



## 1. Project Data

**Project ID**

P145316

**Project Name**

GH - Dedicated Grant Mechanism

**Country**

Ghana

**Practice Area(Lead)**

Environment, Natural Resources &amp; the Blue Economy

**L/C/TF Number(s)**

TF-A3349

**Closing Date (Original)**

30-Nov-2021

**Total Project Cost (USD)**

5,500,000.00

**Bank Approval Date**

26-Apr-2017

**Closing Date (Actual)**

30-Nov-2021

**IBRD/IDA (USD)**
**Grants (USD)**

Original Commitment

5,500,000.00

5,500,000.00

Revised Commitment

5,500,000.00

5,500,000.00

Actual

5,500,000.00

5,500,000.00

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## 2. Project Objectives and Components

### a. Objectives

The Project Development Objective (PDO) of the project is "to strengthen knowledge and practices of targeted local communities in the Select Regions of the Member Country in REDD+ processes and sustainable forest management" (Grant Agreement dated May 19, 2017, Schedule 1, page 7). The PDO formulation in the Grant Agreement was identical to that in the PAD (para 13). The project was implemented in the Western region and the Brong Ahafo region (ICR, para 9), as envisioned in the PAD (para 14).



For this ICR Review, IEG will assess the following two objectives:

Objective 1: To strengthen knowledge of targeted local communities in the Select Regions of the Member Country in REDD+ processes and sustainable forest management

Objective 2: To strengthen practices of targeted local communities in the Select Regions of the Member Country in REDD+ processes and sustainable forest management

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

Yes

**Did the Board approve the revised objectives/key associated outcome targets?**

Yes

**Date of Board Approval**

19-Jan-2021

**c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?**

No

**d. Components**

**Component 1: Capacity Building for Local Communities (Estimate: US\$1.0 million, Actual: US\$1.0 million)** provided training to target groups including the Forest Investment Program communities, community-based organizations, queen mothers and chiefs, and school children, on topics related to sustainable and climate-smart practices, illegal operations, and grant financing opportunities. A group of dedicated trainees who were selected from the basic trainees received technical training focused on cocoa and yam production, water retention, fire protection, and grant proposal writing.

**Component 2: Sustainable and Adaptive Community Initiatives (Estimate: US\$3.5 million, Actual: US\$3.5 million)** consisted of the following two subcomponents.

*Subcomponent 2A: Local Community Initiatives* provided grants to communities, individuals, and community-based organizations to implement small-scale sustainable initiatives related to climate change and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

*Subcomponent 2B: Technical Training of the Grantee in Activity Implementation* provided field-based training in the local Twi language for the selected grantees in the specific activity for which the grant proposal was selected.

**Component 3: Project Governance, Monitoring, and Evaluation (Estimate: US\$1.0 million, Actual: US\$1.0 million)** supported the national executing agency for project management and administration

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



**Project Cost:** At appraisal, the project was estimated to cost US\$5.5 million (PAD, page vi). At project closing, the actual cost was US\$5.5 million (ICR, page 2).

**Financing:** As envisioned at appraisal (PAD, page vi), the project was fully financed by a grant from the Strategic Climate Fund (ICR, page 2).

**Dates:** The project was approved on April 26, 2017, and became effective on August 18, 2017. The Mid-Term Review was published on June 17, 2020. A restructuring was conducted on January 19, 2021 to revise PDO indicators and intermediate results indicators. The project was closed on November 30, 2021, which was the original closing date.

No split rating was needed for the project, based on the harmonized guidelines between OPCS and IEG. The changes in outcome indicators reflected different and better measures of the project's achievements. The project's level of ambition and scope remained the same after dropping, adding, and revising some PDO indicators at restructuring.

### 3. Relevance of Objectives

#### Rationale

Country and Sector Context: Deforestation and forest degradation accounted for a 2 percent annual loss of forest cover in Ghana, resulting in losing over 60 percent of its forest cover since 1950 (2.7 million hectares) (ICR, para 3). Forest loss in the country was caused by a mixture of direct and indirect drivers including small-scale agriculture, timber harvesting, land conservation, and mining, while the design and enforcement of existing legal and policy frameworks were not sufficient to mitigate deforestation (PAD, para 4 and Table 1, pages 2-3). Climate change negatively affected the country's efforts to accelerate poverty reduction and economic and social development. Farmers' crops and livelihoods were heavily dependent on rainfall patterns, which were linked to intact forests (PAD, para 43). Unlike indigenous lands in Brazil, community lands in Ghana had higher levels of deforestation than state protected lands (PAD, para 43). Moreover, the Western and Brong Ahafo regions were cocoa growing areas with high deforestation rates due to the farmers' common agricultural practice to remove trees from lands to secure abundant sun for cocoa trees (ICR, para 24). The shaded cultivation practice was introduced to the farmers in the regions by the Ghana Cocoa Board as a more environmentally-friendly alternative, but the farmers were not persuaded to adopt the new practice (ICR, para 24). The Western and Brong Ahafo regions were also home to multiple traditional local communities, including the Krobo, the Fante, and Twi-speaking communities, migrant communities, as well as other agricultural and pastoral communities who were dependent on specific surrounding ecosystems (PAD, para 14).

Relevance to Government Strategies: At appraisal, the objectives were in line with the Ghana REDD+ strategy published in 2016. The objectives also aligned with the Framework for Action of the Cocoa and Forests Initiative signed at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's Conference of the Parties in 2017. This policy included interventions to support cocoa farmers to switch to more environmentally friendly agricultural practices (ICR, para 24). In addition, Ghana was one of eight counties participated in piloting of the Forest Investment Program (FIP) in 2010. The global Dedicated Grant Mechanism (DGM), which was an essential part of the FIP, aimed to promote the inclusion of local, forest-reliant communities in policy formulation and initiatives that seek to reduce deforestation and



degradation (ICR, para 6). At project closing, the objectives aligned with the second Cocoa Sector Development Strategy, which emphasized enhancing productivity through the empowerment of smallholder cocoa farmers to adopt modern technologies and positioning the cocoa industry strategically to operate efficiently and effectively in a sustainable manner within a modern business environment (ICR, para 24). The objectives were also relevant to the Green Ghana Initiative started in June 2022.

Relevance to Bank Assistance Strategies: At appraisal, the objectives aligned with the Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) FY13-FY18, particularly Outcome II.5 (Improved land and water management) which aimed at addressing “climate change issues through support for REDD+ and programs focused on attention to water management and land degradation” (CPS, para 100). The project was expected to build capacities of community groups to engage on the FIP program, which implemented landscape-level interventions to improve the enabling environment for private sector engagement through devolving management rights to communities (CPS, para 100). At project closing, the objectives aligned with the Country Partnership Framework FY22-FY26, which took an integrated landscape management approach to achieve Objective 3.2 (Improved management of natural resources and climate change risks) under Focus Area 3 (Promoting Resilient and Sustainable Development).

Prior Sector Experience: The World Bank has been supporting the country over the past decade to sustainably manage the cocoa forest landscape and prepare for REDD+ processes through preceding projects under the FIP and the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. For instance, Ghana FIP - Enhancing Natural Forest and Agroforest Landscapes Project (P148183; FY15) aimed to improve forest and tree management practices in the same two regions.

However, while the objectives were aligned with the strategies of the government and the World Bank’s assistance throughout the project duration, the relevance of the objectives is pitched at an output level that does not adequately reflect a potential solution to a development problem. “To strengthen knowledge and practices of targeted local communities” alone is not sufficiently outcome focused and does not help in understanding what development results were expected as a consequence of the project. Those expected results are described in the PAD (para 7) as follows: “to promote the inclusion of forest-reliant communities in policy formulation and initiatives that seek to reduce deforestation and degradation and to facilitate the effective participation of LCs in the design and implementation of country-specific FIPs and to strengthen the capacity of these groups to play an informed and active role in the FIP, as well as in other local, national, and global REDD+ processes.” These may be longer term targets; however, tracking them in the PDO formulation is an important aspect of a successful development operation. Overall, the relevance of the objectives is rated substantial.

## **Rating**

Substantial

## **4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)**

### **OBJECTIVE 1**



## Objective

Strengthen knowledge of targeted local communities in the Select Regions of the Member Country in REDD+ processes and sustainable forest management

## Rationale

**Theory of Change:** The theory of change envisioned activities including providing training and radio campaigns to targeted local communities intended to result in outputs including increased knowledge of local communities on forest and natural resources management and on climate change adaptation. These outputs would contribute to an outcome of an enhanced inclusion of local communities to design and implement interventions related to REDD+ processes and sustainable forest management. In the long-term, those outcomes would contribute to impacts of reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and increased resilience and livelihoods of forest-reliant communities.

Critical assumptions included: the training to targeted local communities was adequate for the local communities to access relevant information to combine their traditional knowledge with scientific-based knowledge on forest and natural resources management and on climate change adaptation.

## Outputs (ICR, paras 28-49 and Annex 1):

- 84 percent of selected community members successfully completed basic training in REDD+/climate change, exceeding the target of 75 percent.
- 17,300 people participated in the basic training, which was more than 15 times the target of 1,100 people. Out of the 17,133 individuals for the basic training, 51 percent were women (ICR, para 57).
- 50,000 community members were sensitized, which was more than 4.5 times of the target of 11,000 people.
- 8,415 people became dedicated trainees, which was almost 5 times of the target of 1,733 people. Out of all 8415 dedicated trainees, 46 percent were women (ICR, para 57).
- 30 result stories were produced by grant recipients and presented during local, regional, and global knowledge sharing events, exceeding the target of 20 result stories.

## Outcomes (ICR, paras 28-49 and Annex 1):

- 88.94 percent of project beneficiaries, without grants, apply knowledge acquired through sensitization/basic training to implement sub-projects that contribute directly to FIP and REDD+ objectives, achieving almost six times of the target. Based on the 2019 survey, 85 percent of the beneficiaries, who attended basic training but did not receive a grant, responded that they had practiced what they had learned through an active measure (ICR, para 36).
- 48.60 percent of basic trainees completed all three knowledge modules, not achieving the original target of 70 percent. Following the basic training, a group of people from the basic trainee pool (now called dedicated trainees) voluntarily took 6-month intensive training in agroforestry and other sustainable practices (ICR, para 30). Considering the intensity of the additional training, the result of almost half of basic trainees became dedicated trainees was remarkable (ICR, para 33).
- 80 percent of basic trainees passed the knowledge test on climate change (ICR, para 19), meeting the target of 75 percent.

The local communities who participated in basic training or listened to radio campaigns applied their newly gained knowledge to implement sustainable practices. About half of the basic trainees dedicated



themselves to acquire more technical knowledge by participating in all three knowledge modules, not achieving the original target but made a substantial achievement. Overall, the achievement of objective 1 is rated substantial.

## **Rating**

Substantial

## **OBJECTIVE 2**

### **Objective**

Strengthen practices of targeted local communities in the Select Regions of the Member Country in REDD+ processes and sustainable forest management

### **Rationale**

**Theory of Change:** The theory of change envisioned activities including providing direct grants to targeted local communities to implement subprojects that would result in outputs including completed subprojects on agroforestry, livelihood, forest management. These outputs would contribute to an outcome of enhanced inclusion of local communities in designing and implementing interventions related to REDD+ processes and sustainable forest management. The theory of change also envisioned that activities including supporting the national executing agency in implementing the decisions of the national steering committee and project procedures and supporting local communities to manage climate funds with accountability and transparency would result in outputs including strengthened capacities of local communities in managing grants and implementing local initiatives, which would contribute to an outcome of a strengthened governance and transparency of local communities to play an informed and active role in in REDD+ processes and sustainable forest management. In the long-term, those outcomes would contribute to impacts of reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and increased resilience and livelihoods of forest-reliant communities.

Critical assumptions included: (i) targeted local communities were adequately engaged to conduct environmentally friendly practices after project closing; and (ii) the sub-projects delivered benefits to the local communities.

**Outputs** (ICR, paras 28-49 and Annex 1):

- 2,122 dedicated training participants submitted proposals for funding, tripling the target of 770 people.
- 0.18 percent of dedicated training participants exposed to successful REDD+ practices at national, regional, or international levels, not meeting the target of 5 percent.
- 225 grants were awarded to basic training participants, exceeding the target of 182 grants.
- M&E data system effectively tracked number of trainees, proposals, awards, and completion of implementation, meeting the target.
- 30 result stories were produced by grant recipients and presented during local, regional, and global knowledge sharing events, exceeding the target of 20 result stories.





The following indicators were designed as PDO indicators in the results framework, but only measured achievements of outputs.

- 100 percent of community-based organizations initiatives were successfully completed and achieved their stated objectives, exceeding the target of 70 percent.
- 100 percent of individual initiatives were successfully completed and achieved their stated objectives, exceeding the target of 70 percent.
- 88 percent of community initiatives were successfully completed and achieved their stated objectives, exceeding the target of 65 percent.
- 78 percent of grantees used grants to implement/practice subprojects that contributed directly to FIP and REDD+ objectives, achieving the target of 75 percent.
  - 100 percent of grantees used community-based organizations grants to implement/practice subprojects that contributed directly to FIP and REDD+, more than doubling the target of 40 percent.
  - 100 percent of grantees used the project's individual grants to implement/practice subprojects that contributed directly to FIP and REDD+ objectives, exceeding the target of 65 percent.
  - 22.64 percent of grantees used the project's community grants to implement/practice subprojects that contributed directly to FIP and REDD+ objectives, not meeting the target of 65 percent.
- 68 percent of women and migrant grantees executed subprojects, exceeding the target of 50 percent. Out of the 156 grantees, 49 percent were women and 37 percent were migrants (ICR, para 57).

**Outcomes** (ICR, paras 28-49 and Annex 1):

- 92 percent of community members changed to sustainable practices following basic training sensitization and education on REDD+ and climate change, almost doubling the target of 50 percent. At the 2021 restructuring, the following three sub indicators of the PDO indicator were given baselines and updated the targets accordingly (ICR, para 19).
  - 91 percent of farmers moved from full sun cocoa to shade cocoa, increasing from the baseline of 62.60 percent and achieving the target of 90 percent. According to the 2019 beneficiary survey, 55 percent of the farmers who incorporated shade trees were motivated by the project, suggesting that the project contributed to their change in farming practices (ICR, page 67).
  - 14 percent of beneficiaries moved from non-renewable energy to sustainable sources, increasing from the baseline of 1.30 percent and achieving the target of 10 percent. Though the target was met, the target was set with a low level of ambition and might not contribute to reducing deforestation and forest deterioration even in the longer term. In addition, it was not clarified to what extent the non-renewable energy sources were replaced with sustainable energy sources. According to the 2019 beneficiary survey (ICR, pages 68-70), the use of renewable energy sources for cooking and lightening increased but at a low level that did not affect the main energy sources of respondents: non-renewable energy (firewood and charcoal) for cooking and sustainable energy (electricity from the national grid) for lightening. Moreover, the use of charcoal increased in a statistically significant manner after the project while the use of firewood for cooking almost stayed the same (ICR, page 68). At the time of the 2019 survey, 82.53 percent of respondents mentioned that what prevented them from using the sustainable energy sources were the expensive costs (ICR, page 70). The cost constraints were addressed by the project through the community grants which provided solar power



- equipment for boreholes and improved cookstoves to the communities which completed all three modules of training (ICR, page 86).
- 81 percent of farmers increased tree planting, increasing from the baseline of 51.20 percent and exceeding the target of 70 percent. By project closing, 83 percent of randomly sampled beneficiaries in DGM communities had planted one tree or more (ICR, para 35). Even in early years of implementation, the proportion of DGM community members who planted trees increased while the proportion of non-DGM community members who planted trees remained the same (ICR, Figure 3, page 15).
  - 100 percent of grievances registered related to the delivery of project benefits was addressed, meeting the target. On the other hand, only 36.92 percent of the grievances were resolved at the time of the 2019 survey because only grievances that offered solutions to the satisfaction of the complainant were recorded (ICR, para 67).
  - 84 percent of grantees expressed satisfaction with the project, exceeding the target of 70 percent.

In addition to the results measured by the results framework, the ICR reported the following outcomes, which did not have any formal targets.

- 49,730 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent was expected to be reduced or avoided over 20 years, based on calculations with FAO's Ex-Ante Carbon-balance Tool (ICR, page 48).
- The slash and mulch technique was applied in the landscape, based on anecdotal evidence (ICR, para 37). The farmers reported increases in their yields due to high water retention (ICR, para 37).
- 73.5 percent of seedlings survived at least one dry season and over 6 months, out of the total 658,038 seedlings that were produced and distributed to 5,411 beneficiaries under the subgrants of the project (ICR, para 94). The species of seedlings included cashew, acacia, and over 5 other economic timber tree species (ICR, para 94 and footnote 28 in page 76).

Sustainable practices including growing shade cocoas and planting trees were adopted by the local communities, directly contributing to address deforestation. If the sustainable practices introduced by the project were continued, 49,730 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent were estimated to be reduced or avoided in the next two decades. On the other hand, the non-renewable energy sources remained to be the main energy sources of local communities for cooking at project closing, indicating that the project's contribution on changing energy consumption practices of the local communities were limited due to cost constraints. Moreover, no evidence was provided regarding the extent to which the project contributed to the inclusion and the capacity strengthening of forest-reliant communities in policy formulation and initiatives for the FIP and the REDD+ processes. Therefore, the achievement of objective 2 is rated substantial due to limited evidence on changes in practices and behaviors of local communities to enhance the sustainable forest management measures and the REDD+ process.

**Rating**  
Substantial

## OVERALL EFFICACY





### Rationale

The achievement of objective 1 was substantial. The achievement of objective 2 was substantial though at a lower side of it. Overall, the efficacy is rated substantial.

### Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

## 5. Efficiency

**Economic Analysis:** At appraisal, no economic internal rate of return was calculated due to the uncertainties in designing demand-driven subprojects and estimating costs of forest and climate change adaptation (PAD, para 41). The project was expected to generate both quantifiable benefits (biomass/carbon increase) and non-quantifiable benefits (behavior change, knowledge strengthened). Estimates of the value of reduced emissions and enhanced carbon stocks in cocoa landscapes derived from the project activities were calculated in an aggregate with those from the relevant FIP project, showing that these project's interventions would result in about 160,000 tons of carbon dioxide and 5.0 million tons of reduced emissions (PAD, para 42). The net present value of reduced emissions and enhanced carbon stocks in cocoa landscapes was estimated at US\$13.5 million with a 5 percent discount rate over 30 years and a conservative market value of US\$ 5.5 per ton of carbon dioxide, showing that the project's expected economic benefits exceeded the costs (PAD, para 42). Non-tangible benefits expected from the project included strengthened capacity of local communities to understand these climate/REDD+ related issues and to make informed decisions on development and risk management (PAD, para 43). At project closing, no economic internal rate of return was calculated due to the lack of data on economic benefits including yield increase at appraisal and completion (ICR, para 51). Based on calculations with FAO's Ex-Ante Carbon-balance Tool, the project is expected to reduce or avoid 49,730 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent over 20 years (ICR, page 48). The net present value of carbon benefits is estimated US\$1,556,995 with a 6 percent discount rate and a low social price of carbon (ICR, page 50). The project contributed to bring certain intangible benefits which resulted in improved technical understanding of reforestation and agroforestry and improved forest and land management practices among the beneficiaries (ICR, para 51).

**Aspects of design and implementation that affected efficiency:** The project was completed with no additional financing or extension despite the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The commitment of the national executing agency enabled the project to transition from a field-based supervision to a remote one during the pandemic without much delay (ICR, para 53).

The net present value of carbon benefits at project closing exceeded the actual project costs, while the project was closed in a timely manner without additional costs. Overall, the efficiency is rated substantial.

### Efficiency Rating

Substantial



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 relevance of objectives was substantial. The efficacy was substantial. The efficiency was substantial because the estimated benefits exceeded the actual project costs and the project was closed in a timely manner without additional costs. Overall, the outcome is rated satisfactory.

### a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

## 7. Risk to Development Outcome

**Technical risk:** There was a potential risk that the subproject activities might not be sustainable and scalable after project closing. To mitigate the risk for the subprojects implemented with the community-based organizations, the NSC and the NEA established mechanisms for selling the products from the subprojects and supplying water and necessary inputs to the subprojects (ICR, para 93). The 15 community-based organizations operating in the project zone received subgrants along with technical expertise that ensured hands-on learning and support (ICR, page 86).

**Financial risk:** There was a potential risk that the governance and fund management structure established under the project might not be sustained due to limited future financing. Given the intensive effort and resources invested in establishing the governance structures, it would be a missed opportunity for the mechanism to be a short-lived phenomenon. The Dedicated Grant Mechanism (DGM) had a potential to serve as a platform to reach out to indigenous people and local communities as new partners and indicate their interest in outreach efforts (ICR, para 100). However, only one DGM project was able to secure additional financing from the Climate Investment Fund out of all 12 DGM countries (ICR, para 100).

**Stakeholder ownership risk:** There was a potential risk that local communities would not use the sustainable energy sources (gas and solar) for light and cooking due to expensive costs to procure equipment (ICR, page 69). The risk was mitigated by providing solar power equipment for boreholes and improved cookstoves under the community grant to the communities which completed all three modules of training (ICR, page 86).



**Risk related to exposure to natural disasters:** There was a potential risk that planted trees would not survive due to challenges related rainfall and fire, which were experienced during project implementation (ICR, para 94). The risk was mitigated by directly working with farmers to initiate water conservation measures, enhancing drip irrigation techniques with plastic bottles, establishing fire belts, and providing community trainings on fire belt protection (ICR, para 94).

## 8. Assessment of Bank Performance

### a. Quality-at-Entry

Technical, environmental, social, and fiduciary aspects were adequately assessed and designed. The strategic relevance was adequate, as described in section 3. The project was designed based on analytical work both in Ghana and worldwide, as well as consultations with local communities (ICR, para 90). The risk assessment was adequate to mitigate potential risks for implementation. On the other hand, the bottom-up approach required by the DGM program was not well aligned with the World Bank's project approval procedures. There were no existing institutions to represent the local communities in the country, so the project needed to create the national steering committee from scratch to ensure that it fully represented community interests (ICR, para 71). No technical counterpart in the government was present at the design stage as the government played an observer's role (ICR, para 71). Selecting the national executing agency after project approval resulted in the misalignment between the implementation arrangements that were described in the PAD and preferred by the selected national executing agency (ICR, para 71). Moreover, the M&E arrangements at the design stage was not adequate as described in section 9.a. Overall, the quality at entry is rated satisfactory.

### Quality-at-Entry Rating

Satisfactory

### b. Quality of supervision

The project's focus on development impact was adequate. The M&E activities regularly collected data on changes in the environment and the local communities' practices to track the project's contribution to outcomes, as described in section 9.b. The supervision of fiduciary and safeguard aspects was adequate. During implementation, the World Bank provided additional training on fiduciary and safeguards policies and worked closely with the national executing agency to update relevant project documents (ICR, para 91). An environmental officer and a social specialist provided safeguards oversight during implementation, though the initiation of safeguard oversight was slow due to the delay in appointment of the environmental officer (ICR, para 53). The performance reporting covered issues that caused downgrading of overall safeguards rating and remedial actions (ICR, para 83). The implantation support was seamlessly provided over the handovers of the task team leaders (ICR, para 91). Overall, the quality of supervision is rated satisfactory.



Overall Bank performance is rated satisfactory based on the satisfactory ratings both at entry and during supervision.

### **Quality of Supervision Rating**

Satisfactory

### **Overall Bank Performance Rating**

Satisfactory

## **9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization**

### **a. M&E Design**

The two objectives were clearly specified in the PDO statement. On the other hand, the level of ambition of the PDO statement was set at the output level rather than the outcome level. The indicators did not encompass all outcomes of the PDO statement, in particular, outcomes of objective 2 (strengthened practice of local communities for the FIP and REDD+ processes) were not adequately measured by the results framework which focused on outputs. The M&E design was not well embedded institutionally because the national executing agency was recruited after the PAD was approved based on the DGM program requirements (ICR, para 77). It resulted in the mismatch of the M&E design with the implementation strategy of the national executing agency (ICR, para 77).

### **b. M&E Implementation**

All the indicators in the results framework were measured and reported. The agency responsible for M&E ensured attention to effective M&E implementation. The M&E specialist of the national executing agency collected robust and nuanced data by conducting surveys, mapping assessments, beneficiary feedback on overall project results, sub-grant implementation updates, and rapid assessments to estimate outcomes for various project indicators (ICR, para 78). Based on a clear methodology, the 2018 and 2019 surveys collected responses from more than 3000 beneficiaries and 1500 beneficiaries, respectively, that resulted in supplementing the evidence on outcomes at project closing (ICR, para 78). The national executing agency utilized the IT tools including Open Data Kit software and an interactive voice response platform which enabled them to implement M&E activities under the travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic (ICR, para 78). The weakness in the M&E design including missing baseline data, unspecific indicators, and duplicated indicators were addressed at the 2021 restructuring. On the other hand, the baseline data collection was not completed until almost three years and 5 months after the project came into effect. The target of the PDO indicator on the ratio of basic trainees who completed three training modules to become dedicated trainees was not revised downwards despite of the low probability of achieving the target due to the farmers' competing priorities in farms and households (ICR, para 77). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no survey was conducted in 2020 and the final survey in 2021 was scaled down (ICR, para 78).



### c. M&E Utilization

The M&E findings were communicated to the various stakeholders including those in the national steering committee and informed the revision of the results framework at the restructuring in 2021. The M&E data, which was collected beyond the results framework, was used to provide evidence of achievement of outcomes. The M&E findings informed planning of the subsequent interventions related to the FIP and the DGM (ICR, para 80).

The shortcomings in the M&E design were corrected during implementation by revising the results framework and collecting and analyzing data through multiple surveys and assessments, resulting in adequate M&E utilization. Overall, the M&E quality is rated substantial.

### M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

## 10. Other Issues

### a. Safeguards

**Environmental and Social Safeguards:** The project was rated Category B and triggered the following safeguard policies at appraisal and project closing: OP/BP 4.01 Environmental Assessment, OP/BP 4.04 Natural Habitats, OP/BP 4.36 Forests, and OP 4.09 Pest Management. The project developed the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and the Pest Management Plan based on those of the FIP project with minor updates (ICR, para 82). Based on the mid-term review's findings on the lack of obtaining necessary clearance for removing almost 11,000 diseased and old cocoa trees (ICR, para 83), the overall safeguards rating was downgraded from moderately satisfactory to moderately unsatisfactory in June 2020 (Operations Portal). To address the issue, a retroactive audit was conducted to find out the reasons and impacts of the clearing of trees and recorded the findings in the subsequent Aide Memoires (ICR, para 83). For every lost tree, the project replanted three trees (ICR, para 83). In addition, the project provided training to farmers on new techniques of growing food crops (plantain and yam) without cutting trees and of mulching, with an aim to secure their income while waiting for cocoa seedlings to grow. No grievances reported at interviews with farmers during the audit regarding the clearance of old and diseased trees to re-establish new cocoa farms. At project closing, most of the last agreed actions was completed by the national executing agency, including the development and disclosure of the Environmental and Social Management Plan which aimed to guide subsequent safeguard interventions beyond the life of the project (ICR, para 83). No pending environmental and social safeguards issues, including any outstanding grievance on their record, was reported at project closing (ICR, para 87).

### b. Fiduciary Compliance

**Financial Management:** The project established financial management arrangements as agreed with the World Bank and fully disbursed the funds in line with the minimum requirement of the World Bank's policy



on Investment Policy Financing instrument (ICR, para 88). The audit reports were in acceptable quality and submitted in a timely manner (ICR, para 88).

**Procurement:** All procurement activities totaling the disbursement of USD 2.425 million were completed in line with the approved procurement plan and in compliance with the World Bank's procurement guidelines and procedures (ICR, para 89). The procurement implementation arrangement and staffing were adequate.

### c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

No unintended impact was mentioned in the ICR.

### d. Other

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## 11. Ratings

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

## 12. Lessons

The ICR (paras 95-100) presented six lessons. The three notable lessons are included below with rephrasing because these may benefit future projects related to engaging local communities to enhance sustainable forest management and the REDD+ process.

**Ensuring information is shared with appropriate targeted communities on a timely basis and by the most effective means is essential for awareness raising and the engagement with local communities to adopt sustainable practices to address deforestation and forest degradation and climate change.** The project developed a detailed communication strategy with a multifaceted approach to communicate with and provide training to local communities, including delivering programs through local radio stations, involving a climate change ambassador, using outdoor classes, designing a specific training program for women, and using local languages and pictures through training modules (ICR, para 96) through strong collaboration with key institutions at national, regional, and district levels (ICR, para 98). Translating the complex concept of REDD+ and climate





change into simple messages with pictures of daily actions and real-life examples ensured an inclusion of illiterate people into the awareness raising and engagement activities (ICR, para 96).

**Establishing a good information management system at project initiation can improve efficiency and effectiveness, especially for projects which involve multiple stakeholders with limited monitoring experience.** Insufficient disaggregation of targets for the target population (women, migrants, youth, and people with disabilities) resulted in limited depth in the analysis of the vulnerable stakeholders in project reporting (ICR, para 99). Data on beneficiary satisfaction needs to be disaggregated based on beneficiary groups (different levels of trainees and grantees) (ICR, para 99). Moreover, the project benefitted from utilizing georeferenced data collection tools including the Open Data Kit software and an interactive voice response platform for M&E activities under the COVID-19 restrictions (ICR, para 78). The M&E system could have been further improved by increasing a flexibility to upload documents, an alignment with the M&E criteria for subprojects, and a compatibility with an offline application under limited internet connection (ICR, para 99).

**Limited additional financing from the Climate Investment Fund to the countries which piloted the Dedicated Grant Mechanism (DGM) projects can affect sustainability of development outcomes.** The DGM program design document mentioned that the available resource envelope was limited given the complexity of issues and the broadness of the geography covered (ICR, para 100). Only one out of 12 DGM projects was able to secure additional financing from the Climate Investment Fund (ICR, para 100). Given the intensive effort and resources invested in establishing the governance and fund management structures for the project and the potential of the DGM to engage the indigenous people and local communities, it would be a missed opportunity for the structures to be left unused after project closing (ICR, para 100).

### 13. Assessment Recommended?

No

### 14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR provides a detailed overview of the project. The narrative supports the ratings and available evidence. The evidence is collected from multiple surveys and assessments with a solid methodology. The ICR aimed to triangulate data to reach conclusions where possible. The ICR's lessons are responding to the specific experiences and findings for the project. The quality of evidence and analysis is aligned to the messages outlined in the ICR, though the evidence relied more on the data collected before the Mid-Term Review than the end-line data due to the challenges in conducting surveys in latter period of the project under the COVID-19 pandemic. The theory of change was brief and did not articulate the links between outputs and outcomes. Overall, the quality of ICR is rated substantial.

#### a. Quality of ICR Rating

Substantial

