in part c of this section in this ICR Review.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial Management. The project faced some financial management challenges, namely a lack of compliance with Bank standard financial management and procurement policies, causing operational level inefficiencies (ICR para 45). Despite significant mitigation attempts to strengthen this capacity through the project – i.e. a financial adviser was recruited for the first year and then as needed, procuring an accounting system, retaining an external auditor and designing tailored capacity building plans - weak capacity to manage LSM funds remained a problem. The challenges were addressed by close follow up by the project team, bringing management of the LSM in house and establishing an independent amortization fund to handle payments (ICR paras 59, 85, 86). The two project closing date extensions were requested to accommodate these issues, enabling completion of the project. The ICR also noted that audit missions were regularly carried out. Nevertheless, at project completion a final audit was still pending.

Procurement. According to the ICR, the planned establishment of the dedicated Procurement Commission within the project was considerably delayed. This delayed the procurement process, including the recruitment of the Management Agency to lead the design and implementation of the LSM (ICR, para 64). Without a comment to the contrary in the ICR, this review assumes that procurement management was satisfactory.



c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

The ICR notes that an additional significant outcome arose as a result of the close collaboration between MINFOF and indigenous Baka leaders brought about by the project. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Association of Indigenous Peoples Baka to "recognize the partnership and ensure continued and growing involvement of stakeholders" (ICR para 55).

The Bank task team provided two examples of how this partnership provided opportunities for feedback from stakeholders and a grievance redress mechanism. In one example, Indigenous Peoples claims (received on February 22, 2017) related to their participation in the wildlife reserve management plan elaboration. Their concerns were addressed as follows:

- The Ministry of Forests and Wildlife held a meeting with Indigenous Peoples leaders on March 6, 2017
- Additional local consultations were held from April 10 to 18, 2018 and conclusions of these consultations were incorporated in the management plan for the Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve (RFNg)
- On January 16, 2018 the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Baka communities in the support zones of the RFNg

In a second example between November 2017 to February 24, 2018, nine complaints relating to land, marital conflict, damage to assets and contract management were received, registered, processed and resolved.

d. Other

11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	---
Bank Performance	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	---
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Modest	---
Quality of ICR		Substantial	---

12. Lessons

The following synthesize lessons are partly drawn from the ICR with a supplementary lesson suggested by IEG.



A Livelihoods Support Mechanism (LSM) is a complex undertaking that requires extensive local economic, social and cultural research, requiring dedicated expertise to devise and implement it sustainably. For example, in this project to manage high stakeholder engagement, sustainability and capacity risks for this project, the LSM was intended to be designed and managed by a specialist contractor (PAD para 43). But due to procurement challenges, implementation was brought in-house to the PIU (ICR para 65). A lack of understanding of cultural and local market conditions (ICR paras 94, 99, 100), resulted in failures in the initial rounds of micro-projects and the lack of sustainability of the LSM. These failures could have been mitigated by retaining a dedicated contractor experienced in livelihood support programs to manage the LSM pilot and design its scaling up, as envisaged in the PAD (para 46).

Legal safeguarding is an effective first step in the very long-term venture of addressing conservation in protected areas, but its long-term effectiveness relies on broad, ongoing stakeholder engagement, appropriate capacity and financing mechanisms (based on ICR para 98). For example, in this project successful conservation and management improvements in forest reserves were enabled through broad stakeholder engagement in the context of a participatory approach. At project closing, however, uncertain financial resources for conservation and management, stretched local capacity for monitoring, and a lack of clear alternative sustainable livelihoods for communities negatively affected by the protection of forest reserves have threatened the ongoing efficacy of these gains. Hence, expectations of securing long-term benefits from a short-term project must be modest, especially where building capacity and behavior change are also necessary.

PDO statement requires specificity on outcomes/results expected. In this project, key terms in PDO indicators were not precisely defined, creating difficulty in assessing project achievements. For example, the term 'improvements' expected, particularly in relation to 'conservation' was not specified, which meant the indicator for the outcome (legal classification) was not sufficient to demonstrate results against conservation. In addition, the objective of increasing 'access' to income generating activities defined as a measure of success for those 'directly benefitting' from the project, but without defining 'access' or 'benefit', the ICR left significant unanswered questions about the impact of the activities on local communities.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR is of good quality overall. It is clear and flows well throughout. It strikes a healthy balance of highlighting successes and forthright presentation of challenges. There is a mix, however, of instances where loose phrasing leads to overstatement of impacts of the project (such as on Efficacy and Efficiency), and others where the assessment is commendably clear and frank, particularly in relation to the challenges of



implementing the LSM. This mix of language confused the narrative at times, exacerbated by the issues caused by discrepancies between PDO indicators and the expected outcomes in the results framework.

Annex 1 narrative (Results Framework and Key Outputs) provides helpful descriptions and fills some gaps in evidence in the main part of the document, such as the rationale for construction of basic and social infrastructure and specific data that are not in the main document. Overall, evidence is provided for the claims and relevant justifications for ratings are given.

Because this was a pilot there were some opportunities missed in the ICR. First, alternative approaches to livelihoods such as improved access to water, sanitation, safe housing and education facilities were implemented. According to the ICR these services were indeed improved, but if this project was to be a successful pilot there was every reason to generate evidence to assess the efficacy and efficiency of these additional efforts as contributions to the livelihoods of forest communities. Second, the ICR recognized that the success of the legal protection of the RNFG resulting in restricted access to the forest for hunting and logging, coupled with the difficulties in establishing and maintaining the LSM, may have resulted in a net loss of livelihoods, with no immediately viable alternatives available (ICR para 49). This issue was noted in the ICR, but not analyzed in any detail which was surprising since this pilot project (or a subsequent scaled up version) could leave some local communities or forest occupants potentially worse off. Finally, the ICR reported that community consultation platforms and networks were strengthened through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between MINFOF and Baka leaders (para 55) but there was no analysis of the impact of the strengthened consultation.

The observations in the Lessons Learned section were useful for future similar operations. Given this was a pilot, it would have been instructive to have presented more lessons in the ICR.

a. Quality of ICR Rating
Substantial