

		<p><i>Indicators: Improved management effectiveness as measured by the METT scorecard;</i> <i>Stable gorilla population in the landscape;</i> <i>Stable elephant population in the landscape;</i> <i>Reduction in the encounter rate and distribution area of hunting signs (from 2013 baseline in Messok Dja and 2014 baseline in Ntokou-Pikounda and the Ngombe Concession for the gorilla, elephant and hunter sign indicators)</i></p> <p>[Baseline and targets will be established during the PPG]</p>	<p>1.1.2. Protection of Buffer Zones in the Ngombe Concession (12,4334 ha between Odzala-Kokoua National Park, the Ntokou-Pikounda National Park and the Sangha River) and the Pikounda North concession (north of the Ntokou-Pikounda National park covering 96,091 ha)</p> <p>1.1.3. Gazettement of Messok Dja protected area (14,5693 ha), currently only under informal protection</p> <p>1.1.4. Capacity development of Ministry staff in relation to understanding of application of PA and illegal wildlife trade legislation, enforcement systems, intelligence gathering, human resources management, operations management, etc.</p>			
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<p>Component 2: Strengthening capacity for effective PA and Illegal Wildlife Trade governance in Congo</p>	<p>TA</p>	<p>Outcome 2.1. Biodiversity and Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) priorities are integrated into key national policies and plans and harmonized with regional initiatives.</p> <p><i>Indicators: Establishment of harmonized National PA Strategy and National IWT Strategy; Significant improvements in capacity of key role-players as indicated by customized Capacity Development Scorecard.</i></p>	<p>2.1.1. Preparation and enforcement of legislation recognising new transboundary UNESCO Man and the Biosphere site (MAB) in Odzala [as part of new PA Strategy detailed in 1.1.2] and outlining management arrangements.</p> <p>2.1.2 Formulation and implementation of a comprehensive National Protected Areas Strategy (harmonized with National IWT Strategy below).</p> <p>2.1.3. Formulation and implementation of National Strategy for Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade to support national implementation of CITES.</p> <p>2.1.4. National Wildlife Crime Task Force established, likely involving Congo's <i>Gendarmerie</i>, the judiciary, customs, intelligence and relevant ministries, with the mandate for enhancing government systems and institutional capacity for combating IWT.</p> <p>2.1.5 A nationwide system for monitoring wildlife trade and wildlife crime cases will be established for the first time and operationalized.</p>	<p>GEFTF</p>	<p>938,988</p>	<p>7,200,000</p>
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<p>Component 3: Reducing poaching and illegal trade in threatened species [site level].</p>	<p>TA/INV</p>	<p>3.1. Wildlife crime is combatted on the ground by strengthening enforcement operations in targeted PA complexes.</p> <p><i>Indicators: Biodiversity enforcement improved over 16.908 Km2 of important PA complexes; LD benefits covering >65,000 ha [64.917 ha]; Reforestation leading to defined carbon benefits [to be determined at PPG]; Increased prosecutions and convictions relating to IWT [to be determined at PPG].</i></p>	<p>3.1.1 Strengthened enforcement, judicial and forensic capacity to support criminal investigations and prosecution of wildlife crime cases.</p> <p>3.1.2. Ranger Training Centre established in Odzalaand >2 other National Parks to develop national capacity for preventing poaching and other wildlife crimes [PA to be defined during PPG]</p> <p>3.1.3. Wildlife Crime Unit established operating in and around >3 PAs and the national border, incorporating joint committee litigation monitoring on wildlife; incorporating >6 teams of border patrols, and twelve village game scout units (monitoring the conversion of recidivism and the poaching of large mammals).</p> <p>3.1.4. Private sector enterprises are engaged and integrated into a coordinated IWT approach across the landscape leading to the reduced illegal exploitation of threatened species.</p> <p>3.1.5 Through national small grants mechanisms, potentially including GEF SGP, grants are channelled to forest-dependent communities to pilot sustainable livelihoods based on SLM and CBNRM to i) reduce deforestation, IWT and unsustainable bushmeat exploitation; and ii) support land use planning over oil palm concessions; and iii) support efforts to improve forest landscape management.</p>	<p>GEFTF</p>	<p>1,050,000</p>	<p>6,158,280</p>
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	Subtotal		2,968,988	19,458,280
	Project Management Cost (PMC) ⁴	GEFTF	156,263	1,024,120
	Total Project Cost		3,125,250	20,482,400

If Multi-TrustFund project :PMC in this table should be the total and enter trust fund PMC breakdown here ()

C. INDICATIVE SOURCES OF CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT BY NAME AND BY TYPE, IF AVAILABLE

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Amount (\$)
Recipient Govt	Congo Government	In Kind	3,122,400
Donor fund	Odzala Kokoua Fondation	Grant	3,500,000
CSO	Congo Conservation Society	Grant	11,360,000
Private Sector	Forestry Industrial Ouessou	In Kind	2,500,000
Total Co-financing			20,482,400

D. INDICATIVE TRUST FUND RESOURCES REQUESTED BY AGENCY(IES), COUNTRY(IES) AND THE PROGRAMMING OF FUNDS^{a)}

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	(in \$)		
					GEF Project Financing (a)	Agency Fee (b) ^{b)}	Total (c)=a+b
UNDP	GEFTF	Congo Republic	Biodiversity		1,083,500	97,515	1,181,015
UNDP	GEFTF	Congo Republic	Land Degradation		450,000	40,500	490,500
UNDP	GEFTF	Congo Republic	Climate Change		550,000	49,500	599,500
UNDP	GEFTF	Congo Republic	SFM	SFM	1,041,750	93,758	1,135,508
Total GEF Resources					3,125,250	281,273	3,406,523

a) Refer to the Fee Policy for GEF Partner Agencies.

E. PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)⁵

Is Project Preparation Grant requested? Yes No If no, skip item E.

PPG AMOUNT REQUESTED BY AGENCY(IES), TRUST FUND, COUNTRY(IES) AND THE PROGRAMMING OF FUNDS

Project Preparation Grant amount requested: \$150,000					PPG Agency Fee: 13,500		
GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	(in \$)		
					PPG (a)	Agency Fee ⁶ (b)	Total c = a + b
UNDP	GEFTF	Congo Republic	Biodiversity	UNDP	75,000	6,750	81,750

⁴ For GEF Project Financing up to \$2 million, PMC could be up to 10% of the subtotal; above \$2 million, PMC could be up to 5% of the subtotal. PMC should be charged proportionately to focal areas based on focal area project financing amount in Table D below.

⁵ PPG requested amount is determined by the size of the GEF Project Financing (PF) as follows: Up to \$100k for PF up to \$3 mil; \$150k for PF up to \$6 mil; \$200k for PF up to \$10 mil; and \$300k for PF above \$10m. On an exceptional basis, PPG amount may differ upon detailed discussion and justification with the GEFSEC.

⁶ PPG fee percentage follows the percentage of the Agency fee over the GEF Project Financing amount requested.

UNDP	GEFTF	Congo Republic	Land Degradation	UNDP	40,000	3,600	43,600
UNDP	GEFTF	Congo Republic	Climate Change	UNDP	35,000	3,150	38,150
Total PPG Amount					150,000	13,500	163,500

PART II: PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

1. *Project Description.* Briefly describe: 1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed; 2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects, 3) the proposed alternative scenario, with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project, 4) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing; 5) global environmental benefits (GEFTF) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF); and 6) innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up.

1. Project Description

The Problem: The Republic of Congo covers a surface of 342.000 km² and straddles the Equator; it extends between the 5° from Southern latitude and the 4° of Northern latitude and between longitudes 11° and 19° East. It is bordered in the north by Cameroon and the Central African Republic, in the east by the Congo river and its affluent Oubangui, which separates it from the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the south by the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the south-west by the Atlantic Ocean and in the west by Gabon. The Congolese Atlantic Ocean coast is 170 km long. Congo is home to one of the richest and most biologically important and intact-forest ecosystems on the planet. Around 65% of the country is covered by lowland tropical forests, which includes large tracts of intact forest. These areas are home to a diverse range of rare and endangered mammals, insects and plants – forest elephants, chimpanzees, western lowland gorillas, leopards and bongo antelope are just some of the species of large mammals. The country also boasts old growth forests containing enormous mahoganies and other tree species which are many hundreds of years old, particularly in the forestry concessions in the north of the country.

With the creation of the new Ntokou Pikounda protected area (PA), the total PA estate now covers 4.142.400 ha or 12% of total surface area. The PAs have as a principal objective the protection and the conservation of wild fauna, flora and ecosystems. Among these protected areas, four have approved management plans: the three National Parks of Odzala-Kokoua, Nouabalé-Ndoki and Conkouati-Douli, and the Lossi gorilla sanctuary. Congo harbours several ecozones and is covered mainly with forests (65% of the territory), which in total account for 13% of the whole of the African humid dense forests. They are primarily divided into three principal solid massifs: Mayombe, Chaillu and the Congo North massif.

The Congolese zone within the the Minkébé-Odzala-Dja Inter-zone in Gabon, Congo, and Cameroon, also known as the TRIDOM area and is a key IWT hub. The 147,000 km² trans-border zone covers 7.5% of the Congo Basin Tropical Rainforest, the world's second largest expanse of rainforest. Twelve PAs in the area are connected through a thinly populated "interzone" that is essential for maintaining ecological connectivity and long term maintenance of ecological processes. This Ecoregion and its biodiversity are threatened, especially for its bush meat and ivory. Its forests are target for poachers and its roads and towns a transit route for trafficked wildlife from Central African Republic (CAR), Congo and Gabon. Trafficking is often led by local elites who exploit poorer community members, co-opted into poaching for their tracking and hunting abilities and to transport illegal wildlife products. Local people accrue little of the benefits, see their natural resources depleted, face compromised security in their daily lives and feel disempowered in the face of criminal elites.

This situation is compounded by the fact that in recent times, managers have lacked the resources and technical support to efficiently manage the protected areas that are the core of the landscape. More broadly, law enforcement agents lack capacity to gather and use intelligence information, collect evidence, follow due process and build robust cases. Low pay and morale means they are vulnerable to corruption and intimidation. Prosecutors and judges often show a reluctance or to apply relevant laws, and are usually subject to tempting offers to waive cases or to release prisoners. Border agents lack the resource and skills to effectively secure the frontier against trafficking, or worse, are complicit in affording safe passage to traffickers in return for bribes. IWT undermines the rule of law, nurtures corruption, disrupts communities and hinders economic development. It also threatens the regions' wildlife. Forest elephant populations in Congo declined by

50% between 2002-2011 and a huge number of pangolins are trafficked to markets in East and South East Asia. As a consequence, IWT threatens the integrity of the forest system itself and the continued provision of essential ecosystem services on which many rely.

The principal factor influencing the state of terrestrial biodiversity in this area is by far the practice of commercial hunting (mostly for the burgeoning urban populations of Congo, Cameroon and DRC). Over 64% of Congo's population lives in cities or towns. Kinshasa, an enormous city of 14 million people lies within easy reach down river from the TRIDOM complex, and the cities of Southern Cameroon can be easily reached by road in less than 48 hours. The practice of commercial selective logging throughout the north of the country has resulted in a visible modification of the forests, but because extraction is limited to a few trees per hectare, the main deleterious effect of commercial logging is a very high hunting rate of all mammal species, because remote inaccessible forest tracts have now become easily accessible following the creation of the network of forestry roads throughout all the timber concessions. Large mammal populations only survive in any numbers in concessions where there is a very strict practice of employing forest guards whose main task is anti-poaching. Where there is no anti-poaching, and where these roads remain open to vehicles or foot traffic after the completion of timber extraction, hunting continues until almost all the medium to large mammals have been killed, smoked, and transported into the very active chain of commercial meat trade either within Congo itself or to the other nearby large regional hubs, such as Yaounde and Douala in Cameroon (containing roughly 3 million people each), Mbandaka and Kinshasa (now thought to have perhaps as many as 0.5 and ~14 million people, respectively) in DRC. The towns within "easy striking distance" of the TRIDOM within Congo include Pokola (13,500 people in 2014) and Ouessou (over 30,000 people in 2012). Transport to Brazzaville, much further south (at least 1.5 million people) is now greatly facilitated by a new tar road linking Ouessou and Brazzaville: the journey can be done in a single day. Thus, forest "goods", such as ivory and meat, are rapidly trafficked in various directions from the TRIDOM using the constantly improved transport network in the region.

The second factor influencing the state of terrestrial biodiversity is the destruction of natural habitats and the overexploitation of the terrestrial flora. Slash-and-burn agriculture has a very limited impact, as (i) local people carry out a forest fallow system; and (ii) rural human population density is low throughout most of the country, especially in the Tridom area. However industrial plantations of palm oil – a recent phenomenon in Congo – will render large areas of land uninhabitable for almost all the medium-sized to large mammals of the region, either because they will be unable to survive in an oil palm monoculture or because they will destroy the crop and will in turn be eliminated by the plantation owners. If no natural forest exists between existing PAs, they will lose the biological links between them, eventually becoming biological islands, leading to local extinctions, reduction in biodiversity, disruption of biological processes, genetic isolation and the loss and impairment of global environmental benefits.

Provision of fuelwood for households constitutes one of the causes of deforestation in and around the urban agglomerations but is not much of an issue in the Congo part of the landscape – yet. Almost the entirety of Congolese households still uses fuelwood as principal fuel for cooking and heating, and the vast majority of the rural population depend on wild protein (either fish or mammals) rather than domestically produced meat. While Congo has a great diversity of agricultural and forest farming systems with food, market-gardening, industrial and fruit-bearing crops, "wild" foods consist for a large part of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP). These are subject to intense exploitation, which unmanaged, will lead to unsustainable use of forest habitats. It is clear that Congo still harbors an abundant biological diversity, but that, in spite of this great biological richness, the average Congolese lives in severe poverty. The link between this wealth of biodiversity and the poverty of the people has been identified in major policies, strategies, plans and national programmes, demonstrating that concerns related to the safeguarding of the environment are now pivotal in the Congolese national development plans.

Baseline: The Congolese government has made significant contributions towards protecting the forests through the creation of national parks and other PAs, and has demonstrated its commitment to the long-term sustainable management of forest resources and sustainable development. Much of the forest protection activity is a direct result of the Summit of Central African Heads of State held in Yaoundé in March 1999, in which high-level commitment was made to the concepts of forest conservation, sustainable management and trans-boundary collaboration. In order to ensure effective implementation of the Yaoundé Declaration, the signatory States established an institutional mechanism, the Central African Commission for Forests (COMIFAC), and defined implementation strategies in the "Plan de Convergence". The latter prioritises protection of twelve priority transborder conservation areas and Congo is a signatory.

Several initiatives have already been implemented in Congo and the region. These initiatives constitute a baseline and are detailed below.

- The UNDP-GEF project ‘Conservation of trans-boundary biodiversity in the Minkebe-Odzala-Dja interzone in Gabon, Congo and Cameroon’ (1583); known as the regional TRIDOM project. This started in 2008 for a period of 7 years. It is a conservation project which aims to preserve ecological functions of this area and ensure in the long-term that the transboundary system of protected areas remains preserved. It has worked towards the following expected outcomes: Land-use and the governance structures of a trans-border complex for biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource use are designed, endorsed and operational; capacity to monitor trends in biodiversity, resource exploitation and ecological functions and to minimize pressures on natural resources is strengthened in TRIDOM; benefits from community-based natural resource management contribute to poverty alleviation; and sustainable funding is mobilized for the conservation and sustainable management of the TRIDOM.
- Regional project providing specific country support to Congo to support implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to and Benefit Sharing (ABS) of Biodiversity.
- The UNDP-GEF project on ‘Sustainable Financing of Protected Area Systems in the Congo Basin’ (2906).
- Sectoral Forest and Environment Program (FESP): Under the auspices of the World Bank, Cameroon, Gabon and Congo are developing and implementing Sectoral Forest and Environment Programs (Programme Sectoriel Forêt et Environnement, FESP). The objective of the Forest and Economic Diversification Project in Congo is to increase the capacity of the Republic of Congo to: (i) promote better implementation of its forestry legislation; and (ii) enhance the policy environment for participation of local communities and the private sector in sustainable forest management and reforestation.
- Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT): The Congolese government and the European Union signed on May 17, 2010 a Voluntary Agreement of Partnership (APV) on the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT). The purpose of this trade agreement, come into effect on March 1, 2013, is to improve the forest governance in Congo and to make sure that wood and wood products of Congo fulfill the legal requirements of the country.

Barriers: Key barriers revolve around the challenges faced by the government and key agencies to control wildlife crime and destruction of habitats, which are threatening large mammal endangered species, notably the largest species with slow reproductive rates (forest elephant, western lowland gorilla, and central chimpanzee), the very large herbivores (bongo and forest buffalo), and, more recently, Giant (and other species of) pangolins which are hunted for their commercial value in the markets of the Far East. Barriers can be summarised as:

- Lack of capacity and corruption within the law enforcement and legal system, and insufficient information and tools to understand, regulate and combat illegal wildlife trade;
- Lack of robust enabling framework (policies, etc.) for protected areas management and IWT;
- Ineffective management and enforcement at the site and landscape level; and
- Limited transboundary coordination in planning and control of resource use are factors contributing to unsustainable exploitation of natural resources in the interzone.

The Alternative Scenario

The Long-term Solution isto strengthen the conservation of globally threatened species in the Basins of the Republic of Congo by improving biodiversity enforcement, resilience and management. This will be achieved through three interconnected components with the set outcomes, as summarised in the project framework table in Section B. This project will implement activities at three geographic levels; the national (central government) level in the Republic Congo; at a number of key sites within Congo that harbour globally significant biodiversity threatened by increasing rates of wildlife crime and poor management; and a small and select number of activities designed to facilitate inter-country coordination between Gabon, Congo and Cameroon (in the TRIDOM area). The project will evaluate its impact against the rate of loss of biodiversity within Congo, achieved through improved biodiversity management in targeted PA complexes and a reduction in wildlife crime.

Component 1: Management planning for PAs. Under this Component, the project will support anti-poaching and intelligence work that will assess threats and risks at the system level and build them into the management plans for the area. Based on the recently completed biodiversity assessments of the Messok Dja, Ntokou-Pikounda, Odzala and Ngombe landscape components (2013, 2014, 2012 and 2014 respectively), the PA management plans will be created for the existing Ntokou-Pikounda NP and for the soon-to-be-gazetted Messok Dja PA. These management plans include plans for the maintenance and official recognition of biological corridors for connectivity threatened species and buffer zones that will promote the restoration of degraded lands and forests in partnership with local communities and private sector players. These are critical to the unique possibility to maintain a viable link between Nki National Park in Cameroon and Odzala Koukoua National Park in Congo. It is also critical to give chance to wildlife habitat to be maintained during and after the construction of the Cholet Dam. In parallel, the capacity of PA staff will be developed to improve management systems, ensure the application of PA and IWT legislation and enforcement measures, and improve planning, budgeting and equipment, etc. Staff will also be trained in controlling poaching and trafficking, preventing the unsustainable exploitation of bushmeat, securing wildlife populations and assuring PA integrity.

Component 2: Strengthening capacity for effective PA and IWT governance in Congo. Under this Component, the preparation and enforcement of legislation recognizing the new transboundary UNESCO MAB in Odzala and outlining management arrangements will be completed. This will tie into the formulation and implementation of updated National Protected Areas Strategy and a new National Strategy for Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade to support national implementation of CITES. A National Wildlife Crime Task Force will be established (involving Congo's Gendarmerie, the judiciary, customs, intelligence and relevant ministries) with the mandate for enhancing government systems and institutional capacity for combating IWT in accordance with the new IWT Strategy, and a nationwide system for monitoring wildlife trade and wildlife crime cases will be established for the first time and operationalized.

Component 3: Reducing poaching and illegal trafficking of large mammal threatened species [site level]. Under this Component, enforcement, judicial and forensic capacity will be strengthened to support criminal investigations and prosecution of wildlife crime cases. A Ranger Training Centre will be established in Odzala and >2 other National Parks to develop national capacity for preventing poaching and other wildlife crimes [these will be defined during the PPG stage]. This will be complemented by the introduction of Wildlife Crime Units operating in and around >3 PAs and the national border (incorporating joint committee litigation monitoring on wildlife), >6 teams of border patrols and twelve village game scout units (monitoring the conversion of recidivism and the poaching of large mammals). In addition, private sector enterprises will be engaged and integrated into a coordinated IWT approach across the landscape leading to the reduced illegal exploitation of threatened species. Through national small grants mechanisms, potentially including GEF SGP, grants are channelled to forest-dependent communities to pilot sustainable livelihoods based on SLM and CBNRM to i) reduce deforestation, IWT and unsustainable bushmeat exploitation; and ii) support land use planning over oil palm concessions; and iii) support efforts to improve forest landscape management and protect carbon sinks.

Incremental Reasoning and Global Environmental Benefits

The incremental approach can be summarised as follows: The government of Congo has clearly identified strengthening and consolidating the national PA system as a priority action for conserving biodiversity and preventing domestic and transnational illegal wildlife trade. However, despite strong commitment from the government, actions are seldom taken to concretely remove the barriers to effective PA management and enforcement against trafficking and poaching of highly threatened species. In particular, legal inconsistencies and corruption at the national (and regional) level are compounded by the lack of management and enforcement capacity at the site level. Together these limit the potential for effective action. In terms of IWT, the capacity and understanding amongst law enforcement agencies is low, regional collaboration is weak, and existing mechanisms to regulate legal wildlife trade are not being appropriately applied. The proposed intervention is particularly timely given the sharp increase in illegal wildlife trade volume globally and the emergence of Congo as a key source country in regional wildlife trade networks as well as significant transit country for transnational wildlife trafficking.

In the baseline situation, a weak enabling environment, a lack of coordination between agencies, a lack of capacity and resources, and an inability to upscale successful models will mean that endemic unsustainable resource exploitation in Congo's globally significant protected areas will continue. Illegal wildlife trade will continue to operate as organized crime. Wildlife trade, both illegal and legal will continue to substantially increase, which has already resulted in widespread local

declines of key wildlife species throughout most of the south of the country outside of the Conkouati-Douli National Park and, in the forested north of the country, in logging concessions which have not been subject to strict antipoaching activity over the last ten years or so. In particular, elephants (at highest risk because of the very high profit margin offered by ivory trafficking) are already absent from large areas of the country and will eventually be hunted down to extremely low densities. At that point, their ability to act as important functional elements of the forest ecosystem (dispersal and nutrient transport) will be destroyed; and beyond that point their ability to reproduce successfully will become exceedingly difficult. It is likely that degradation and fragmentation of the Congo's forests will continue. Wildlife trade, both illegal and legal will substantially increase or, at best, will continue unabated, resulting first in local declines followed by outright extinctions of key Congolese wildlife including elephants, gorillas and rhinos.

In the alternative scenario enabled by the GEF, systemic and institutional barriers to effective action to strengthen the management effectiveness of the Congolese PA system, while combating illegal wildlife trade, will be removed at national, local and landscape levels through improved regulatory and institutional frameworks, anticorruption, and enhanced and coordinated government action. Core PAs and adjacent landscapes (the Odzala-Odzla Koukoua National Park (13,546 km²), Lossi-Pikounda-Ngombe-Ntokou landscape and the Souanke-Sembe landscape Gorilla Sanctuary (350 km²), Messok-Dja National Park (1,450 km²) will be strengthened to support the conservation of globally threatened species in Congo. Coordinated National PA and IWT Strategies will underpin integrated action at local, national and regional levels, involving private sector and communities as part of a multi-modal effort to strengthen the protected areas estate, fight wildlife crime, demonstrate the multiple benefits of sustainable land and forest management, and involve local people in co-managing wildlife and their habitat – the very ecosystems on which they depend. Capacity amongst national and regional enforcement agencies will be increased, there will be greater awareness of the importance of reducing the use of wildlife products, and enhanced high-level political will to act. A nation-wide system for monitoring wildlife trade and wildlife crime cases will be established for the first time and operationalised. The Congolese state and people will benefit economically while the globally significant wildlife of Congo, such as forest elephants and gorillas, will be lifted from the threat of extinction caused by unsustainable exploitation.

Global Environmental Benefits: The Republic of Congo is one of the most biodiverse regions in the world, and supports many mammal and bird species including endemic and endangered species threatened by commercial wildlife trade, such as forest elephants, western lowland gorillas, and giant pangolin, among others. Congo is home to one of the richest and most biologically important forest ecosystems on the planet. Around 65% of the country is covered by lowland tropical forests, much of which is made up of large tracts of undisturbed virgin wilderness. GEF funding will secure populations of globally significant species through dramatically improving the systemic and institutional capacity of the nation to conserve biodiversity through the establishment of more effective management of protected areas; preventing land degradation through reduced illegal logging and land conversion in areas adjacent to PAs; helping to mitigate climate change through enhanced protection of the region's vast carbon sinks; and controlling commercial wildlife trade and associated overexploitation of species and their habitats. In addition, the GEF finance will significantly reduce the role of Congo as a supplier for transnational wildlife trafficking networks, especially for African elephant ivory. These benefits will emerge from capacity building as well as from coordinated approach to integrated landscape management, involving all stakeholders in the area. The project will generate these benefits by helping to build fundamental management capacities needed to generate revenues, working according to management and business plans and ensure an enabling institutional and policy environment that is conducive to adequate and dependable financial flows to PA system managers.

Innovativeness, Sustainability and Potential for Scale-up: The development of cost-effective and sustainable solutions to reduce the detrimental impacts of poor PA management, degradation of adjacent areas and associated wildlife trade is central to all aspects of this project. The project will work to support and strengthen Congolese institutions and authorities to more effectively manage the national PA estate and reduce poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking. The underlying premise for the project is that interest already exists within the Government of Congo, especially within the Ministry for Sustainable Development, Forest Economy and Environment (MDDEFE) to improve management of the PA system located in the TRIDOM zone (with the intention to consolidate important work initiated through the regional TRIDOM project 2008-2015), and to control poaching and wildlife trade. What is needed is a combination of facilitation and demonstration to show that resources can be applied for the benefit of globally important biodiversity and Congo's sustainable economic development. Following the completion of the project, national institutions and authorities will be empowered and better equipped to exercise their mandates, without requiring further external resources. The project will build on existing initiatives and policies

to develop better collaboration and information exchange, rather than creating new costly systems. The project will promote legitimate industry over unscrupulous IWT by developing regulatory environment into one which provides a clear competitive advantage to legal, sustainable and responsible trade. Particularly innovative aspects of this project include: i) improved land-use and the establishment of governance structures for a trans-border complex to secure biodiversity conservation and promote sustainable natural resource use; ii) capacity to monitor trends in biodiversity, resource exploitation and ecological functions and to minimize pressures on natural resources; and iii) benefits from community-based natural resource management, which contribute to poverty alleviation.

2. Risks

RISK	RISK RATING	RISK MITIGATION MEASURE
Deteriorating political and economic conditions	Medium	Continue project activities as the project seeks to serve as a model for long-term financing of protected areas in countries where political uncertainty and economic constraints currently preclude the government from allocating adequate resources to conservation activities.
Increased loss and degradation of forest due to climate effects	Medium	This risk is clearly more important over the medium to long term. Complementary efforts to maintain resilience and connectivity amongst forest ecosystems at landscape level will be essential to maintaining PA biodiversity over the longer term.
Allocation of budgetary resources to national and regional trust funds remains low	Medium	The project will build on the environmental economic valuation work of the UNDP 'Sustainable Financing' project, to strengthen the business case in favor of Government financing of PAs. It will encourage the integration of PA financing allocations into national planning. At the same time, the emergence of new markets for conservation, also supported by the project, will help to change the cost-benefit calculus surrounding budgetary allocations for PA, corridor and open spots management.
The international community and private investors reluctant to provide resources for biodiversity conservation	Medium	Propose an institutional mechanism that strengthen environmental governance, transparency and maximize credibility. Build partnerships with different groups such as the private sector.
Increases in threats facing PAs due to sectoral activities and/or demographic trends counterbalance improvements in management	Medium	This risk may require action by Government that goes beyond increased PA management to address risks at source. The fact that this project is being developed as part of a multi-donor partnership and within regional frame-works geared to improved forest governance serves to mitigate this risk.
Limited local expertise to carry our implementation and/or follow up	Medium	For project implementation purposes, a combination of national and international expertise is envisaged to provide the technical competencies and skills necessary. However this external expertise is not deemed sustainable and support will include transfer of knowledge, mentoring and training of PA system staff and those agencies managing the interzone.

3. Coordination

The Government of Congo's Ministry for Sustainable Development, Forest Economy and Environment (MDDEFE) is currently working in partnership with AFD on strengthening the National Forest Inventory and Forest Management Planning, and with the EU on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), timber traceability, and timber tracking. In parallel, the EU is also supporting an Independent Observer of Forestry, implemented by the NGOs Resource Extraction Monitoring and Forests Monitor, in Congo. The Republic of Congo has also adopted, in early 2010, a new law

on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Strengthening Congo's Forestry policy and institutions will require close collaboration with other donors working in the forest and related sectors in the country, such as the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the French Development Agency (AFD) and the European Union (EU).

In addition, Congo is involved in numerous regional programs related to the implementation of the CBD (e.g. *Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale* (COMIFAC), *Conférence sur les Ecosystèmes des Forêts Denses et Humides d'Afrique Centrale* (CEFDHAC), *Réseau des Aires Protégées d'Afrique Centrale* (RAPAC), *Partenariat pour les Forêts du Bassin du Congo* (PFBC), and the United Nations initiative committed to ensuring the long-term survival of Chimpanzees, Gorillas, Bonobo in their habitats in Africa known as Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP). Importantly, the project is in line with the COMIFAC 'Plan de Convergence', which seeks to guide the actions of member countries regarding the sustainable management of their forests. The project is also in line with the following national strategies and plans: DSCERP, PNAE, PAFN, NBSAP, PAN-LCD, National Biodiversity strategic Action Plan (NBSAP); and Forest and Wildlife Sub-Sector Strategy.

At the GEF level: This project is being submitted to the GEF as part of (i) the Biodiversity Focal Area – Programme 1: Improving Financial and Effective Management of the National Ecological Infrastructure; ii) the Programmatic Approach to Prevent the Extinction of Known Threatened Species. A key focus is on reducing poaching and illegal trafficking of threatened species, the subject matter of the GEF's Program 3, under the Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy. Various other GEF projects form part of the above-mentioned Programmatic Approach and are being submitted for Council approval by different GEF Agencies, with the World Bank playing a coordinating role. UNDP projects under the Programmatic Approach follow a 'national strategy methodology', i.e. they engage key national stakeholders in addressing the issue of preventing the extinction of known threatened species and fighting wildlife crime as an issue of governance and development, as much as it is an issue of NRM; and (iii) the Land Degradation Focal Area – Objective 2: Forest Landscapes: Program 3: Landscape Management and Restoration. In addition, it will contribute to the SFM Strategy through SFM: Reduce the Pressures on High Conservation Value Forests by Addressing the Drivers of Deforestation; and CCM-2: Demonstrate Systemic Impacts of Mitigation Options; Program 4: Promote conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks in forest, and other land-use, and supporting climate smart agriculture.

PART III: APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT BY GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT(S) AND GEF AGENCY(IES)

A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT⁷ OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S): (Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter(s) with this template. For SGP, use this SGP OFP endorsement letter).

NAME	POSITION	MINISTRY	DATE (MM/dd/yyyy)
Benjamin Nzaba Boungou	Director General of the Environment	MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND ENVIROMENT	03/13/2015

B. GEF AGENCY(IES) CERTIFICATION

This request has been prepared in accordance with GEF policies⁸ and procedures and meets the GEF criteria for project identification and preparation under GEF-6.

Agency Coordinator, Agency name	Signature	Date (MM/dd/yyyy)	Project Contact Person	Telephone	Email
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⁷ For regional and/or global projects in which participating countries are identified, OFP endorsement letters from these countries are required even though there may not be a STAR allocation associated with the project.

⁸ GEF policies encompass all managed trust funds, namely: GEFTF, LDCF, and SCCF