Report Number: ICRR0024106

1. Project Data

Project ID P162789	**Project Name** CI - FIP	
Country Cote d'Ivoire	**Practice Area(Lead)** Environment, Natural Resources & the Blue Economy	
L/C/TF Number(s) TF-A6248,TF-A6861	**Closing Date (Original)** 31-May-2023	**Total Project Cost (USD)** 14,376,088.56
Bank Approval Date 26-Jan-2018	**Closing Date (Actual)** 31-May-2023	

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	15,000,000.00	15,000,000.00
Revised Commitment	15,000,000.00	15,000,000.00
Actual	14,376,088.56	14,376,088.56

Prepared by	Reviewed by	ICR Review Coordinator	Group
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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The Project Development Objective (PDO) of the Forest Investment Program (FIP) as articulated in the Loan Agreement (page 6) and in the Strategic Climate Fund Forest Investment Program Grant Agreement (page 7) were identical to the one stated in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD, paragraph 18) and aimed to:

"Conserve and increase the forest stock and improve access to sources of income from sustainable forest management for selected communities in target zones."

Parsing the PDO. The PDO will be parsed according to the following two objectives:

1. To conserve and increase the forest stock for selected communities in target zones.

2. To improve access to sources of income from sustainable forest management for selected communities in target zones.

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

22-Feb-2022

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

The PDO was supported by the following three components:

1. Sustainable Management of the Gazetted Forests (appraisal cost: US$11.94 million, actual cost: US$10.60 million). This component aimed to contribute to the implementation of zero-deforestation agriculture in Gazetted Forests (GFs) and their sustainable management in an inclusive and participatory manner with forest-dependent communities and promoting incentive mechanisms that would provide alternative revenues to communities thereby reducing human pressure on protected areas. It included three sub-components:

1.1 Participatory development and implementation of GFs management plans. This sub-component aimed to support the National Forest Development Agency (SODEFOR) with the participatory development of GF management plans through the mobilization of village associations for GF co-management. It would finance awareness-raising activities at the local level through participatory workshops and trainings to finalize the establishment of the Local Co-management Committee (CLCG) with support from the National Non-Governmental Organization (NGO-Ivorian Observatory for Natural Resources Management) and SODEFOR.

1.2. Development and implementation of an incentive system to reduce pressure on GFs. This sub-component would pilot a performance-based incentive mechanism in villages adjacent to selected GFs to provide alternative revenues to local communities in order to reduce human pressure on natural resources. The project would finance performance-based agroforestry and afforestation sub-projects through: (i) provision of upfront subsidies to individuals or communities engaged in the program; (ii) scheduled payment triggered by: (a) the effective introduction of a certain number of tree seedlings in farms (for example 50 to 100 trees by ha – a price tag would be fixed by tree planted); (b) survival rate after a certain period (up to five years); and (iii) conservation of the trees in the long term.

1.3. Support to voluntary return from the South West to the Center. This sub-component aimed to support the current trend of individual voluntary returns from the South West to their native lands in the Center given the high potential for agroforestry and reforestation there at this time.

2. Support to Sustainable Management of the Tai National Park (appraisal cost: US$2.00 million, actual cost: US$2.34 million). This component would be implemented through two subcomponents:
2.1. Enhancing surveillance capacity for OIPR. This sub-component aimed to enhance the Ivorian Office for Parks and Reserves (OIPR) surveillance capacity of the Taï National Park (TNP) to reduce pressure on the park and maintain its integrity. The component would finance acquisition of surveillance vehicles and remote sensing equipment including surveillance cameras and drones. It would also finance small works to rehabilitate access roads in order to facilitate patrolling by park rangers. Surveillance missions operating costs would also be supported by the project and monitored by the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART).

2.2. Support to enhance park communities' livelihoods. In conjunction with surveillance activities inside the TNP, OIPR would be engaged in several initiatives with local communities to reduce human pressure on the park, including awareness raising campaigns, capacity building of local communities to engage in alternative activities such as vegetable gardening, agroforestry, and reforestation with fruit trees, fodder, fuelwood trees and other nutritional tree species that benefit women. These initiatives have helped reduced human pressure on the TNP to a small extent but if scaled up, it would be expected that the impact would be more visible. The project would therefore support enhancement of these activities to reach a wider number of local communities to secure park integrity. The sub-component would also finance the rehabilitation of degraded low lands in the vicinity of the TNP due to illegal gold panning through assisted natural regeneration.

3. Project Management and Monitoring and Evaluation (appraisal cost: US$1.06 million, actual cost: US$2.06 million). The component would be implemented through the two sub-components below:

3.1. Project management. This sub-component would finance the overall daily administration of both WB and ADB projects to: (i) ensure coordination among the different entities involved with project implementation in compliance with the WB fiduciary requirements and; (ii) ensure that regular M&E is carried out and that results are fed back into decision making on project implementation.

3.2. Independent monitoring. To ensure an independent evaluation of the project's results, a civil society team would be mandated by the project to carry out independent monitoring on the implementation of several aspects of the project including traceability, monitoring and contracting between SODEFOR and farmers.

Revised/Cancelled activities.

1. Sustainable Management of the Gazette Forests.

- Cancelled activity: (i) under sub-component 1.1, the activity to reforest 5,000 ha in the three targeted GFs in the center was discontinued, cancelling reforestation of 1,600 ha. This modification was decided during the first restructuring of the project due to the limited capacities of local communities and SODEFOR to both extend the plantations and ensure the maintenance of those already carried out. Remaining funds were redirected for maintenance activities of the 3,400 hectares established plantations.

- Revised and moved activity: (ii) under sub-component 1.1 to reforest 15,000 ha through agroforestry contracts between SODEFOR with individual Cocoa farmers was changed to agroforest concessions with the Cocoa industry and moved to sub-component 1.2. The reason was due to reclassification of targeted GFs from Category 2 to Category 3 (degraded by more than 75%), which implied that only concessions with the Cocoa industry could be considered going forward.
- Cancelled Sub-component 1.3 (Support to voluntary return initiative from the Southwest to the Center) due to non-alignment with the Government's Strategy for the Preservation, Rehabilitation and Extension of Forests (SPREF), which planned to undertake involuntary resettlement.

2. Support to sustainable management of the Taï National Park.

- Revised activity: under sub-component 2.1 Enhancing Surveillance capacity of OIPR to include rehabilitation of four park rangers' quarters and 100 km of access road to facilitate surveillance.
- Revised activity: under sub-component 2.2 Support to enhance park communities' livelihoods to increase the number of Income-Generating Activities (IGAs) by extending them to more park dependent communities, especially women and youths.

3. Project Management and Monitoring and Evaluation.

- Revised activity: Increased budget reallocation of US$1 million to sub-component 3.1 (Project Management) to ensure sufficient resources to cover project management costs and timely closure of project activities.

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

Project Cost. The total project cost was estimated at US$15.00 million. The actual cost according to the ICR (Data Sheet, page 2) was US$14.38 million or about 96% of the appraisal estimate.

Financing. The project was fully financed through a Grant worth US$15.00 million from the the Strategic Climate Fund Forest Investment Program. The actual amount disbursed according to the ICR (Data Sheet, page 2) was US$14.38 million.

Borrower Contribution. The project was fully financed through a Grant as noted above and no borrower contribution was expected.

Dates. The project was approved on January 26, 2018 and became effective four months later on May 16, 2018. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) was conducted on October 19, 2020 which was about two years and five months after effectiveness. While the PAD did not specify a date for the MTR, this Review finds that it was timely conducted relative to the original closing date. The project closed on May 31, 2023 which was the project's original closing date specified in the PAD.

The project was restructured three times all Level 2 restructuring as follows:

1. On February 22, 2021, when the amount disbursed was US$6.27 million, in order to revise the Results Framework, change components and cost, and
change disbursements arrangements.

2. On July 22, 2022, when the amount disbursed was US$9.98 million, in order to change in components and cost, and reallocate funds between disbursement categories.

3. On January 9, 2023, when the amount disbursed was US$12.37 million, in order to revise the Results Framework, reallocate funds between disbursement categories, and adjust the reimbursement rate.

While the two PDO outcome targets were revised, a split rating will not be applied to assess the overall outcome of the project. The revision for the GHG reduction related to PDO outcome indicator #1 were relevant and more specific, since the original targets covered the whole FIP areas, while the revised targets reflected only the areas covered by the World Bank-supported activities. The second revision of the targets was based on improvements on the underlying data of the REDD+ Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification tool, which according to the ICR (paragraph 17) became more precise overtime. Further, while the targeted reduction of GHG in metric tons/year decreased from an original 2,609,774 to 817,140, the proportional reduction against the baseline increased from 12% to 34%. As for the PDO outcome indicator #2, the measuring unit was changed from “Volume per ha of forest stock in target GF (metric tons)” to “Number of hectares of plantations established by the project (Ha)” given the young age of the plantations and the lack of certainty regarding survival rates. The new target instead tracked the number of hectares reforested in targeted project areas from agroforestry and restoration of forest plantations. These changes were relevant and improved the assessment of outcomes and did not substantially impact the original theory of change.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

Context at Appraisal. Côte d'Ivoire is home to the last primary rain forest left in West Africa and to several endangered species. However, the forests in Côte d’Ivoire were suffering from the highest average deforestation rate in the world at 4.3% per year between 1990 and 2015 (National Bureau for Technical and Development Studies-BNETD) and were at risk of disappearing within decades. The main causes of deforestation and forest degradation were: (i) the massive expansion of extensive slash-and-burn agriculture mainly for cash crops mainly coco; (ii) the uncontrolled harvesting of forests for firewood (estimated at 20 million cubic meter per year); (iii) bushfires (accidental or intentional, often for agriculture or hunting); and (iv) mining, notably illegal small-scale gold mining. To reverse the trend of deforestation and forest degradation, Côte d'Ivoire committed in 2011 to the international mechanism of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) process. In parallel, Côte d'Ivoire successfully applied for the Forest Investment Program (FIP) developed to address key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation through agriculture intensification, agroforestry, restoration of degraded forests, afforestation, and promotion of sustainable fuel wood production.

Previous Bank Experience. The World Bank has rich global technical expertise on climate, landscape and forestry issues, and is home to a large pool of technical staff and sector experts. The Bank also continues to support a range of carbon and climate finance mechanisms to achieve transformational changes in land use and forestry. In addition, the World Bank had deep experience working with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire on REDD+ through the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) REDD+ readiness grant, and the Emissions Reduction Program, which was under preparation. The FIP also complemented the existing

World Bank project portfolio, such as the Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Development Policy Financing Project (P169828), which sought to reduce the deforestation rate between 2018 and 2021. Also, several key studies at the national level, including the history of land use, wood use for energy, reforestation potential, as well as the national REDD+ strategy financed by the FCFP, served as the basis for investments to be supported by the project. Overall, the World Bank was well positioned to assist the Côte d'Ivoire in forest and land management to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from land use change and deforestation.

Consistency with Bank Strategies. At project appraisal, the PDO was in line with the goals of the World Bank Group's Country Partnership Framework (CPF, FY2016–FY2019) for Côte d'Ivoire. The CPF focused on two cross-cutting areas, governance and spatial inequalities, with three major focus areas: (i) sustaining strong private sector-led growth; (ii) building human capital for inclusive growth, social cohesion and youth employment; and (iii) strengthening public financial management and accountability. The FIP had direct and indirect contributions to the following objectives of the CPF's first two focus areas: (i) Objective 1: Improve productivity in agriculture/agribusiness value chains through support to agriculture intensification and enhanced collaboration with the cocoa industry to implement their engagement in the Government zero-deforestation agriculture objective by 2020; and (ii) Objective 4: Formalize and enhance access to land for business and agriculture, through land tenure security and public-private partnership for sustainable management of Gazetted Forests.

At project completion, the PDO continued to be in line with the World Bank Group's Côte d'Ivoire CPF for the period (FY2023-FY2027). Specifically, the project directly supported Objective 5: Improve sustainable management of natural capital of the CPF and will contribute to the assessment of key results indicators, including: (i) number of farmers with Climate-Smart Agriculture skills and/or assets, (ii) targeted forest-dependent community members with increased access to income sources derived from sustainable forest management, and (iii) carbon emission reduction. It also supported Objective 8: Support development of sustainable and competitive agricultural and manufacturing value chains. The PDO was also in line with the Bank's Country Climate Development Report (CCDR, 2023). The CCDR assessed climate change impacts on Côte d'Ivoire's economy and specifically recommended the promotion of policies to halt deforestation and restore land through agroforestry practices for resilient cocoa production. The CCDR was endorsed by Côte d'Ivoire in November 2023 at UNFCCC COP28. The project also supported the Forests for Development, Climate, and Biodiversity program which was one out of eight programs under the Global Challenge Programs (GCP) supported by the Bank. Further, the project supported the Bank's Green Resilient and Inclusive Development agenda and was in line with the WBG's Climate Change Action Plan 2021–2025. Also, the project contributed to supporting the World Bank Gender Strategy 2024–2030 as it promoted expanding economic opportunities for women. Finally, the PDO was in line with the World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence (2020-2025).

Consistency with Government Strategies/Priorities. At appraisal, the PDO was in line with Côte d'Ivoire Forest Investment Plan (IP, 2016). The IP was designed to combine different interventions in short and medium terms. It was based on two key areas: (i) a medium and long-term national vision aimed to balance the economic interests of a range of stakeholders with the goal of emissions reduction and sustainable conservation and management of the country's forests; and (ii) a focus on the sectors which have become the main drivers of deforestation in the country.

At project completion, the PDO continued to be in line with Côte d'Ivoire's 2030 Vision which aimed for an economic transformation that would sustain a 7% real GDP growth rate per year on average, while halving poverty and attaining upper middle-income status. One of the key objectives of the 2023 Vision was to develop Sustainable Economic Capital by protecting the green infrastructure of forests and coastal areas. The PDO was also in line with the new Abidjan Legacy Program presented (2022), which aimed to create a model for sustainable land management through better agricultural practices, reforestation and agroforestry, and sustainable water management. The Program was supported by the World Bank through several complementary projects, including the next-phase Forest Investment Project 2 (FIP-2).

Summary of the Relevance of Objectives Assessment. The PDO statement was clear and pitched at an adequate level of ambition. At completion, the PDO continued to be in line with Côte d'Ivoire's strategic development priorities and was also in line with the most recent Bank CPF (FY2023-FY2027) as well as with the Country Climate Development Report (CCDR, 2023). Therefore, the Relevance of Objectives is rated High.

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

To conserve and increase the forest stock for selected communities in target zones.

Rationale

Theory of Change (ToC). To achieve the stated objective, the project supported the following activities:

1. Support establishing a forest management framework. This would create an enabling environment for sustainable management of selected GFs. The project would establish five local Committees for GFs co-management. The project would work with these existing partners, local communities and SODEFOR to formally establish CLCG around these selected GFs and monitor their involvement in GFs. The project would also support the establishment of an agreement between the CLCG and SODEFOR for the benefit sharing of incomes generated from GFs management with the CLCG. The project would also support the the formation of four Participatory Forest Management Plan (PFMPs) and the support forest surveillance and operation.

2. Support the implementation of the GF governance frameworks with aim of restoring 20,000 hectares of degraded GFs through reforestation and agroforestry. The project would support reforesting 5000 ha (planting) thereby restoring more than 60% of their lost forest cover. Also, 15,000 ha would be reforested through agroforestry results-based payments. The reforestation activities would be undertaken by women and youth associations from adjacent communities under technical guidance and supervision of SODEFOR. The project would also support zero-deforestation agriculture through agro-forestry contracts with existing cocoa farmers in GFs. The establishment of fuelwood trees for sustainable charcoal production to provide for the local market would reduce pressure on forests and ensure full restoration of the GFs with forest tree cover over ten years. The project would also support conservation and ecotourism development through partnerships with third parties. Specifically, the project would reinforce these partnerships by clarifying their

roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the management plans of these GFs through a memorandum of understanding between SODEFOR and these partners for conservation actions in the GFs, including operating costs of enhanced surveillance of Cavally which is a buffer zone to TNP.

3. Development and implementation of an incentive system to reduce pressure on forest resources. This would be though piloting a performance-based payment system in villages adjacent to selected GFs (Goin-Debe, Haute-Dodo, Rapides Grah) to provide alternative revenues to local communities to reduce human pressure on natural resources. The project would also support voluntary return from the southwest to the center. Due to lower agricultural pressure, the Center has major potential for regenerating its forest cover and is attracting its natives back. The aim would be to accompany this natural trend, organize it as it could be scaled up in the long run and achieve a transformational change for the country’s land use balance, and reduce pressure on the South West GFs, thereby indirectly impacting project results.

4. Enhance OIPR surveillance capacity of TNP. The project would provide vehicles and surveillance equipment to OIPR and support its surveillance operations. Also, the project would support the banning of establishing new gold panning sites since gold panning activities continue to degrade significantly the park northern and eastern buffer zones.

The expected outputs of the above-mentioned activities included: the establishment of five local participatory management bodies (CLCGs); establishment of a benefit sharing agreement between CLCG and SODEFOR; the development of four PFMPs and surveillance operations implemented; 5,000 ha reforested by women and youth associations; 15,000 ha reforested through results-based payment contracts; forest concessions promoting agroforestry timber and fuel wood plantations signed with private sector'; partnerships with third parties promoted for GF conservation and ecotourism development; performance-based agroforestry and afforestation sub-projects piloted in adjacent villages; voluntary return initiative from the south west to the center regions supported; OIPR surveillance operations supported; and the establishment of new gold panning sites prevented.

The expected intermediate outcomes of the afore-mentioned activities and outputs included: the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable participatory management of GFs; 20,000 ha of degraded GFs restored; and human pressure on forest resources in TNP reduced.

All of this combined would contribute to achieving the stated PDO of conserving and increasing the forest stock for selected communities in target zones. The anticipated long-term impacts included realizing the Government of Côte d’Ivoire's (GoCI's) zero deforestation agriculture, improving productivity in agriculture-agribusiness value chains, increasing opportunities in benefit-sharing and employment in the forest sector, and achieving long-term sustainable development of natural resources.

The achievement of the PDO was underpinned by the following assumptions: 1. Performance-base agroforestry will incentivize zero forestation cocoa growing and raise income levels; 2. CLCGs set up during first year of project implementation to take active part in the development of PFMPs; and 3. Political stability and continued political commitment to the project's PDO.

Overall, the ToC reflected relevant activities that were connected to the stated outputs, intermediate outcomes and the PDO in a plausible causal chain. The stated assumptions were logical and realistic.

Outputs/Intermediate Results

1. Building an enabling environment for sustainable participatory forest management (GFs).

- 7 Gazetted Forest (GFs) with participatory management plans (PFMPs) were under implementation, exceeding both the original target of 4 and the revised target of 5; there was none prior to the project. Key activities of these PFMPs are currently being implemented, notably monitoring, development of forest and agroforestry plantations as well as ecotourism.
- 22 community forest co-management committees were created and trained in participatory forest management approaches, exceeding the original target of 15. Also, capacity-building support was provided to 345 CLCG committee members to report on the progress of project activities and to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the PAPFs (no target provided).
- 6 Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) contracts were signed to comanage gazette forests exceeding the original target of 5, baseline was 1.

2. Restoring degraded forest land.

- 1.3 million seedlings were produced with a survival rate of 80% and used for agroforestry reforestation and re-densification activities to increase forest stock (no target provided).
- 2,000 ha area of new or restored plantations in GF were established through concessions with women and youth associations fully achieving the target of revised target of 2,000, but below the original target of 5,000 ha, baseline was 100 ha.
- 557 ha areas were brought under enhanced biodiversity conservation exceeding the original target of 300 ha. This was a WBG core indicator. At completion, 557 ha of surface area were covered by increased conservation measures since the start of the project. The areas covered relate to vulnerable areas, in particular those prone to illegal gold panning. This result comes from the effort of management activities including monitoring, awareness raising and education on the environment and sustainable development for local communities.

3. Reducing human pressure on forest resources

- 100% of selected sampled surface areas were visited per year fully achieving the target, baseline was 90%. This indicator measured the surveillance efforts by TNP park rangers. The Tai National Park was divided into 263 quadrats of 5km x 5km. In 2022, the 263 quadrats or 100% of the quadrats were visited by, at least, one surveillance patrol. In 2023, 181 quadrats were covered during the patrols carried out in the first quarter of 2023. SODEFOR carried out 2,000 man-days (100% of the expected target) in the Cavally gazetted forest over 10 missions. This effort was complemented by an additional surveillance of 4,220 man-days carried out by agents from the Cavally Forest Management Unit (UGF) based in the locality of Zagné and 10 eco-guards from neighboring villages. This resulted in 80 arrests for category 1 GF clearing presented to the court, of which 52 resulted in firm sentences and 28 in suspended sentences.
- The number of gold panning sites decreased to 16 compared to 85 at baseline and exceeding the original target of 30. This indicator measured the success of awareness raising campaigns and surveillance patrols organized by OIPR against the number of gold panning sites in TNP.
- 10 fire prevention and control committees were established made up of young local residents living near reforested plots in the center GFs: during project implementation a total of 14 fires were brought under control. The committees had limited success due to the scale of the fires and the inadequacy of the communities' equipment. SODEFOR plans to update its fire-fighting strategy.

- A GF monitoring strategy was developed and the technical skills of 40 agents was strengthened in the use of the SMART tool for monitoring and protecting reforestation. OIPR trained 21 SODEFOR technical agents in the use of SMART for monitoring and carrying out reforestation missions in January 2023.
- 3,400 ha were planted in center GFs, subject to three plot maintenance campaigns between 2020 and 2021, and more than 20,000 nursery plants (Teak and Cassia) were produced.
- Over 1.5 billion francs were injected into the local economy through 241 performance-based contracts for nursery construction, seedling transport and planting.
- An annual annual monitoring plan was implemented to support: (i) financing of surveillance operations enabling surveillance patrols and ecological monitoring, enabling regular monitoring of areas prone to gold washing, (ii) training of 9 agents since 2022, (iii) 218 regular patrols (an average of 54 patrols/quarter) and 13 large-scale patrols (patrols covering the entire fleet) were carried out for 11,850 man-days from 2020 to 2023. As a result: (i) Apprehended 47 poachers, 38 gold panners and 6 operators of non-timber forest products (2023), and (ii) Monitored 98% to 100% of the 263 5km x 5km quadrats in the TNP from 2018 to 2022).
- A disaster risk prevention and management plan was developed in line with the best protected World Heritage sites. Validated with stakeholders in the TNP management in Soubré in 2022.
- A total of 15 patrols from 2019 to 2023 with a combined level of effort of 17,190 man-days, resulting in the apprehension of 100 offenders engaging in illegal mining and poaching activities, 85 of whom received firm sentences and 15 of whom received suspended sentences.
- An agroforestry buffer zone was created at the southern boundary of Taï National Park. Agroforestry redensification program for cocoa plots in the riparian zones of the TNP through production and distribution of food and medicinal forest plants such as Ricinodendron eudelotii, Irvinga gabonensis, Xylopia aethiopica, Garcinia kola, Tieghemella heckelii and Beilschmiedia mannii on the outskirts of the TNP.
- 1,172,000 seedlings were produced to reforest cocoa plots along the southern boundary of Taï National Park.
- 5,000 ha of cocoa plots bordering the TNP were enriched to a density of 18 stems/ha.

Outcomes

- By project completion, the project conserved and increased forest stock in the targeted GFs as evident in an 82% reduction of GHG emissions from gazetted forests and protected areas targeted by the project between 2018 and 2023. Against a reference net emission of 2,369,162 metric tons/year in 2018, the project successfully reduced emissions from 1,925,561.0 T eCO2eq in 2018 to 345,164.4 T CO2eq in 2022 (PDO Outcome indicator 1), a reduction of over 82%, based on the assessment of the Monitoring Reporting and Verification team at the Office of the Permanent Executive Secretary of REDD+ (SEP REDD+) according to Forest Carbon Partnership Facility methodology (ICR, paragraph 28).
- The project restored 22,719 ha of degraded forest land through reforestation and agroforestry activities in targeted GFs exceeding the target of 20,400 ha (PDO Outcome Indicator 2). This was facilitated by the production of 1.3 million seedlings and with a survival rate of 80%, agroforestry reforestation and re-densification activities have increased forest stock (ICR, paragraph 35).

- However, the project did not achieve the planned framework agreement between SODEFOR and communities for co-managing natural resources in gazetted forest, which according to the ICR would be addressed under the project's next phase (FIP-2).

Summary of Efficacy Assessment. The project contributed to decreasing the rate of deforestation and increasing CO2 sequestration through reforestation and agroforestry activities. Specifically this was achieved through: (i) building an enabling environment for sustainable participatory forest management through supporting developing a participatory forest management framework for gazetted forests in the center and southwest regions and modelling the first management plans for category 3 GFs (ICR, paragraph 28); (ii) restoring degraded forest land where the project restored nearly 23,000 ha of degraded forest land through reforestation and agroforestry activities in targeted GFs (ICR, paragraph 35), and (iii) reducing human pressure on forest resources most notable was reducing the unsustainable exploitation of forest resources by lowering the number of illegal gold panning sites along the northern rim of TNP by 80% (ICR, paragraph 37). As noted above, the project exceeded its outcome targets for carbon dioxide sequestration and for the restoration of degraded forests (PDO outcome indicators 1 and 2). The project also met or exceeded all of its intermediate results indicators pertaining to the three main activities supported by the project. However, the planned framework agreement between SODEFOR and communities for co-managing natural resources in gazetted forest was not achieved. Therefore, the efficacy with which this objective was achieved is rated Substantial with minor shortcomings.

Rating
Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective
To improve access to sources of income from sustainable forest management for selected communities in target zones.

Rationale
Theory of Change (ToC). To achieve the stated objective, the project supported enhancing local livelihoods near TNP through awareness raising campaigns, capacity building of local communities to engage in alternative activities such as vegetable gardening, agroforestry, reforestation with fruits trees. Seedlings would be provided for free to interested farmers including technical assistance to manage and maintain their farms for better harvests. The project would also finance rehabilitation of abandoned gold panning sites in the TNP buffer zones and restore them for the development of income generating activities (agroforestry, vegetable gardening, lowlands rice culture) targeted to women for food security and providing them with incomes given that they have limited access to cash crops revenues. The project would also support performance-based agroforestry and afforstation sub-projects on pilot basis in TNP adjacent villages.

The expected outputs for the afore-mentioned activities included: scaling up of alternative livelihood activities; and rehabilitation of abandoned gold panning sites. As a result of those outputs the expected intermediate outcome was the provision of an alternative revenue stream for local communities, which in turn would reduce human pressure on forest resources in TNP. All this would contribute to improving access to sources of income from sustainable forest management for selected communities in target zones.

The achievement of the PDO was underpinned by the following two assumptions: 1. Performance-base agroforestry will incentivize zero forestation cocoa growing and raise income levels; and 2. Political stability and continued political commitment to the project's PDO.

Overall, the ToC reflected relevant activities that were connected to the stated outputs, intermediate outcome and the PDO in a plausible causal chain. The stated assumptions were logical and realistic.

Outputs/Intermediate Results

- 7 gazetted forests (GF) with participatory management plans were under implementation exceeding the original target of 4 and the revised target of 5.
- 22 community forest co-management committees were created and trained in participatory forest management approaches exceeding the original target of 15.
- 6 PPPs contract were signed to comanage gazetted forests exceeding the original target of 5, baseline was 1.
- Access of women to agroforestry sites was enhanced through the provision of vehicles (two 4x4 and four three wheeled bikes) to the Malebi women association.
- 20 water catchments were made available to women associations exceeding the original target of 5, baseline was none.
- The project supported strengthening the livelihoods of peripheral communities by scaling OIPRs pilot IGA program in forest edge communities near TNP. This included funding 38 micro projects that moved on to implementation. At the end, nearly 1,000 people benefited from the program, of which more than half are women (ICR, paragraph 40).

Outcomes

- By project completion, 1217 farmers adjacent to targeted GF had increased access to income sources exceeding the target of 500 (PDO Outcome indicator 3). Results-based payments were delivered via mobile platforms primarily and amounted to approximately US$2,760 per beneficiary over the life of the project (ICR, paragraph 38). Potential productivity gains from converting 15,000 ha of cocoa plantations to agroforestry amount to US$54 million over 20 years (before discounting). For each of the 1,217 beneficiaries, this will mean an additional average annual income of US$300 in 2025 growing to US$ 2,230 in year 2035 (ICR, paragraph 38).
- A project beneficiary survey showed that beneficiaries of remunerated reforestation and agroforestry activities were generally satisfied with the project and note an increase in income. For example, 74% of beneficiaries reported a high level of satisfaction with the project exceeding the target of 70% (PDO Outcome indicator #4); and with 80% of beneficiaries reported satisfaction with both the technical support delivered and with the frequency of visits made on a weekly basis. However, more than half the beneficiaries of agroforestry activities were either “not satisfied” or “not at all satisfied” with the remuneration received for the various activities (ICR, paragraph 39). Also, 53% of beneficiaries reported that their living conditions did not improve due to project support. The ICR (paragraph 39) attributed this negative sentiment among beneficiaries to two main reasons: first, the delayed onset of long-term productivity gains, and second, the lengthy process involved in realizing potential emission reduction benefits.

Summary of Efficacy Assessment. The project contributed to improving access to sources of income from sustainable forest management for selected communities in target zones mainly through supporting performance-based payments for reforestation and agroforestry activities, and through strengthening the livelihoods of peripheral communities by scaling OIPRs pilot IGA program in forest edge communities near TNP. The project exceeded its end-line targets for both PDO outcome indicators as noted above. Also, the project exceeded its targets on two intermediate results indicators and fully achieved the third. Therefore the efficacy with which this objective was achieved is rated Substantial.

Rating
Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale
Overall Efficacy is rated Substantial. The project exceeded its targets of all four PDO indicators. It successfully developed a participatory forest management framework. The project also strengthened local communities' access to alternative sources of income, but at the same time helped to maintain the integrity of Taï National Park (TNP). The project also contributed to the objectives of the Emissions Reduction Program around TNP, which was expected to enable the first related carbon credits to be sold (ICR, paragraph 41). However, the project did not achieve the planned framework agreement between SODEFOR and communities for co-managing natural resources in gazetted forest, which instead was expected to be addressed under FIP 2 (ICR, paragraph 41).

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

Economic and Financial Analysis (EFA)

ex-ante

- The economic analysis at appraisal did not provide an overall economic rate of return for the project investments. Given time and data constraints, the consideration of benefits for the quantitative simulation was limited to a few aspects and complemented by a qualitative discussion of other benefits (PAD, Annex 4).
- Direct economic benefits included reduction in GHG emissions and increase income of beneficiaries. Indirect benefits included reduced pressure on protected areas; increased resilience to external shocks; reduced malnutrition; better access to credit; and reduction in inundations. A Cost-Benefit-Analysis was applied to conduct the economic efficiency assessment for this project. This quantitative analysis only

included the direct improvements of forest area affected. A “With” and “Without” project situation was used for estimating incremental benefits generated by the project.
- Net Present Value (NPV) and Benefit-Cost Ratio (B/C-Ratio) were used as criteria to assess the economic feasibility of the project. The results showed a net present value of US$3,334.7 million in the baseline scenario and a B/C-Ratio of 257.79.
- Valuation of carbon benefits. Using the official guidance for the social value of carbon as provided by the World Bank (2015) a baseline shadow value of Carbon starting at US$30 in 2015 and increasing to US$80 (US$33 in 2018 to US$38 in 2022) in real terms by 2050 was applied. For carbon sequestration and storage values of forest ecosystems a rather conservative value of US$ 50/ha/annum was assumed.
- A sensitivity analysis was applied considering discount rates of 5%, 10%, and 20%. the economic robustness was tested for a low carbon price and a low carbon price combined with a reduction of all benefits by 50 percent. Even with a low carbon price and a reduction of all benefits by 50% , the project yielded positive results at all discount rates (PAD, Annex 4, table 4.3).

ex-post

- At completion, a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) was carried out using the same scenarios and sensitivity tests applied at appraisal. The CBA yielded positive results across different scenarios and discount rates (ICR, Table 9) and compared favorably to estimates at appraisal.
- The following benefits were estimated in monetary terms: (i) productivity gains in resilient cocoa agroforestry, (ii) revenue from timber (teak) plantations, (iii) watershed benefits, (iv) climate regulating ecosystem services, and (v) global benefits in terms of the verified reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Benefits were estimated under two scenarios, with Carbon benefits and without. In the scenario with carbon, the NPV of project benefits was valued between US$327 million to US$889 million (using a discount rate of 20% and 5%, respectively). The economic robustness of project investments was also tested in a scenario without carbon benefits. The results confirm that even in the scenario in which carbon benefits were excluded, the analysis yields positive results for all discount rates. The NPV ranges from US$12 million to US$80 million when using a discount rate of 20% and 5%, respectively, with an IRR of 39.6%.
- The project results also compare favorably to other FIP projects in the region. For example, in Burkina Faso, the economic analysis of the
Forest Investment Project at completion in 2021 indicated an NPV of US$2.3 million and an IRR of 9% at a 6% discount rate in a scenario without carbon benefits. When considering the carbon impact, a global CBA generated an NPV ranging from US$87 million (low) to US$174 million (high), also using a 6% discount rate.
- Another aspect of efficiency considered in the *ex-post* analysis was a cost-effectiveness analysis of the unit cost per hectare of land reforestation. The entire cost of the project was US$15 million, and the result of reforestation through agroforestry and forest re-densification on 22,719 hectares, the unit cost per hectare reforested was US$660. According to the ICR (paragraph 44) "this compares favorably with the latest figure from a new World Bank Country Climate and Development Report on Côte d’Ivoire, which states that large-scale reforestation efforts cost about US$1,500/ha."
- Implementation efficiency. The project closed on its expected closing date set at appraisal. The integrated PMU (IPMU) for managing operating costs among various projects faced some challenges. Those related to financial transfer arrangements from the IPMU to the implementing agencies (IAs), which at times forced the IAs to have to prioritize payments at the expense of some activities (ICR, paragraph 46). While the actual costs of components 1 and 2 were reasonable compared to appraisal

estimates, the cost of component 3 was nearly double the appraisal estimate. This was attributed to several factors as noted by the ICR (paragraph 47): "there was a significant level of inefficiency at the level of coordination between the PMU and the integrated PMU; it may reflect that the Borrower mobilized 80% of counterpart funding committed at appraisal; and finally, it may relate to a delay in payment of allowances to the project focal points designated by SODEFOR and OIPR, which is likely to have lowered motivation for timely and dedicated implementation."

Summary of Efficiency Assessment. The *ex-post* IRR was estimated at 39.6% which was significantly above the discount rates used for the sensitivity analysis. The CBA results at completion were all positive with the benefits outweighing the costs in all tested scenarios including with carbon benefits and without. The project faced some implementation inefficiencies as noted above, but those did not negatively affect overall project outcomes. Finally, the project was expected to generate a wide range of benefits beyond what was included in the *ex-post* economic analysis. Therefore, 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 ☐ Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	39.60	0 ☐ Not Applicable

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

6. Outcome

Relevance of Objectives was rated High. Overall Efficacy was rated Substantial. The project exceeded its targets of all four PDO indicators. It successfully developed a participatory forest management framework. The project also strengthened local communities’ access to alternative sources of income, but at the same time helped to maintain the integrity of Taï National Park (TNP). However, the planned framework agreement between SODEFOR and communities for co-managing natural resources in gazetted forest was not achieved. Efficiency was rated Substantial. The *ex-post* IRR was estimated at 39.6% which was significantly above the discount rates used for the sensitivity analysis. Also, the CBA results at completion were all positive with the benefits outweighing the costs in all tested scenarios including with carbon benefits and without.

Based on the assigned ratings for the three outcome criteria, the overall Outcome is rated Satisfactory.

a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

The following Risks could potentially impact the Development Outcome:

1. Government ownership/commitment risk. The GoCI remains highly committed to advancing the agenda based on project outcomes and encouraged by the new international regulation to guide value chain actors in the cocoa sector towards sustainable, deforestation-free cocoa production. The GoCI's also showed strong commitment to zero-deforestation agriculture and its current engagement with reforming the cocoa industry to align with two new regulatory frameworks: the European Union's Deforestation Regulation (EUDR-effective in 2023) and the African Organisation for Standardization's Sustainable Cocoa Certification (ARS-1000). The EUDR ensures that seven commodity products, including cocoa, will no longer be sold in the EU if sourced from areas affected by deforestation or forest degradation practices. As the EU constitutes the principal market for Ivorian cocoa, purchasing approximately 60% of cocoa produced in Côte d'Ivoire, the country's economy faces a risk of collapse if this supply chain falters. The GoCI is also currently implementing key national support frameworks towards ARS-1000 certification to ensure economic, social and environmental sustainability and traceability of cocoa. At the same time, without intervention over the next two decades, the country's forests may vanish entirely. Therefore, the GoCI aims to reforest 20% of the country by 2030 and the FIP project has catalyzed change to this end.

2. Political risk. The biggest risk to the sustainability of project outcomes relates to continued political stability and commitment. Political instability has deeply affected neighboring countries in West Africa as Guinea, Mali, and Burkina Faso, with which Côte d'Ivoire shares its northern and eastern borders. Those countries have fallen subject to coup d'etats in 2021/2022.

3. Financial risk. Insufficient budget allocation for SODEFOR and OIPR for monitoring of illegal activities in GF and TNP risks reversing the positive outcomes from project-supported surveillance missions. While the project outcomes are positive, they require sustained financing for maintenance and operation. Additional funding is secured in the next phase FIP 2 project, but the cost should be absorbed by the GoCI going forward.

4. Institutional risk. At the institutional level, the lack of capacity and sustainable funding of operations is a risk. At SODEFOR, the lack of institutional capacity presents a challenge for broadening the business model. SODEFOR previously financed its operations by selling concessions to timber and fuel wood growers. There is now a demand for SODEFOR to engage institutionally with the Coffee and Cocoa Board in selling concessions for commodities in GF as well as with the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MINEDD) on addressing carbon issues through forest management. However, SODEFOR lacks a sustainable business model as a state-owned company, which must generate profits with gazetted forest with a drastic change in the management objectives of GFs objective endorsed by the REDD+ strategy and the Strategy for the Preservation, Rehabilitation and Extension of Forests (SPREF). At OIPR, institutional capacity is higher as they already have a sustainable funding mechanism in terms of the Foundation for Parks and Reserves for Côte d'Ivoire, a conservation trust fund. However, lack of sustainable funding is inhibiting the scale-up of activities from within OIPR. Restriction on IDA funds to capitalize this type of funding mechanism means that other avenues must be explored to fund OIPR. Discussions are underway to explore how to capitalize the fund with part of the ERP benefits from the benefit-sharing plan targeting OIPR.

5. Other stakeholder ownership risk. The lack of a benefit-sharing agreement between CLCGs and SODEFOR for co-management of GFs and substantial levels of dissatisfaction among farmers with the financial incentive structure to meet community needs puts zero-deforestation agriculture at risk. At the community level, sustaining the engagement of farmers and cooperatives in co-managing forest resources and participating in the performance-based remuneration mechanism (both are preconditions for advancing the REDD+ agenda) remains a challenge to development outcomes. All of SODEFOR's forest management agreements with third parties, such as cooperatives, women's associations and private sector actors were meant to ensure that a percentage of the revenue generated from forest management activities would return to communities through a mutually agreed upon benefit sharing mechanism. However, the definition of a single percentage was not possible due to the multitude of forest products and the diversity of value chains. The project's beneficiary Survey revealed a significant level of dissatisfaction with the level and timeliness of payments for reforestation and agroforestry activities. The survey also revealed that payments to farmers were sometimes delayed by up to twelve months from signing of the agreement, and the payment sometimes was insufficient. To mitigate the risks going forward, lessons from FIP 1 are helping to inform the design FIP 2.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

- **Strategic relevance and approach.** The project was the first phase of the Forest Investment Program (FIP) under the Strategic Climate Fund (SCF). The FIP aimed to catalyze policies and measures and mobilize significantly increased funds to facilitate the reduction of deforestation and forest degradation. The program also aimed to promote sustainable management of forests, leading to emissions reduction and the protection of carbon stocks. The project was strategically relevant and in line with the Government priorities. The PDO was also in line with the Bank strategies (see Section 3 for details). Reversing the trend of deforestation and forest degradation continues to be a top priority for the Government of Côte d'Ivoire.
- **Technical, financial and economic aspects.** The project design reflected international best practices and incorporated lessons learned from previous and similar projects on forest management and reforestation. For example, activities related to co-management, community and stakeholder participation and independent oversight by NGOs were based on lessons learned from Benin’s experience through direct cooperation between the two countries’ forestry departments. While activities that aimed to support enhanced surveillance and management of TNP stemmed directly from the World Bank’s extensive experience in projects focused on protected area management, biodiversity conservation and the use of conservation trusts throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. Also, past WB and IFC projects experiences in the region and beyond provided lessons on the key role of domestic and regional markets for forest products that contributed to a better understanding of the potential for revitalizing old lumber and fuelwood plantations (ICR, paragraph 55). Design also promoted a community-approach to participatory forest management based on a shared vision for the management of forest resources and financial rewards linked to results. However, arrangements for repayment for communities were

problematic and resulted in delayed payments and dissatisfaction among beneficiaries. Finally, the PAD reflected an adequate EFA that justified the project investment. Overall, the project design was relevant and adopting a pilot approach to some activities allowed the achievement of targets, despite being slightly ambitious.

- **Poverty, gender, and social development aspects.** The project was designed to directly counter the poverty of rural households that contributed to the overexploitation of natural resources, which constituted one of the main direct causes of deforestation and forest degradation in the country and contributed to rising carbon emissions. Project activities were expected to enhance livelihoods, improve agricultural practices, and clarify land tenure. Also, the implementation of a performance-based payment system was expected to directly impact income levels and potentially poverty rates at the local level. The project was gender-tagged and design reflected careful consideration was given to address gender inclusion in the project design. The project design sought to address gender gaps, including collecting gender disintegrated data and facilitating female participation. At least 50 of incentive-based sub-project funds were directed to women targeted activities.
- **Environmental and Fiduciary aspects.** While the project design reflected adequate environmental aspects, financial management faced some challenges. The project experienced fiduciary inefficiencies at the level of the integrated PMU in the early phase of implementation affected coordination. According to the ICR (paragraph 60), three main factors contributed the inefficiencies: first, a lack clarity of governance procedures, second, different texts regulating project coordination (between the PADs and the internal regulations of the IPMU), and third, unclear reporting lines.
- **Implementation arrangements.** An Integrated Project Management Unit (IPMU) was responsible for the implementation of the FIP, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Sanitation, Environment and Sustainable Development. The IPMU had experience in the implementation of Wb projects as it was managing two World Bank-financed projects: (i) the FCPF-Readiness grant managed by a REDD+ focal point who is also the Permanent Secretary of the REDD+ (SEP-REDD+); and (ii) the Obsolete Pesticides Management Project (P131778) under a dedicated project manager.
- **Risk assessment.** The overall risk of the project was rated Substantial at the appraisal stage. Four main risk areas were relating to: the technical design of project; institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability; fiduciary; and stakeholders. While the project design made appropriate accommodations to mitigate the likelihood and impact of identified risks, fiduciary risk proved more challenging and contributed to delays.
- **M&E arrangements.** Overall monitoring and evaluation was to be ensured by the Strategy for the Preservation, Rehabilitation and Extension of Forests (SEP-REDD), SODEFOR and OIPR. The FIP focal point under the SEDP-REDD within the Integrated Project Management Unit was responsible for data collection and upstream reporting and monitoring information and overall progress toward achieving results. M&E design reflected an adequate Results Framework. However, there were weaknesses related mainly to poor design of PDO indicator 1 (see Section 9a for details).

Summary of QAE Assessment. The project was strategically relevant. Design reflected international best practices and incorporated lessons learned from previous and similar projects on forest management and reforestation. While environmental aspects were adequate, fiduciary aspects faced serious challenges. Implementation arrangements faced challenges due to inefficiencies at the level of the IPMU. The risk assessment was realistic and identified most risks, however, fiduciary risk was underestimated. M&E arrangements were complex with multiple agencies involved. Also, the RF had some shortcomings pertaining to the design of PDO indicator one. Overall, Quality at Entry is rated Moderately Satisfactory due to moderate shortcomings pertaining to risk mitigation measures, M&E arrangements and implementation arrangements.

Quality-at-Entry Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

- The World Bank conducted nine implementation support missions with a frequency of two missions per year over the project implementation duration. According to the ICR (paragraph 80) "the Bank team provided adequate supervision guidance to the project." The Bank's financial management and procurement departments also provided several support missions.
- The World Bank team provided timely supervision and provided solutions to over implementation challenges. The Bank team proactively advanced the MTR by five months to address poor performance, restructured the project to align the project with SPREF and deleted the sub-component relating to voluntary return to the center, revised the results framework, and reallocated of funds between components to enable certain activities to be carried out more effectively. The Bank team was also proactive in facilitating full disbursement of project funds prior to closing.
- However, the ICR (paragraph 80) highlighted that the "lack of consistency in properly archiving Implementation Supervision Reports and Aide Memoires in the Bank’s internal designated repository for project documentation. This omission likely affected general supervision and may partly explain a lack of compliance with World Bank safeguards policies regarding some activities."

Summary of Quality of Supervision Assessment. The Bank team guided the project towards a successful outcome and was proactive in restructuring the project to enable certain activities to be implemented more effectively. However, a notable shortcoming was the lack of proper filing of project documentation and lack of compliance with safeguards policies. Therefore, the Quality of Supervision is rated Moderately Satisfactory.

Based on the assigned rating to QAE and Bank Supervision, the Overall Bank Performance is rated Moderately Satisfactory due to moderate shortcomings pertaining to both QAE and Quality of Supervision.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

- The PAD did not include a Theory of Change (ToC) since it was not yet required by the Bank at the time of appraisal. Nonetheless, the ICR included a ToC that reflected the relationship between the project activities, outputs, intermediate outcomes and PDO outcomes in plausible causal chains. This Review reconstructed a ToC narrative for each objective based on the detailed project description in the PAD (Annex 2) in combination with the ToC reported in the ICR.
- The PDO was composed of two objectives (see Section 2), which were assessed based on the following four PDO outcome indicators: 1. Net greenhouse gas emissions (in metric tons/year of CO2 eq); 2. Volume per ha of forest stock in target GF (by metric/ton); 3. Communities adjacent to targeted GFs with increased access to income sources (number); and 4. Satisfaction of beneficiaries (level of engagement, by gender and age). While the stated indicators were relevant and connected to the stated objectives, the target for outcome indicator #1 was based on an expected contribution from the overall Forest Investment Program. This assumption was flawed because FIP 1 was intended as a pilot to the larger FIP 2 project. Also, the measuring unit for outcome indicator 2 (Volume per ha of forest stock in target GF (metric tons)) was not the best choice because most areas were composed of young age forest plantations with uncertain survival rates.
- The Results Framework included fifteen intermediate results indicators (IRIs) to track the progress of the different project activities. The IRIs were measurable, reflected reasonable targets, and were connected to the project activities. However, the RF lacked a dedicated indicator to track progress on implementation of microproject IGAs (ICR, paragraph 66).
- M&E arrangements were integrated into the existing REDD+ M&E system, and data collection was designed to contribute to Côte d'Ivoire's overall FIP program. M&E design featured a dedicated sub-component to independent monitoring and verification of project activities and outputs by a third-party civil society team.
- The original M&E design was complex with 15 IRIs. There were also shortcomings pertaining to the mistaken assumption for PDO Outcome indicator #1, difficulty in measuring outcome indicator #2, and the lack of any IRI to track progress on implementation of microproject IGAs.

b. M&E Implementation

- The responsibility for M&E collection, analysis and reporting was shared between the IPMU, SODEFOR and OIPR. The FIP focal point under SEP-REDD+ within the IPMU had the overall responsibility for data collection and upstream progress reporting to the FIP Steering Committee and the World Bank on an annual basis. SODEFOR and OIPR were each in charge of collecting regular M&E data on their respective activities to allow for regular assessment of project implementation progress.
- Two outcome indicators were revised, while six intermediate indicators were dropped as activities were adjusted in accordance with new strategic priorities set out by the GoCI. These changes helped to align the RF with the activities on the ground and clarified attribution to enable a better assessment of outcomes.
- According to the ICR (paragraph 69) "baseline data for key indicators was established at appraisal and all indicators were measured and reported." The project relied on existing data sources at SODEFOR and OIPR, and on the tools developed by the SEP-REDD to monitor forest cover in Côte d’Ivoire. These tools included the SMART tool used in TNP by OIPR staff, the gendarmerie

and mobilized community members to record all data collected in the field and facilitate reporting of realized security operations.

- A monitoring and evaluation manual was developed, with attention to gender gaps identified during project preparation and the risks of violence against women (GBV) associated with project implementation. End-of-project surveys and evaluations were timely completed to inform the assessment of project outcomes (ICR, paragraph 70).
- Monitoring activities benefited from partnerships with local and international NGOs. This facilitated regular monitoring and enabled independent verification of implementation progress and project outcomes. A methodological guide to independent monitoring was produced and validated by the IPMU and other implementing structures. The project also project partnered with an international NGO to monitor the implementation of microprojects (ICR, paragraph 71).
- M&E implementation successfully generated enough information on the progress towards the achievement of the PDO. According to the ICR (paragraph 74), the project data was "robust and reliable." Also, the restructured RF addressed a number of design weaknesses and was sufficient to assess the achievement of the objectives and track the results chain linkages.

c. M&E Utilization

- According to the ICR (paragraph 72) "M&E data and information was actively used for project management and accountability purposes." The FIP Technical Committee and Steering Committee used M&E information to take course corrective action, including through three restructurings and revisions of the RF.
- Further, the project data informed the preparation of the FIP Phase 2 follow-on operation. The collected data would also support the objectives of the Emissions Reduction Program and enable the first related sale of carbon credits. Finally, the entire database of the results-based payment mechanism was shared with the ERP to support continuity of activities around Tai National Park (ICR, paragraph 73).

Summary of M&E Quality Assessment. M&E design had some shortcomings related to the RF. Those were mostly rectified during implementation. M&E implementation successfully generated enough information to assess the achievement of the objectives and track the results chain linkages. Finally, M&E utilization was evident in informing management decisions and guiding the project. Also, M&E data was used beyond the project to inform the preparation of FIP-2, support the objectives of the Emissions Reduction Program, and support continuity of activities around Tai National Park.

Therefore, the Quality of M&E is rated Substantial.

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

- **Environmental Category and Safeguards.** The project was rated Category B (partial assessment) with expected significant positive environmental and social impacts. The project triggered five environmental and one social safeguards policies: Environmental Assessment (OP 4.01), Natural Habitats (OP 4.04), Pest Management (OP 4.09), Physical Cultural Resources (OP/BP 4.11), Forests (OP 4.36), and Involuntary Resettlement (OP/BP 4.12).
- **Compliance with Environmental and Social Safeguards.** While the impacts of project activities were minor, the ICR (paragraph 76) reported that "instances of incompliance with World Bank safeguards policies prompted the project team to recommend an audit of safeguards activities." The audit found that some activities and sub-projects were not carried out according to the environmental and social safeguards mechanisms recommended in the ESMF of the PIF. Also, the audit found that activities related to reforestation, agroforestry, fencing and water retention did not submit an environmental compliance certificate prior to implementation to the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development in accordance with Decree No. 96-894 of 8 November 1996. The project's GRM received a total of 16 complaints and according to the ICR (paragraph 77) "all of which were resolved by project closing."

b. Fiduciary Compliance

- **Financial Management (FM).** Regular financial monitoring reports and annual audits were timely transmitted in compliance with World Bank procedures. There were no overdue audit reports for FIP-1 or at the integrated PMU at the time of project closing. FM benefited from closer FM supervision by in-country World Bank FM staff. At completion FM compliance was rated Satisfactory.
- **Procurement.** The project experienced difficulties with proper archiving in the STEP software due to a failure to archive before 2021. Procurement activities benefited from closer FM supervision by in-country World Bank FM staff and a requirement of prior-review of all procurement documents. According to the ICR (paragraph 78) "there were no instances of mis-procurement." At completion Procurement compliance was rated Moderately Satisfactory.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

None.

d. Other

None.

11. Ratings

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

12. Lessons

The ICR included three lessons which are emphasized below with some adaptation of language:

1. Projects supporting results-based agroforestry require better coordination of the payment and transfer mechanism to sustain the engagement of farmers. The project's experience showed that mobile transfer payments have had a positive social effect on local forest communities. However, payments faced several challenges including the lack of identity cards among forest populations, which are required to receive mobile transfers. Therefore, the next-phase project will contribute to the process of facilitating access to ID cards to members of local communities engaged in project activities. Also, legal identity papers will have additional ripple effects for those beneficiaries, including legal status to engage in agroforestry and access to health care. This requires harmonization of identification, beneficiary monitoring and activity verification procedures, harmonized database management, and clarification of procedures for switching from results-based remuneration agreements to concession agreements.

2. To achieve long-term sustainability and emissions reduction goals, it is important to take a deliberate and phased approach to forest management, informed by evidence-based learning and stakeholder collaboration. Forest ecosystems and socioeconomic conditions vary across regions, making it essential to tailor co-management approaches to local contexts. The project experience demonstrated that piloting initiatives at the local level facilitates engagement with local communities and stakeholders, enabling the development of customized strategies to align government priorities with local needs, and provides opportunities for inclusive decision-making, capacity building, and empowerment. This participatory approach builds trust consensus, and commitment among stakeholders, laying the groundwork for successful scaling up. Piloting different approaches to co-management of forest resources is critical before scaling up project activities and as a prerequisite for developing a national Emission Reduction Program.

3. To effectively address deforestation and promote sustainable forest management, it is critical to follow a holistic approach to conservation, addressing multifaceted challenges such as deforestation, habitat degradation, biodiversity loss, and livelihoods. The project experience demonstrated that cross-sector collaboration, particularly between environmental, forestry, and agricultural sectors, is instrumental in addressing deforestation and promoting sustainable forest management. Cross-sectoral cooperation has also encouraged institutional knowledge sharing and synergy in resource management and strengthened policy alignment and coordination. By recognizing and fostering partnerships that transcend traditional sector boundaries, projects can leverage diverse expertise, resources, and perspectives to effectively address deforestation and promote the sustainable management of forest resources, ultimately contributing to both environmental conservation and socio-economic development goals.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

- Quality of Evidence. The ICR provided an adequate evidence base to support the achievements reported.
- Quality of Analysis. The ICR provided clear links between evidence and findings to the extent possible and used the evidence base to serve the arguments under the different sections.
- Results Orientation. The ICR included a well structured discussion on the two objectives. It provided a well balanced discussion between reporting on the achievement of outcomes in relation to the indicators and what the project actually achieved on the ground.
- Internal Consistency. Various parts of the ICR were internally consistent and logically linked and integrated.
- Lessons. Lessons reflected the project experience and were based on evidence and analysis.
- Consistency with guidelines. The ICR used the standard structure defined in the Guidelines and used available evidence to justify the assigned ratings.
- Conciseness. Overall, the ICR was well written, provided a clear and concise coverage of project activities, and candidly reported on most shortcomings.

Summary of the Quality of ICR Assessment. The ICR included an adequate assessment of outcomes. The lessons drawn by the ICR were relevant. Most sections were concise and reflected relevant evidence. Overall, the Quality of the ICR is rated High.

a. Quality of ICR Rating

High