Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: June 20, 2019 | Report No: 142016

BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country	Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name
Republic of Gabon	P167065		Gabon – REDD+ Readiness
Region	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date	Financing Instrument
Sub-Saharan Africa		N/A	TF Grant
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency		
Republic of Gabon	National Agency of National Parks		

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To improve emissions estimates from the forestry sector and design a strategy to reduce emissions from forestry practices at a national scale, including examining the potential for reforestation.

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	1.95
Total Financing	1.95
of which IBRD/IDA	0.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Counterpart Funding	0.00
Borrowing Country's Fin. Intermediary/ies	0.00
Trust Funds	0.00
Montreal Protocol Investment Fund	0.00

Environmental and Social Risk Classification	Concept Review Decision
Substantial	N/A

Note to Task Teams: End of system generated content, document is editable from here. *Please delete this note when finalizing the document.*

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

Gabon's biogeophysical attributes and socioeconomic position

1.   The basins of the Congo and Ogooué rivers comprise the second largest expanse of tropical forest on earth. The region's forests remain relatively intact and are globally important as a reservoir for biodiversity and a sink for atmospheric CO_2. Gabon is a highly-forested nation, with 88 percent forest cover, and houses approximately 18 percent of the Congo-Ogooué Basin's forest. These forests are one of the last strongholds for the forest elephant with an estimated elephant population of 40,000. Gabonese forests are thought to be home to 50 percent of all remaining forest elephants in Africa. Gabon is also an important country for the conservation of the Western Lowland Gorilla and Chimpanzees. This biodiversity is afforded protection through a network of protected areas that include 13 national parks created in 2001, totaling 1,293,000 ha; together with park buffer zones, protected areas cover 15 percent of Gabon's territory. In addition to natural capital, forests have always played an important role in the country's economic development. Economically, they had long been the main national asset before being overtaken by oil in the early 1970s. In 2016, the entire sector represented CFAF 240.1 billion, or 2.9 percent of national GDP.

2.   Gabon is subdivided into nine provinces with a land area of 267,667 km^2. With its 1.8 million inhabitants, is one of Africa's most urbanized countries with approximately 75 percent of its population living in urban centers with more than 50 percent of inhabitants living in the capital (Libreville), as well as other urban centers including Port-Gentil (the economic capital), and Franceville (a mining region). Gabon is a sparsely populated country, with an average density of the population of 5 inhabitants per km^2, which makes Gabon the African country where the forest-to-inhabitant ratio is one of the highest. The rural population is thinly scattered over the hinterland where access is difficult. Gabon is the fifth largest producer of oil in Africa. Gabon is also well-endowed with forests, fisheries, biodiversity and mineral resources. It is Africa's second largest exporter of timber and it has the second largest deposit of manganese worldwide.

3.   In the 2016 Human Development Report, Gross National Income (GNI) per capita is US$19,044, among the highest in Africa. However, the country has not been able to ensure equitable development and social welfare among the population. It is ranked 109 in the world according to the Human Development Index. During the oil boom years of 1973 to 1985, the Government promoted full employment policies in government agencies and public enterprises. Oil wealth brought benefits to the urban elite and public servants which were further shared through family networks but did not reach an important share of the population which remained poor until today. Inequalities plague the current social service delivery system, and access of the poor to services remains low.

4.   For decades, Gabon's economy has been driven by oil exports. Though timber harvest has been an important component of the economy, forests have remained relatively sheltered from activities that promote deforestation – resulting in a deforestation rate of only 0.04 percent annually. However, as oil prices decline, Gabon's development strategy depends on economic diversification to other sectors. Economic diversification is expected to increase resource exploitation by extractive industries and expansion of agricultural intensification, both of which could have implications for Gabon's forests.

5.   Gabon's economy suffered considerably from the recent oil price shock. At the time of the terms of trade shock in 2014, oil represented 84 percent of total exports and oil revenue constituted 49 percent of total fiscal revenue. As oil prices fell from US$100 per barrel in 2014 to an average of US$45 in 2016, growth slowed significantly, and twin deficits emerged. GDP growth slowed to 2.1 percent in 2016 with lower commodities prices (oil and manganese) and production.

The industrial sector overall stagnated in 2016. The decline in public spending combined with significant arrears from the public sector weighed on services sector growth, which slowed from 5.2 percent in 2015 to 3.2 percent in 2016. Agriculture, a relatively small sector, was the only bright spot; its growth reached 11.9 percent in 2016 from 8.2 percent in 2015. Inflation increased to 2 percent (year-on-year) in 2016 from 1 percent in 2015, remaining below the CEMAC target threshold of 3 percent; inflation in December 2016 was 4.1 percent due to rising fuel prices resulting from the elimination of most subsidies.
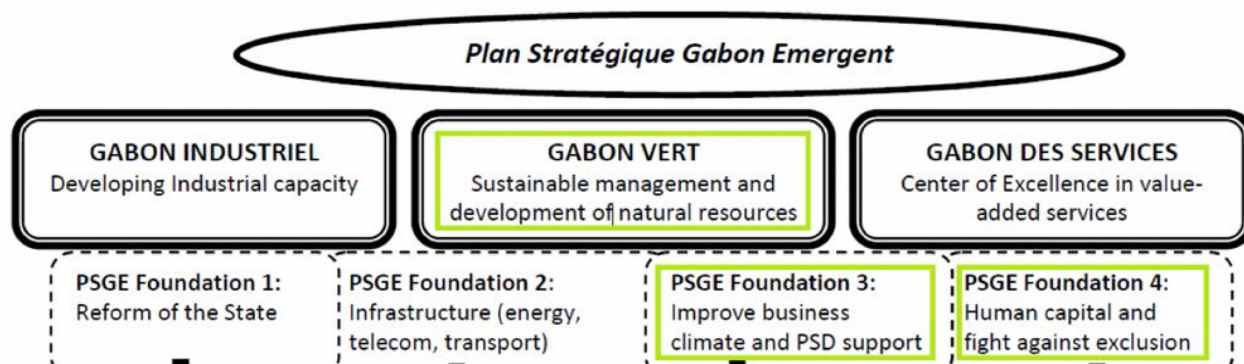
6.   To foster a shared and more diversified growth, Gabon's challenges consist of: (i) improving efficiency and equity in the use of the country's resources, both natural and financial; (ii) diversifying the economy by improving the investment climate for responsible private sector development; and (iii) improving governance, through improved transparency and accountability in the use of its resources and public service delivery. The management of natural resources is central in this agenda.

Emerging Gabon: Gabon's forward-looking vision

7.   To address these challenges, the Gabonese President presented a new economic vision in 2009: Emerging Gabon. The strategic road map for an Emerging Gabon (*Plan Stratégique Gabon Emergent—PSGE*) aims to modernize the country and turn it into an emerging economy by 2025. It is based on accelerating growth and reducing poverty while also looking to capitalize on Gabon's comparative advantages at both the regional and global levels to diversify its economy and pursue sustainable development. Combined with the Sustainable Development Law (No. 002/2014), the PSGE lays the foundation for transforming Gabon into an emerging, yet diversified economy while maintaining natural capital. The strategy is built on three pillars:

   a. Industrial Gabon (*Gabon Industriel*) aims to develop Gabon into a metallurgic and industrial center of excellence (optimizing oil and mining, construction, building materials, and agro-industrial transformation).
   b. Green Gabon (*Gabon Vert*) with three major goals: (i) Instituting sustainable forest management and transforming Gabon into a global leader in certified tropical timber production; (ii) Developing agriculture and livestock farming sustainably to improve food security; (iii) Creating sustainable and responsible fisheries.
   c. Gabon Services (*Gabon des Services*) with the objective of making Gabon a center of excellence in business, ecotourism, and value-added services such as higher education and research, health, media, and information technologies.

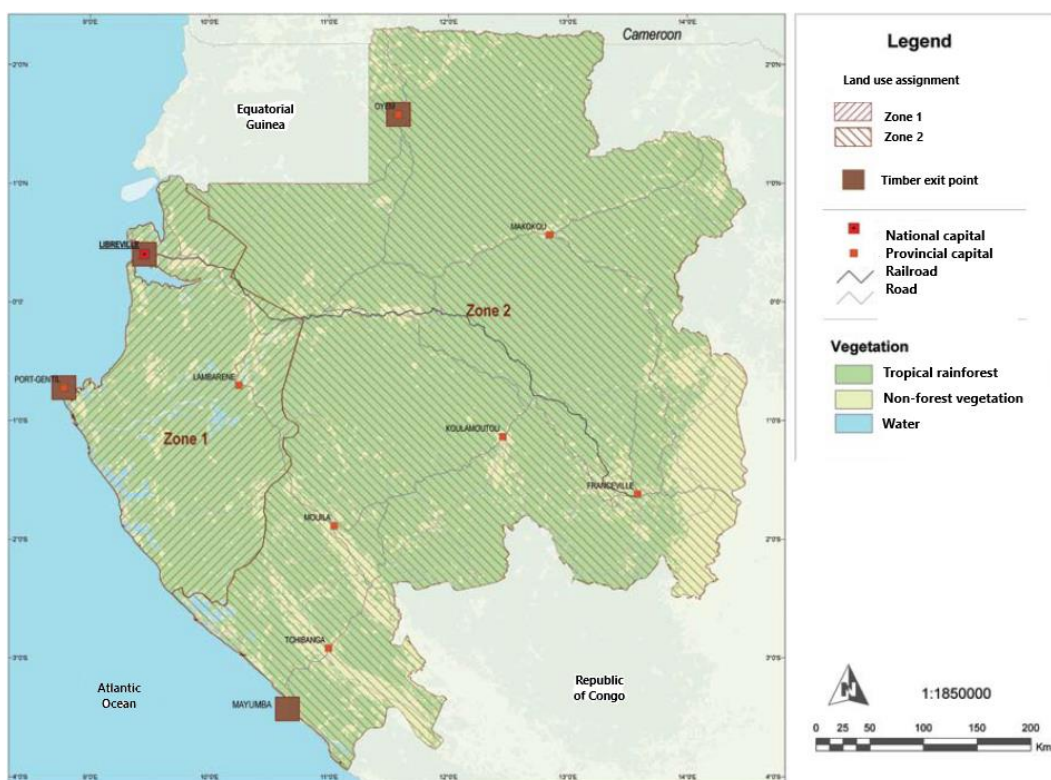**Figure 1: Emerging Gabon (*Plan Stratégique Gabon Emergent—PSGE*)**

Sectoral and Institutional Context

8.   Consistent with the new strategic focus of Emerging Gabon, Gabon has been an active participant in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations. In 2010, the President established a National Climate Council to coordinate Gabon's response to climate change by developing a strategic, overarching plan called *Plan Climat,* which incorporates climate change considerations into the country's sectorial development strategies.

9.   Gabon submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the UNFCCC in April of 2015. Because a high percentage of Gabon's estimated emissions are from the forest sector (due mostly to logging), the NDC is largely focused on sustainable management of forests and sound land use planning. The Government of Gabon (GoG) has the vision that forests, their use, conservation and long-term functioning, have a true potential to achieve holistic low emission development.

10.   Gabon is divided into two main zones in terms of logging activities. "Zone 1" in figure 2 comprises more than 30 percent of the country's forests. It is easily accessible and is characterized by a relatively good communications network. More than 50 percent of Gabon's population lives in this zone and it is under strong pressure. The flagship and endemic *Okoumé* tree is abundant in this zone. The zone is homogeneous in terms of altitude and vegetation but very rich in the diversity of its natural habitats. Six main types of forest are observable: open, swampy, periodically flooded, permanently flooded, savannas and mangrove islands. "Zone 2" in figure 2 comprises 70 percent of the remaining forest area. It has less diversified natural habitats, with forest types that are distributed over the altitudinal gradient (lowlands, valleys, low altitude, medium altitude, high altitude, plateaus). Finally, four sites (Libreville, Port-Gentil, Mayumba and Oyem) are the main points of exit of international timber flows.

Figure 2: Logging areas and main points of exit of international timber flows

11.   The forestry sector is a significant contributor to Gabon's economy. In 2016,[1] GDP for forest exploitation was CFAF 91.1 billion (+21.5%), or 1.1% (0.9%) of national GDP at current prices. GDP linked to wood-related industries was CFAF 149 billion (+6.6%), or 1.8% (1.6%) of national GDP. The entire sector represents CFAF 240.1 billion, or 2.9 percent of national GDP. However, the sector was significantly impacted in 2010 by the institution of a ban on the export of unprocessed logs which aimed at supporting the development and modernization of the domestic timber processing industry.

12.   The ban was instituted during the international financial crisis of 2008-2009, at a time when global demand for tropical timber was experiencing severe contraction. Most of the companies whose main activity was in exporting unprocessed logs were faced with the choice of either establishing sawmill units to their operations or ceasing their activities; almost all of these companies had not prepared for this conversion—even though the 2001 Forest Code had already required that, by 2012, 75 percent of logs be processed before export—and many could not obtain the commercial financing necessary do so. Many of Gabon's timber enterprises lost their appetite for implementing forest management plans seen as too restrictive and costly. Between 2005-2009, the five years before the ban, Gabon's log production averaged 3,126,339 m^3/year. In the five succeeding years, 2010-2015, this production fell to an estimated 1,548,731 m^3/year; a drop of over 50 percent.

13.   With industrial logging being one of the main factors of forest degradation in Gabon, the ban contributed to a decrease in overall forest degradation, and concomitantly in greenhouse gas emissions. A 2016 World Bank study on the impact of the export ban, *Impact of the 2010 log export ban on forests, the timber industry and the Gabonese economy (Report No. ACS20539)*, estimated that these avoided emissions resulted in greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions of approximately 11.53 million tCO_2/year since 2010. According to the same study, most of the gains in avoided emissions— around 88 percent—are due to the reduction of collateral forest degradation that occurs during logging operations. In the case of Gabon, while the decline in log production from the export ban is equivalent to direct emission avoidance of 1.41 million tCO_2/year, the vast majority of decreased emissions (10.12 million tCO_2/year) comes indirectly (e.g. from the access roads that are not opened through dense vegetation or the damage to neighboring trees during felling that does not occur).

14.   However, reconfiguration of the sector has also led to an influx of foreign investors whose appearance has strengthened Gabon's timber processing capacities significantly from 1.5 to 2.5 million m^3/year. Much of this is due to the opening of the Nkok Special Economic Zone (SEZ), where more than 81 companies have already pledged to invest US$1.7 billion, as a result of an ambitious partnership between the Republic of Gabon and Olam International Limited. Because much of Gabon's low deforestation rate and emissions savings has been linked to an industrial forestry sector lacking in processing capacity, this development has the potential to erode much of the country's gains in reduced GHG emissions. Preventing such a loss entails that sustainable forest management plans are adhered to, a fact that underscores the necessity of the Government of Gabon to maintain a comprehensive forestry observation system.

15.   Lack of data hinders precise estimation of carbon emissions from the logging sector, but current approximations indicate that it accounts for a relatively high proportion of Gabon's total emissions. Logging concessions cover approximately 150,883 km^2, or 57 percent of the surface area of the country. In 2013, approximately half of these concessions were subject to management plans meant to promote sustainability; it is unclear to what extent existing management plans are implemented. Furthermore, illegal logging is believed to have escalated in recent years, supported by well-organized criminal networks.

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[1] Source: DGEPF, 2016 National Economy Scoreboard. Figures in parentheses show changes in relation to 2015.

16.   Showing further commitment to the Green Gabon pillar and its commitment to develop its forest sector sustainably, the Gabonese President announced in September 2018 that all logging concessions must be Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified by 2022. Any logging company operating in Gabon, not involved in this certification process in 2022, will be deprived of its license. Currently only three out of 40 major forestry companies are FSC certified: Rougier Gabon, Precious Woods and the Gabon Timber Company (*Compagnie des Bois du Gabon)*.

17.   Without careful planning and mitigation, development activities initiated to support economic diversification and improved food security in the context of the PSGE could result in high rates of deforestation, habitat destruction, national insecurity, high species extinction and destabilization of livelihoods of forest-dependent communities. On the other hand, the country's exceptionally rich biodiversity, high forest cover, and low rate of deforestation offer tremendous opportunities for the design and implementation of innovative sustainable development models. Such models have the potential to diversify the nation's economic portfolio and enhance agricultural and extractive resource production, while ensuring biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation - by both minimizing and/or avoiding emissions and reducing emissions from the forestry sector through improved forestry practices.

18.   Understanding that sound land use planning is critical to the implementation of Emerging Gabon, the GoG launched a National Land Use Planning process (*Plan National d'Affectation du Territoire - PNAT*) in 2013 under the political coordination of the *Secrétaire Général du Gouvernement* and technical oversight of the National Climate Council. The PNAT process is the government's primary mechanism for achieving its sustainable development, forest conservation, and climate change mitigation goals. It oversees all political and technical aspects related to national-scale spatial planning.

19.   Gabon received funding from the Central Africa Forest Initiative (CAFI) in support of its goals of minimizing and avoiding emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. CAFI is a collaborative partnership that supports strategic, holistic and country-level investments in low-emissions development, including activities that reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+).[2].

20.   Gabon, as part of the CAFI partnership, developed its National Investment Framework (NIF) which was finalized in April 2017 and presented to the CAFI Executive Board. Based on this NIF, the GoG and CAFI signed a Letter of Intent[3] in June 2017 whereby CAFI pledged US$18 million and the GoG committed to reducing by 50 percent its greenhouse gas emissions by 2025, compared to 2005, from improved forestry practices. The Letter of Intent is articulated around three objectives:

> *Outcome 1: The implementation of a national land use plan.*
> The first outcome is optimizing and adopting the PNAT, based on robust information and coupled with an inclusive, multi-ministerial process. Emphasis is put on participative mapping of resource use by rural communities and public consultation and communication in the land use planning process, as well as on optimizing land allocation for industrial and small holder agriculture, in line with the Gabonese NDC.

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[2] The Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI)'s objective is to recognize and preserve the value of the forests in the region to mitigate climate change, reduce poverty and contribute to sustainable development. CAFI support focuses on developing and implementing National Investment Frameworks (NIFs) endorsed at the highest level by national institutions with cross sectoral mandates , providing funding based on the achievement of policy and programmatic milestones that are spelled out in letters of intent, encouraging donor coordination and alignment of bilateral assistance to partner countries based on NIFs and promoting inclusive participation of all stakeholders. http://www.cafi.org/content/cafi/en/home.html

[3] The financial commitment of US$ 18 million is pledged in two equal tranches. The second tranche is conditioned to reaching intermediary milestones that will be independently evaluated.

Outcome 2: A National Natural Resources and Forestry Observation System.
The second outcome is a rigorous long-term Natural Resources Monitoring and Observation System (NNRFOS). It is expected to include observations from space and ground measurements to allow Gabon to identify and mitigate changes in forest cover, as well as to monitor the biodiversity and carbon sequestration capacity associated with various land use decisions. The system will simultaneously monitor i) forest ecosystem health, ii) floral and faunal diversity and iii) provision of ecosystems services (carbon sequestration, biodiversity, and food security), with a view to evaluating the impacts of climate change and land use planning decisions on these variables. The completion of the Natural Resource and Forest Monitoring System will provide a transparent means to evaluate, monitor and report on the PNAT, as well as Gabon's compliance with the NDC commitments.

Outcome 3: Efforts to maintain carbon sequestration by forests, reduce emissions related to forest degradation and improve inclusive forest governance.
These objectives will be reached by preserving High Carbon Stock (HCS) and High Conservation Value (HCV) forests; introducing a permanent cap on the area of non-HCS/HCV forests that can be converted to other land uses; reducing areas under forest concessions; and fighting illegal logging, among other strategies.

21.   As part of the PNAT process, Gabon has completed an assessment of land use, land use change drivers, forest law, policy and governance. Additionally, the GoG has already established a working governance and implementation structure and consulted with various ministries, set up an institutional monitoring framework, and determined how to address feedback and grievances (though has yet to establish it). A broad range of key stakeholders has been identified and time and effort has been invested to raise general awareness of the basic concepts and process of REDD+. By the end of the process, data layers that define the terrestrial forest environment (including HCV and HCS forests, areas of high timber value, and areas of importance for national and cultural heritage), village customary use zones and practices, regions of high potential for agriculture or mineral extraction, and infrastructure and energy development needs will all be mapped. A consultation process with multiple stakeholders, including forest-dependent people, is defined as an integral component of the PNAT process. The decision-making process will include a full assessment of positive and negative potential impacts of land-use decisions and a PNAT that optimizes economic benefits, conservation values, and local needs will be produced over three years of data collection and consultation. The GoG is continuing to work with CAFI to achieve Outcomes 1 and 2 but requires additional support to achieve Outcome 3 (Efforts to maintain carbon sequestration by forests, reduce emissions related to forest degradation and improve inclusive forest governance).

22.   In support of Outcome 3 of the Gabon-CAFI partnership, the GoG requested support from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) to improve emissions estimates from the forestry sector and design a strategy to reduce emissions from forestry practices at a national scale, including examining the potential for reforestation. More specifically, support was requested to: (1) improve knowledge and estimates of current emission levels from forest degradation in logging concessions; (2) define guidelines for improved forestry management, with an emphasis on reduced impact logging-carbon (RIL-C); (3) examine the potential of reforestation, plantations and stock enhancement programs; and (4) examine the potential of a national "label" program to incentivize operators to implement RIL-C, or other best practice forestry guidelines.

23.   In September 2017, the FCPF Participants Committee allocated[4] US$ 1.95 million to Gabon for the implementation of its REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP)[5]. The activities to be financed with support from the FCPF are fully integrated into the activities being financed by CAFI.

24.   The GoG has requested the World Bank to act as implementing partner for the implementation of the FCPF's R-PP. The World Bank has been a long-term partner in supporting the GoG to manage forest resources and develop this economic sector. Approved in 2005, a US$15 million Development Policy Loan (DPL) for Natural Resources Management (NRM) aimed to increase the contribution of natural resources to national income and reduce the country's heavy dependence on declining oil resources while protecting the resource base and improving management efficiency. The World Bank's involvement in the NRM-DPL built upon the Forest and Environment Project (*Projet Forêt Environnement – PFE*), which closed in 2002 after helping to improve the knowledge base on Gabon's forest resources and assisting the preparation of the 2001 Forest Law, while strengthening the technical capacities of the Ministry of Forest (also in charge of Environment). In 2015, the Government requested support from the World Bank for the wood sector, which resulted in an assessment of the impact of an export ban of raw logs on the economy and which identified options for a program in support of developing the industrial wood sector. The Bank and the GoG have also been in discussions about a potential Forestry Sector Revitalization Project (FoSeR Project or FoSeRP). The FoSeR Project would help give greater competitiveness to the forestry and wood sector while ensuring the principle of sustainable management of forest resources.

Relationship to CPF

25.   *Performance and Learning Review (PLR) of the Country Partnership Strategy (CPS).* The CPS for the FY2012-2016 period set in motion a portfolio of activities to strengthen three strategic development pillars: (i) governance and public-sector capacity; (ii) competitiveness and employment; and, (iii) human development and environmental sustainability; gender equity was a cross-cutting theme. The PLR, which revised the CPS, extending it to FY2018, noted that Gabon had made significant progress in increasing transparency and sustainability of natural resources management, having achieved all the CPS targets for 2012-2016[6]. Because of Gabon's strong commitment to climate action—it was the first African country to submit its NDC and it reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation by 475 million tons between 2000-2016, mainly via its own financing—the PLR adjusted the CPS to lend support explicitly to implementation of Gabon's NDC. The current project complements Gabon's existing efforts in reducing emissions, as laid out in the country's NDC, by rendering land use planning in the forestry sector data-driven and sustainable.

26.   The project's goals are closely linked to the two strategic themes supported by the current CPS: 1) *increasing competitiveness and employment*, which the project addresses through developing human capacity in the public and forestry sectors, and positioning the domestic forest industry to take advantage of increasing consumer awareness of sustainability concerns; and 2) *vulnerability and resilience*, by identifying sensitive and high-value forested areas in order to protect and/or restore them. The Project is expected to contribute to the CPS by increasing transparency and accountability (Outcome 1) by underpinning national land and natural resource use management with scientific rigor; improving private sector development (Outcome 3) by incentivizing the private sector and adding economic market value to Gabon's wood products through a sustainable forestry certification initiative; and building vocational skills and capacity (Outcomes 4 and 5) through trainings in forest sector emissions calculations methodologies and improved logging practices.

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[4] Resolution PC24/2017/6.

[5] Though Gabon signed a R-PP formulation grant in 2009 it did not eventually execute it. In 2017, Gabon engaged again with the FCPF and submitted a R-PP that it had developed with its own resources. The submission of the R-PP was accompanied by a request for the

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

27. To improve estimates of emissions from the forestry sector and to design and validate with key stakeholders a strategy to reduce emissions from forestry practices at a national scale.

Key Results (From PCN)

28. The key results are:
    - Methodology for calculating emissions from forest degradation implemented (Yes/No); and
    - National emissions reduction strategy for the forestry sector designed and validated with all key stakeholders (Yes/No).

D. Concept Description

29. The Project will provide US$ 1.95 million in funding to support Gabon in carrying out a subset of activities outlined in its R-PP, namely to improve emissions estimates from the forestry sector and design a strategy to reduce emissions from forestry practices at a national scale, including examining the potential for reforestation.

30. The Project will have three components:
    - Component 1: Improved baseline emissions calculations from the forestry sector;
    - Component 2: Design and validation of a national emissions reduction strategy for the forestry sector; and
    - Component 3: Project coordination.

Component 1: Improve baseline emissions calculations from forestry sector.

31. Gabon has initiated a robust and transparent national forest monitoring system that combines remote sensing and ground-based forest carbon inventory approaches to estimate anthropogenic forest-related greenhouse gas emissions and removals (the National Natural Resources and Forestry Observation System, NNRFOS). The NNRFOS will support forest law enforcement agencies in their task of monitoring and verifying forest management operations and identifying illegal logging operations. Even though the NNRFOS meets the country's goal of monitoring land-use plan implementation and identifying unplanned deforestation events, taken alone it is not enough to accurately estimate and monitor emissions from the forestry sector. There are technical, financial and human resource challenges associated with calculating emissions from forest degradation. Uncertainty in quantifying carbon loss from degradation, particularly from selective logging, can be large. Conventional methods of remote sensing and surveying are generally not sufficiently sensitive to alleviate this uncertainty.

32. Based on an evaluation of various options and in collaboration with the Institute of Tropical Research, Gabon has selected a methodology to improve emissions calculations from forestry activities. The project will support the training of a team and the implementation at a national scale of the selected methodology. This will include the mobilization of a field inventory team, the funding of field inventory and data collection missions and the purchasing of field equipment

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Readiness Preparation Grant in question, which was approved by the FCPF Participants Committee in 2017 subject to revisions to be made to the R-PP which were finalized in 2018.

[6] Creation of a national database on biodiversity; biological inventory at three sites and biological surveys of over 700,000 ha; increased surveillance in three national parks and participatory management plans for the Loango, Moukalaba-Doudou, and Mayumba parks.

and other goods to enable these missions. Moreover, the project will support the hiring of an international consultancy organization to accompany the national teams undertaking this activity, as well as those under Component 2 which are interrelated. All data generated under this activity will be included as an integral component of Gabon's National Forest Monitoring System (NNRFOS).

Component 2: Design and validation of a national emissions reduction strategy for the forestry sector.

33.   Data generated from activities under Component 1 will be used to identify emissions factors associated with specific aspects of logging operations (e.g. residual damage from felling, skid trails, road creation, wood transformation and wood waste management, etc.). Based on these calculations and further analytical work, emissions from the industry will be identified and the most effective and feasible technical and legal mechanisms to reduce these emissions will be defined in a national strategy to be validated by key stakeholders. These would comprise improved harvest practices that are known as Climate Effective Reduced Impact Logging, or RIL-C[7]. The strategy will integrate technological advancement options and inform decision-makers of any institutional and governance reforms that may be required to achieve emission reductions (for example, a revision to the forest code, better regulation of transformation activities, and so on).

34.   Activities under this component will also assess the degree by which well-designed, multi-purposed plantations and reforestation programs could reduce emissions from the forestry sector (through either carbon sequestration or by avoiding degradation of High Conservation Value (HCV) and High Carbon Stock (HCS) forests) while also increasing economic revenue. A full evaluation of how these activities could contribute to growing the economic contribution of forestry to the nation's economy will also be undertaken. The project will support the mobilization of technical experts, the funding of field missions and the purchasing of field equipment and other goods to enable these missions.

35.   The potential for certifying forestry concessions that are implementing the emissions reductions strategy will be assessed as a means for simultaneously incentivizing the private sector and adding economic market value to Gabon's wood products. This will include the potential for integrating these measures into the FSC certification scheme that all Gabonese logging concessions must comply with by 2022. The project will support the mobilization of a technical team to undertake this assessment, under the guidance of the international organization.

36.   A Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) of the national emissions reduction strategy for the forestry sector will be conducted, upon which the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and other relevant safeguards instruments will be developed[8]. A gender analysis will be done as part of the SESA to identify gender risks and mitigation measures to be included in the design of the strategy. A firm will be hired to conduct this work. Finally, consultations with key stakeholders will be conducted by the government according to the project's Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure Plan, SEIDP.

Component 3: Project coordination.

37.   This component will support the overall daily administration of the project and reinforce the capacity of the implementing agency to carry out project activities. Given the activities to be undertaken and the relatively short

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[7] Research has shown that logging improvements can maintain timber production and reduce carbon emissions by 30-50%. Considering the need to balance human demand for timber products with climate change mitigation, RIL-C is a potential strategic conservation intervention in Gabon.

[8] This SESA is limited to the scope of the national emissions reduction strategy for the forestry sector funded by this project, which is different to the SESA to be conducted for the National Land Use Plan under the CAFI project and referred to in Gabon's R-PP (and, by association/inferring, Resolution PC/24/2017/6).

implementation period, the Project will fund the recruitment of a project coordinator and the following consultants to be dedicated part-time to the project: a financial and administrative officer, a procurement officer, an environmental and social management specialist, a monitoring and evaluation specialist and a project assistant.

Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Project in Disputed OP 7.60	No

Summary of Screening of Environmental Risks and Impacts

Note To view the Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts, please refer to the Concept Stage ESRS Document**.**

CONTACT POINT

World Bank

Mirko Serkovic
Natural Resources Management Specialist

Borrower/Client/Recipient

Republic of Gabon

Implementing Agencies

Lee White
Director, National Agency of National Parks

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20433
Telephone: (202) 473-1000
Web: http://www.worldbank.org/projects

APPROVAL

Task Team Leader(s):	Mirko Serkovic

Approved By

Environmental and Social Standards Advisor:	Hanneke van Tilburg (Acting)	
Practice Manager/Manager:	Aly Rahim; Africa Oshogba Olojoba	
Country Director:	Elisabeth Huybens	