



Report Number: ICRR0024295

1. Project Data

Project ID

P161490

Project Name

Zambia Integrated Forest Landscape

Country

Zambia

Practice Area(Lead)

Agriculture and Food

L/C/TF Number(s)

IDA-60380,TF-A4645,TF-A4646

Closing Date (Original)

31-Aug-2022

Total Project Cost (USD)

32,108,430.80

Bank Approval Date

04-May-2017

Closing Date (Actual)

29-Feb-2024

IBRD/IDA (USD)

Grants (USD)

Original Commitment

32,800,458.00

15,800,458.00

Revised Commitment

32,800,458.00

15,800,458.00

Actual

33,168,121.67

15,800,458.00

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Project ID

P157521

Project Name

Zambia Integrated Forest Landscape (GEF) (P157521)

L/C/TF Number(s)

Closing Date (Original)

Total Project Cost (USD)

0

Bank Approval Date

04-May-2017

Closing Date (Actual)



	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	0.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	0.00	0.00
Actual	0.00	0.00

2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The project development objective (PDO) as stated in the PAD (Page 14) and Financing Agreement (Schedule 1, Page 5) was **“to improve landscape management and increase environmental and economic benefits for targeted rural communities in the Eastern Province and to improve the Recipient’s capacity to respond promptly and effectively to an Eligible Crisis or Emergency”**.

If the PDO will be parsed in the ICRR as below:

1. To improve landscape management and increase environmental and economic benefits for targeted rural communities in the Eastern Province
2. To improve the Recipient’s capacity to respond promptly and effectively to an Eligible Crisis or Emergency

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

No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

The project had four components:

1. Enabling Environment (appraisal cost: US\$6.35 million; actual cost: US\$6.25 million, all from the Biocarbon Fund’s Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes). The key activities included strengthening district-level planning capacity, supporting participatory land use planning at local levels, developing integrated district development plans, engaging agribusiness partners, establishing emissions baselines for the Eastern Province, creating benefit-sharing mechanisms for future carbon payments, developing monitoring and verification systems, preparing safeguard frameworks, and establishing the legal framework for REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation). The component



also supported institutional coordination and stakeholder engagement platforms like the Chipata Round Table.

2. Livelihood and Low-Carbon Investments (Appraisal cost: US\$23.30 million equivalent; Actual cost: US\$21.8 million) Under agriculture and forestry, activities included training farmers in climate-smart agriculture practices, establishing demonstration plots, promoting conservation agriculture and integrated soil fertility management, developing agroforestry systems, creating community forest management groups, implementing forest management plans, supporting fire management, establishing community forestry enterprises, promoting improved cookstoves, and regularizing land tenure rights. The wildlife management activities included strengthening protected area management (including Lukusuzi National Park), supporting community resource boards, establishing community conservation areas, mitigating human-wildlife conflict, and developing binational conservation initiatives with Malawi.

3. Project Management (Appraisal cost: US\$3.15 million; Actual cost: US\$4.75 million). Activities focused on the operational aspects of project implementation including preparing annual work plans and budgets, managing procurement and financial processes, monitoring safeguards compliance, conducting monitoring and evaluation, managing project staff, coordinating between national and provincial levels, maintaining project records and documentation, implementing the communication strategy, managing stakeholder engagement, and preparing progress reports. The component supported both the National Project Unit and the Provincial Project Implementation Unit.

4. Contingent Emergency Response (appraisal cost: US\$0; Actual cost: US\$0). While this zero-budget component had no ongoing activities, it aimed to establish the procedures and mechanisms to rapidly reallocate project funds in case of an eligible crisis or emergency. Activities included setting up emergency response protocols, establishing coordination mechanisms for crisis response, creating procedures for rapid fund reallocation, and maintaining readiness for emergency implementation if needed.

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

Project Cost. The total project cost was US\$33.16 million (ICR datasheet), which was slightly higher than the appraisal cost of US\$ 32.80. The difference of US\$367,663 was due to variations in SDR conversion rate (as explained by the TTL on December 11, 2024).

Financing: At appraisal, the Project had three sources of funding: a) the Biocarbon Technical Assistance Trust Fund (Grant of US\$7.75 million), b) the Global Environment Facility (Grant of US\$8.05 million), and c) IDA (US\$17 million). By completion, the project fully disbursed the appraisal allocation under the two trust funds and exceeded the IDA allocation by US\$ 367,663 due to exchange rate differences in SDR conversion.

Borrower contribution. There was no direct financial contribution from the Borrower.

Dates: The Project was approved by the Board of Executive Directors on May 4, 2017, and became effective on January 30, 2018, with an original closing date of August 31, 2022 which was extended by 18 months to February 29, 2024.



Other Changes. There were two level-two restructurings during project implementation. These did not involve changes to the project components or results framework.

1. **August 21, 2021.** A level 2 restructuring was completed to increase expenditure percentages, reallocate funds to cover project management overruns, and adjust oversight responsibilities to align with the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment. These changes were necessary to increase disbursement flexibility across components and respond to cost differences.
2. **September 12, 2022.** A level 2 restructuring was completed to extend the closing date from August 31, 2022, to February 29, 2024 to allow the completion of the Emission Reduction Purchase Agreement (ERPA), address safeguards issues and complete livelihoods support for relocated communities in Lukusuzi National Park. The restructuring was warranted as it addressed legacy issues related to resettlement, addressed delays caused by Covid-19, and supported Zambia's carbon funding initiative.

Split Rating. Since the PDO remained unchanged throughout the project lifetime and there were no revisions to the PDO indicators or components, a split evaluation is not required. The project maintained its original components and objectives but made adjustments to component costs and implementation timeframes.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

Country Context. Zambia is one of Africa's most resource-rich countries. Roughly two-thirds of Zambia's land area is forested, and nearly 40% of the land area is contained within a network of national parks and forest reserves, and co-managed areas that overlap with customary community lands. Rural livelihoods depend heavily on small-scale agriculture, harvesting forest products, and use of wildlife and other natural resources. At the time of appraisal, the country faced significant poverty and developmental challenges exacerbated by economic downturns, climate change, and high rural poverty rates, particularly in the Eastern Province, where 76.6% of residents lived in poverty. Zambia's natural resources, particularly in the Eastern Province, played a critical role in rural livelihoods, with most of the population dependent on them for survival. However, unsustainable practices such as deforestation, forest degradation, and poor agricultural methods contributed to significant environmental challenges, including reduced soil fertility and biodiversity loss. The project targeted the Eastern Province where poverty levels and natural resource endowments were high.

Alignment with Government Strategy: The PDO aligned with Zambia's Revised Sixth National Development Plan, emphasizing sustainable land management, economic diversification, and poverty reduction. The project supported national priorities such as forest conservation, climate resilience, and agricultural productivity while fostering community-based resource management in the Eastern Province. It was also consistent with Zambia's National REDD+ Strategy and Nationally Determined Contribution, as it supported the goals of reducing emissions from deforestation and sustainable land use and forestry management.



Alignment with World Bank Strategy: The project was consistent with the World Bank's Country Partnership Strategy for Zambia (FY13-FY16), particularly Objective 1 (reducing poverty and vulnerability)

and Objective 2 (improving infrastructure for growth and employment). The project addressed sustainable forest management, community livelihoods, and low-carbon investments. These efforts aligned with the Bank's Climate Change and Forest Action Plans, and the goals of the BioCarbon Fund by promoting emission reductions and landscape conservation. At completion, the project remained relevant under the CPF FY19-23, objectives 1.1, "*making the agri-food sector more productive and better connected to markets*" and 1.2: "*making rural communities more resilient to climate and environmental shocks*". The project's target area aligned with the Government's requests for investments in rural development and growth.

Previous World Bank Experience: The project built on lessons learned from other initiatives such as the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR), and the COMACO Landscape Management Project, and the Forest Investment Program. The COMACO project piloted climate-smart landscape management approach through establishing community-conservation areas, setting up the foundations for emissions reduction payment scheme, and introducing alternative crops that reduce deforestation pressures. The project built on these experiences to adopt an integrated landscape approach that combined forestry, agriculture, and livelihoods with climate change mitigation and resilience.

PDO Level. The PDO was responsive to the country context, addressing the Eastern Province's high biodiversity and poverty rates. Building on the Bank's prior sector engagements in Zambia, the emphasis on improved forest governance and community livelihoods was appropriately ambitious. By integrating goals like poverty reduction, emission reductions, ecosystem resilience, and emergency response capacity, the project tackled multiple dimensions of forest governance although it also risked diluting its focus.

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

To improve landscape management and increase environmental and economic benefits for targeted rural communities in the Eastern Province.

Rationale

Theory of Change

The project's composite development objective encompassed three interlinked goals: sustainable landscape management, enhanced environmental benefits, and improved economic outcomes for rural communities in target areas. These objectives were interconnected - sustainable landscape management practices expected



to generate environmental and economic benefits for rural communities, while economic initiatives like climate-smart agriculture and rural livelihood programs were to contribute to landscape sustainability by reducing deforestation pressures. At the same time, each objective expected to have distinct results. For example, sustainable landscape management were to improve land-use planning systems and institutional capacity; environmental benefits would manifest in increased biodiversity indices and reduced greenhouse gas emissions; and economic benefits would result in higher household incomes and new enterprises.

The project's input activities included establishing Community Forest Management Groups, developing forest management plans, regularizing land tenure rights, and establishing emissions reduction frameworks and monitoring systems. Climate-smart agriculture activities included technical assistance, capacity building for extension officers and lead farmers, and development of Farmer-Led Irrigation Schemes. The project also supported income-generating activities like beekeeping and livestock rearing. These activities were expected to lead to enhanced landscape governance systems, better stakeholder coordination, adoption of sustainable farming techniques, and diversified sources of livelihoods. In the medium term, improved agricultural productivity and alternative income sources would reduce deforestation activities, and improved governance of landscapes would enhance community ownership of natural resources. These changes would ultimately lead to reduced deforestation, improved biodiversity, enhanced ecosystem services, and better economic outcomes for communities.

The project's theory of change presented a logical and holistic approach. It had complementary and reinforcing activities across the three objectives. However, the theory of change relied on a few key assumptions: it presumed that formalized plans and tenure would automatically lead to behavior change without fully addressing implementation barriers; it assumed sustained adoption of climate-smart practices without fully accounting for post-project sustainability; and it may have overestimated the speed at which complex outcomes like income diversification and carbon market revenues could be achieved. Additionally, some aspects lacked clear baseline data and targets in the results framework, particularly for alternative livelihood activities, which created challenges in verifying and attributing outcomes.

Outputs

- 28 Community Forest Management Agreements were established between community forest management groups and the Forestry Department, exceeding the target of 15.
- The Emission Reductions Purchase Agreement (ERPA) was signed on June 17, 2024, meeting the appraisal target for this indicator.
- 145,379 hectares were brought under integrated land use plans, exceeding the target of 52,000 hectares (baseline: 0 ha). This indicator captured the areas covered through land use plans but not necessarily the effective implementation of the plans. While exceeding the project target, this achievement represents only 2% of the total landscape of the Eastern Province (approximately 6,910,600 hectares).
- Four key instruments for enabling emissions reduction funding initiatives were adopted, meeting the target. These instruments, including the GHG baseline, Measuring, Reporting, and Verification system (MRV) for agriculture and forest emissions, benefit-sharing plan, and social and environmental safeguards assessment (SESA), were prepared and adopted as planned. Each instrument was assigned one point for preparation and two points for adoption, with all instruments fully adopted by year five. These instruments support the National REDD+ strategy, guiding actions in agriculture, energy, and land use.



- 224,071 people benefited from project activities, exceeding the target of 214,955, with nearly half of them being women, surpassing the 30% target.
- Partnerships with 3 technical service providers were established, exceeding the target of two private sector partnerships. The companies signed contracts to support value chain development activities in wildlife, agriculture, and forestry.

Outcomes

- 72,840 hectares of forest area were brought under sustainable management practices, surpassing the target of 66,000 hectares (baseline: 0). Of this, 65,032 hectares were community forest lands, while the remainder comprised state-owned forests. Sustainable management practices included the development and implementation of forest management plans and activities such as community forestry enterprises and fire prevention/management initiatives. The indicator had an initial baseline of zero, which limits its ability to convey progress relative to pre-existing conditions or ongoing forest management efforts prior to the project.
- A net reduction in deforestation of 8,745 hectares was achieved, which is significantly below the target of 24,170 hectares. The project team clarified that the underachievement is a reflection of an unrealistic target established for this indicator.
- A Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) score of 62 was achieved using the standardized indicator. This exceeded the target of 60 (baseline: 30). The METT is a standard system for assessing protected area effectiveness, which evaluates six management elements: context, planning, inputs, process, outputs, and outcomes. The score was established for the Lukusuzi National Park, but other national parks and forest reserve areas covered by the project were not included. The ICR does not explain why this is the case.
- The project did not report progress on the enabling environment for wildlife conservation and community engagement index. The team clarified that the indicator was not well designed and the methodology for calculating the index, which reflected community attitudes toward wildlife and government policy, was unclear. Despite plans to revise it a year into implementation, the methodology remained unclear at completion, with the baseline value of 48% retained as the achieved value.
- 162,334 hectares of agricultural land was brought under climate-smart agricultural (CSA) practices, significantly exceeding the target of 59,000 hectares (baseline: 0). While this result demonstrates strong adoption rates, a critical assessment highlights potential issues. The assumption that 50% of farmers receiving project assets and services would adopt CSA practices on one hectare per farmer may overestimate adoption without robust verification. While a combination of at least two CSA practices is required to meet the indicator, there is limited detail on the specific practices implemented and their effectiveness in diverse agro-ecological contexts.
- 162,063 people in targeted communities reported monetary and non-monetary benefits, surpassing the target of 40,000 beneficiaries (baseline: 0), with 47% being women against a target of 30%. Beneficiaries accessed project-provided assets and services, including matching grants, extension services, training on sustainable practices, and agricultural inputs. These efforts contributed to increased crop yields, income from sustainable forest management, and new benefit streams from activities such as small livestock rearing, hatcheries, and irrigation schemes.
- Crop yield increased by 31.3% for maize and soybeans, surpassing the target of 30% (baseline: 0). This result reflects a positive outcome, with beneficiaries adopting climate-smart agriculture practices for maize and soybeans in the Eastern Province. However, while the yield increase is noteworthy, the report lacks details on the factors contributing to this result beyond the adoption of CSA practices. It



would be important to further assess whether the increase is sustainable, and whether it applies uniformly across all beneficiaries or is concentrated among those with better access to resources and training.

- 73,052 farmers adopted new technologies, surpassing the initial target of 59,103 farmers. Of these adopters, 44% were women, exceeding the gender inclusion target of 30%.

Beyond the results framework indicators, the following intermediate results were also achieved:

- Tree nurseries were established in four forest areas.
- Offices and accommodations for forest officers were constructed.
- Supported 36 Community Forest Management Groups (CFMGs) in total, of which 28 were recognized and signed agreements with the Forest Department.
- Training of 599 honorary forest officers (HFOs) to support the protection and management of forest areas in their respective communities alongside the FD and the Zambia Police Services.
- Construction of administrative offices, guard houses, entry gates, and a community eco-lodge completed
- Existing loop roads were upgraded, six water holes were developed as well as boundary fencing, and beaconing to address encroachment and human-wildlife conflict.
- Equipment was procured such as patrol vehicles, GPS devices, and road compactors improved patrol effectiveness, contributing to reduced poaching and enhanced park operations.
- 478 farmer field schools were established.
- 81 community groups received subgrants totaling US\$5.3 million. Supported enterprises included beekeeping, fish farming, goat rearing, poultry production, horticulture, and agro-processing.
- 21 Farmer-Led Irrigation Schemes were established.
- 1,568 farmers were supported with livestock vaccination programs.
- 678 hectares of pasture and fodder banks were created.
- Energy-efficient alternatives were promoted, including the distribution of 156 cookstoves to public institutions, training of 157 individuals in cookstove construction, and construction of 4,805 cookstoves for community households.
- 61% of the project beneficiaries received support through demonstrations, mentorship, workshops, and networking events that supported the widespread adoption of practices (according to the end line evaluation report).
- Climate-smart practices such as the incorporation of nitrogen-fixing trees, such as *Gliricidia sepium* and *Faidherbia albida*, into farming led to the planting of 5.26 million seedlings.

In addition, the ICR collected data on maize and soybean yield levels in project areas, which showed that project beneficiaries achieved higher yields than their respective provincial averages.

The indicator for the validation of the manual on customary land rights was not reported in the ICR. The manual was intended to regulate use rights and issue certificates based on pilot experiences. The project team informed IEG on February 28, 2025 that the indicator was met and the validation took place in October 2020. The ICR notes that 64,944 hectares of land rights were transferred to empower communities to manage and benefit from their natural resources.

Overall, the project met or exceeded most of its indicators. It made good use of index indicators such as the standardized METT score to capture outcomes on protected area management effectiveness, although it only



covered one protected area. It also achieved milestone results such as areas that were covered by land-use plans, agreements signed, GHG measurement tools developed, and “sustainable management practices” defined in terms of forest management plans. However, the project fell significantly short on net deforestation reduction. Yield and productivity levels for major crops have improved, livelihood activities have been initiated, and the emissions reduction payment scheme is likely to produce financial benefits for the communities. Efficacy toward this objective is therefore rated as **Substantial**, with moderate shortcomings due to inadequate evidence of outcomes achieved related to wildlife conservation, community co-management schemes, implementation of forest management plans, and land tenure.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

To improve the Recipient’s capacity to respond promptly and effectively to an Eligible Crisis or Emergency

Rationale

The Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC) was not activated, as there was no crisis that required its use.

Rating

Not Rated/Not Applicable

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

The project achieved substantial progress against its objectives, exceeding many output targets, such as the establishment of community forest management agreements, adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices, and the signing of the Emission Reductions Purchase Agreement. However, it faced challenges in meeting some outcome targets, particularly in reducing deforestation and improving the enabling environment for wildlife conservation. Despite gaps in attribution due to missing baseline data and target revisions, the project achieved key milestones toward increased environmental and economic benefits, enhanced local governance, and strengthened community ownership. Overall, the project’s efficacy is rated as **Substantial**, with shortcomings related to deforestation and wildlife conservation.

Overall Efficacy Rating



Substantial

5. Efficiency

Economic Analysis

At the appraisal stage, the project's efficiency was assessed using several crop budgets for 'without project' (WOP) and 'with project' (WP) scenarios to assess the incremental net benefits of a household cultivating the respective crops on 1 ha of land. The methodology included: a) an analysis of three benefit streams - incremental net benefits from improved crop productivity valued at economic costs, benefits from sustainable forest management (afforestation and woodlots), and environmental benefits from reduced GHG emissions. The analysis generated an economic NPV of \$282 million over 20 years and an IRR of 175% when including all benefit streams. The assessment assumed high social value for carbon benefits as excluding this assumption, the NPV was calculated at \$25.6 million with a 17% IRR. When considering only agricultural productivity benefits, the NPV was lower at \$14.6 million with a 14% IRR.

At completion, the economic assessment methodology was largely consistent with the ex-ante approach and used the same 20-year cash flow model, standard conversion factors, and maintained a 6% social discount rate from the PAD. The ex-post analysis considered actual outcomes achieved under CSA, forest management, woodlots, and beekeeping. For example, a yield increase of 19-34% was considered based on the project's completion evaluation, which was more realistic than the 40% yield increase assumed at the time of appraisal. The ex-post analysis calculated a 29% ERR as a base case without applying any sensitivity analysis. This was calculated based on actual results achieved including: 162,334 ha under climate-smart agricultural practices, 72,840 ha of forests under sustainable management practices, 115 ha of woodlots and 500 households engaged in beekeeping, against a cost of US\$27.9 million. After including social and carbon mitigation benefits, the ex-post ERR increased to 47-60%.

Administrative Efficiency

The project management costs increased initially with \$95,000 being relocated from component 1 activities to cover PIU costs. Consolidating two separate Project Implementation Units (PIUs) into a single provincial-level unit during implementation reduced management costs. The project extension of 18 months extended the project implementation cycle from 5 years to 6.5 years but did not lead to additional costs.

The decentralization of procurement to the provincial level mitigated initial delays and improved implementation speed. Despite challenges from COVID-19 and government procurement processes, the project adapted by using virtual platforms and conducting smaller community gatherings.

Overall, the project demonstrated efficient use of resources to achieve intended outcomes. Despite initial challenges, including delays and the need for adjustments, the project adapted. The project efficiency is therefore rated as 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	✓	17.00	85.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	29.00	85.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

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

6. Outcome

The project was highly relevant to the country context. The project achieved substantial progress against its objectives, exceeding many output targets, such as the establishment of community forest management agreements, adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices, and the signing of the Emission Reductions Purchase Agreement. However, it faced challenges in meeting some outcome targets, particularly in reducing deforestation and improving the enabling environment for wildlife conservation. Efficacy is rated as Substantial with moderate shortcomings. Efficiency was rated as Substantial. Overall outcome is rated Satisfactory.

a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

Capacity Risks. The project built on the COMACO landscape management model and successfully trained 338 extension officers, 10,755 Lead Farmers, and 107,550 farmers on CSA practices. It established 478 farmer field schools and 28 Community Forest Management Groups. However, sustaining these institutional structures requires ongoing support and resources. While the approved upcoming project provides continuity, the ICR highlights risks around maintaining the technical capacity for carbon monitoring and reporting systems, particularly the MRV framework. The certification of Honorary Forest Officers and institutionalization of community forest management approaches offer some mitigation of capacity risks.

Governance Risks. Though the ERPA was signed on June 17, 2024, implementation faces several governance challenges. The project developed a Benefit Sharing Plan and established systems for monitoring and verification, but their effectiveness remains untested. The ICR notes potential risks in managing carbon payments across 72,840 ha of forest under sustainable management, particularly given the complex institutional arrangements involving multiple stakeholders. The transfer of land rights totaling 64,944 ha provides some foundation for benefit sharing, but challenges remain in areas with overlapping land claims.

Social Risks. While the project achieved high community participation (224,071 beneficiaries versus target of 214,955) and women's engagement (47% versus 30% target), sustaining community support requires continued economic benefits. The ICR documents increased monetary benefits for 15% of beneficiaries and



non-monetary benefits for 73%, but notes risks if alternative livelihood activities don't generate sufficient income. The success of initiatives like beekeeping and CSA practices will be crucial for maintaining community buy-in for forest conservation. Additionally, the project did not have an explicit focus on marginalized communities or ethnic minorities under the land management plans. There is a risk of conflicts over management of community resources.

Market Risks. The ICR provides limited discussion of carbon market risks, though these are significant for the project's long-term sustainability. The emissions reduction program targeting 7,837,548 tCO₂e over 20 years depends on stable carbon prices and reliable buyers. Market volatility, regulatory shifts, and uncertain buyer commitments threaten revenue stability and reinvestment in conservation.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The project continued the Bank's engagements on forest and biodiversity conservation which was a highly relevant national and global priority. The project design reinforced previous operations by scaling up piloted activities on community co-management schemes, community land ownership, and livelihoods development. The project adopted a holistic approach aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The Bank team conducted capacity needs assessments on fiduciary aspects and identified issues that needed to be resolved such as the need to connect ministry software platforms and to strengthen internal financial controls. The Borrower prepared a procurement plan, and a procurement module in the project implementation manual, with additional staff training planned to strengthen capacity. With regards to safeguards, a broad assessment was carried out but the detailed environmental safeguards assessment was delayed into implementation. Although consultations were completed, resettlement issues later came up during implementation, which could indicate insufficient assessment of the target areas. The implementation arrangements involving three agencies (Forestry Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Department of National Parks and Wildlife) posed potential transaction costs and delays. The project mitigated these risks through establishing joint a steering committee. Having dual PIUs caused coordination issues, unclear roles between national and provincial PIUs, and slow progress. An M&E baseline survey was not prepared at the time of preparation and was delayed throughout implementation. Two performance indicators were established but were challenging to measure and remained unadjusted even at project restructuring.

Quality-at-Entry Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

The Bank conducted training sessions for the PIU and provincial departments on safeguards and fiduciary requirements (ICR para 55), though the frequency of these sessions was not specified. During



implementation, two restructurings were utilized to address implementation bottlenecks by consolidating two separate PIUs into a single provincial-level unit, which enhanced efficiency. The project implementation period was extended by 18 months, increasing the timeline from 5 years to 6.5 years without incurring additional costs. This allowed for the completion of activities including the signing of the emissions reduction payment scheme. However, the restructurings missed the opportunity to revisit some indicators to establish baselines and clarify calculation methodologies.

The Bank team actively addressed procurement challenges throughout implementation, managing new government regulations, a suspended procurement unit in 2021, and disruptions caused by COVID-19. Their efforts enabled the PIU to maintain a Satisfactory procurement rating by ensuring compliance with regulations and minimizing cancellations. Decentralizing procurement to the provincial level was a key strategy that improved efficiency. To adapt to COVID-19 restrictions, the team leveraged virtual platforms and organized smaller community gatherings to continue capacity-building activities effectively.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The M&E design was forward thinking on sustainable landscape management and environmental conservation. It made use of a mix of indicators to capture outputs, milestones, and outcomes. Milestone indicators, such as areas under climate-smart agriculture and land use plans, were complemented by outcome indicators like deforestation rates in project areas. Index indicators, including the management effectiveness tracking tool, benefits to people in forest areas, and wildlife conservation measures, helped track behavior change. While the wildlife conservation indicator faced calculation challenges, it demonstrated an effort toward assessing the enabling environment for human-wildlife coexistence.

However, some of the benchmarks were based on assumptions without a verification mechanism. For example, the project assumed that 50% of farmers who received CSA training or assets would automatically adopt CSA practices on one hectare of land. In addition, the absence of baselines limited the ability to attribute results to project activities. On livelihood activities, while the project provided subgrants worth US\$5.3 million to 81 community groups for enterprises like beekeeping, fish farming, and agro-processing, the results framework did not include indicators to track the extent to which such enterprises would be functional or profitable a year or two after the community groups received funds.

While the project included gender-disaggregated indicators, it set a low target of 30% for women beneficiaries of various services and assets. Considering that over 75% of the agriculture sector in Zambia is comprised of women, these targets could have been more ambitious. Measures to track social inclusion



of potential marginalized groups were absent but the results framework did introduce a benchmark on the grievance mechanism.

b. M&E Implementation

The project achieved some of its M&E actions during implementation, including hiring and training M&E officers and establishing a geo-tagged tracking system for real time monitoring, although the extent of this system's coverage was not clear. The ICR did not report any progress with respect to community monitoring, but efforts were made to work with the national statistics agency to collect data and build their capacity. This demonstrates the project team's resourcefulness in leveraging the national agency and improving M&E capacity beyond project implementation.

The project also conducted an end-line evaluation, *Athena Infonomics and Palm Associates, End Line Project Evaluation 2024*, referenced in Annex 10. This evaluation verified key results, including agricultural area under CSA practices, a 61% adoption rate of CSA practices among beneficiaries, and details on women's empowerment through the Sinda Women's Association. The evaluation was a good step in overcoming some of the M&E shortcomings discussed in the above section (M&E quality).

Some shortcomings remained. For example, the May 2020 mission had recommended revising the indicator "*enabling environment for improved wildlife conservation and community engagement diagnostic tool*" to better reflect impacts at the protected area level, but this was not done during the 2022 restructuring. The Bank team opted not to modify the indicator, citing the approaching closing date and that there was already sufficient data available to measure impacts.

c. M&E Utilization

The M&E system provided regular reporting through six-monthly operational data updates, annual M&E surveys conducted by ZAMSTAT, and quarterly reports. The ICR does not specify how findings were shared with community-level stakeholders. M&E data informed two project restructurings including decisions to consolidate the dual PIU structure and extend the project timeline. The M&E findings contributed to designing the follow-on Eastern Province Jurisdictional Sustainable Landscape Project (EP-JSLP), approved in May 2024, particularly regarding community forest management and CSA adoption rates.

The ICR suggested that using third-party monitoring during COVID-19 restrictions could have helped with M&E implementation during that period. Despite this, the team made use of virtual platforms and smaller community engagement groups to overcome these challenges and resumed site visits after the pandemic.

Overall, M&E design and implementation had some shortcomings such as weak methodologies for some indicators (lack of verification methods for CSA adoption, unclear benchmarks for wildlife conservation) and missing indicators for livelihood outcomes (although crop yield and financial benefits/grants were tracked, there was no verification of whether the livelihood activities were functional a year or two after financial support). At the same time, the project exceeded standard practice in several ways: by using the METT score, tracking deforestation and crop yields, and tracking sustainable forest management. It also completed an independent completion evaluation which deserves



recognition. Therefore, the project M&E quality is rated as **Substantial with moderate shortcomings** as noted above.

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was classified as Environmental Category B, indicating that significant or irreversible adverse environmental impacts were not expected. The project anticipated having overall positive environmental outcomes, with limited adverse effects. Throughout implementation, the project maintained a Satisfactory safeguards rating. Initially, five safeguards policies were considered relevant and a sixth one was triggered during implementation.

Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01. The team prepared an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) to assess risks and outline processes for compliance. Key proactive measures included updating the ESMF in November 2021 to reflect evolving environmental contexts and developing site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs).

Natural Habitats -OP/BP 4.04. The project included forest- and wildlife-related activities. The ICR did not report any adverse impacts on natural habitats.

Forests - OP/BP 4.36. This was triggered because project activities directly impacted forests and forest management. The project also supported the legal framework for REDD+, including forest management policies and safeguards, and a national Safeguards Information System.

Pest Management - OP 4.09. The agriculture activities involved the use of pesticides. No positive or adverse impacts were reported in the ICR.

Physical Cultural Resources - OP/BP 4.11. Archeological or other culturally relevant items could possibly be found or exist near selected subproject sites during project implementation, particularly during civil works activities. The ICR did not report any such issues.

Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12. This policy was not initially triggered but was activated during implementation to address a pending government action to protect Lukusuzi National Park and to ensure proper resettlement of individuals moved from Lukusuzi, while maintaining environmental sustainability, and mitigating social impacts. The RAP provided relocated families with land for farming, settlements, and social infrastructure, leading to more secure land tenure and improved livelihoods.

Grievance Redress Mechanism: The project established a grievance mechanism and included an indicator to track the share of grievances received which were addressed by the project. However, while the indicator achieved its target of addressing all grievances, the ICR did not provide a breakdown of how many grievances were received and what issues they were related to.



b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial Management. According to the ICR, the project submitted satisfactory quarterly financial and monitoring reports. Financial management was rated Moderately Satisfactory at closing. The project fully disbursed its allocated budget. External audits, although delayed, provided unqualified opinions. However, financial management challenges included weaknesses in controls over account retirements and overdrawing of grant categories. The accounting system was upgraded to SAGE Evolution.

Procurement. According to the PAD, the World Bank procurement policy applied to the project. During appraisal, the team carried out required actions to prepare for implementation: a Procurement Risk Assessment was undertaken in December 2016 which rated the risk as Moderate; a detailed Procurement Plan was developed for the first 18 months and approved by the Bank before negotiations; and a procurement module was included in the Project Implementation Manual. The project mostly involved small procurement packages. The National Project Unit and Provincial Project Implementation Unit were assessed to have adequate procurement capacity, though additional training was planned for staff once identified.

During implementation, the project faced some procurement challenges, including new government regulations introducing extended approval processes, suspension of the procurement unit in 2021, and COVID-19 disruptions. Despite these obstacles, the PIU maintained a Satisfactory procurement rating by procuring most goods and services in line with regulations.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

None

d. Other

11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Shortcomings in the Bank Performance at entry
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Substantial	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

12. Lessons



Based on the ICR, several important lessons emerged from the project's implementation, including:

Streamlined management structures improve efficiency - the consolidation from two PIUs to a single Provincial PIU improved project coordination and efficiency. This experience suggests future projects operating in specific geographic areas should note that having dual PIU structures can create unclear reporting lines and inefficiencies.

Long-term engagement through mutually reinforcing operations over time enable positive synergies. The project built on previous initiatives like the COMACO Landscape Management Project and leveraged its approaches to community-based natural resource management and climate-smart agriculture. This continuity allowed the project to scale up pilot interventions. The project continued building on the preparatory work completed under COMACO and previous operations to finalize the ERP arrangements. The project's activities have in turn laid the groundwork for the follow-on Eastern Province Jurisdictional Sustainable Landscape Project (EP-JSLP), particularly in establishing community forest management structures, developing carbon monitoring systems, and building institutional capacity.

Projects that combine multiple landscape interventions should strike a balance between comprehensive coverage and implementation capacity. The project design incorporated community co-management schemes, land tenure reforms, emissions reduction frameworks, human-wildlife conflict prevention, and alternative livelihood activities, but managing these diverse components, involving multiple stakeholders created challenges. For example, while the project provided subgrants worth US\$5.3 million to 81 community groups for enterprises like beekeeping, fish farming, and agro-processing, the ICR provides limited evidence of their sustainability or scale of impact. The project's achievements were stronger in areas with concentrated focus, such as climate-smart agriculture where it reached 162,334 hectares, compared to more modest results in areas like woodlot development which only reached 115 hectares against an initial target of 10,000. This suggests that while integrated landscape approaches are conceptually sound, projects need to define more focused intervention areas.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR provided clear information on project activities and included a thoughtful discussion of project efficacy and outcomes. It offered adequate detail on implementation experiences, with consistent analysis. The reconstructed theory of change acknowledged key assumptions, such as community participation, institutional strengthening, and government ownership. The ICR used multiple sources to provide evidence including the endline evaluation, the PIU data, and information from the national statistics agency.

However, there were some shortcomings. The ICR lacked comprehensive reporting on safeguards. The indicator for the validation of the manual on customary land rights, which was intended to regulate use rights



and issue certificates, was omitted in the Results Framework. The overall quality of the ICR was rated Substantial.

a. Quality of ICR Rating
Substantial