

# INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER ORGANIZATION

## ITTO

### PROJECT PROPOSAL

TITLE	ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE SITATUNGA VALLEY NATURAL COMMUNITY PARK IN BENIN
SERIAL NUMBER	PD 930/22 Rev.2 (F)
COMMITTEE	REFORESTATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT
SUBMITTED BY	GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BENIN
ORIGINAL LANGUAGE	FRENCH

#### SUMMARY

The Sitatunga Valley Community Natural Park (PNCVS) in Benin includes over 22 community forests (CFs) with very high biodiversity and representing a natural heritage of great value due to their multiple functions, namely biological, ecological, socio-economic and cultural. Currently, the PNCVS is subject to severe degradation and deforestation threatening the entire ecosystem of the valley and therefore local people's livelihoods. Project implementation aims to restore the valley ecosystem and to achieve the sustainable management of the 22 community forests by building the capacities of stakeholders with a view to improving local people's living conditions. To this end, the project will be implemented based on the *ITTO Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics*, including its six Principles as developed by the Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration (GPFLR), in combination with the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM). Project expected outcomes are as follows: (i) the 22 PNCVS-CFs have management tools in place and are sustainably managed; (ii) income derived from the PNCVS has been improved by 20% through the development of income-generating activities; and (iii) local community organizational skills have been strengthened.

EXECUTING AGENCY	REGIONAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTRE FOR INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT—NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION ( <i>CENTRE RÉGIONAL DE RECHERCHE ET D'ÉDUCATION POUR UN DÉVELOPPEMENT INTÉGRÉ</i> —CREDI NGO)
COLLABORATING AGENCIES	GENERAL DIRECTORATE FOR WATER, FORESTS & HUNTING AND NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WILDLIFE RESERVE MANAGEMENT ( <i>DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE DES EAUX, FORÊTS ET CHASSE</i> —DGEFC & CENTRE NATIONAL DE GESTION DES RÉSERVES DE FAUNE—CENAGREF)
DURATION	36 MONTHS
APPROXIMATE STARTING DATE	TO BE DETERMINED

BUDGET AND PROPOSED FUNDING SOURCES	Source	Contribution in US\$	Equivalent in local currencies
	ITTO	<b><u>453 376</u></b>	
	Benin (CREDI-NGO)	<b>101 976</b>	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>555 352</u></b>	

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## PROJECT BRIEF

### 1. Context and problem to address

The Sitatunga Valley Community Natural Park (PNCVS) **includes 22** community forests high in biodiversity. These forests play a key role in people's lives and for natural resource conservation in the area. Today, wildlife and plant protection rules and regulations are no longer observed as a result high population growth, and increasing impoverishment of rural communities. Most of **the remaining forest patches** located in the PNCVS are being subjected to abusive and uncontrolled use resulting in their degradation or even total destruction. Studies recently carried out on community forests in Southern Benin showed that 60% of **these forests** are degraded. **Forest** ecosystem degradation is a serious threat to biological diversity and to local communities who depend heavily on them for their livelihoods. **Population growth and its consequences, particularly increased anthropogenic pressure on the PNCVS's resources, are not conducive to the long-term sustainability of ecosystem services or the conservation of biodiversity. This is the reason why the three municipalities and their partners are implementing several measures aimed at protecting and sustainably managing the PNCVS's resources. The PNCVS Management and Development Plan was developed as part of these measures to serve as a guide for managers between 2020 and 2029.** CREDI-NGO in collaboration with the Municipalities of Abomey-Calavi, Sô-Ava and Zè developed and validated with all stakeholders the Development and Management Plan for the Sitatunga Valley Community Natural Park to address this challenge.

**The project stems from the implementation of the PNCVS Development and Management Plan. Among other efforts, CREDI-NGO has committed to extending support to the Municipalities of Abomey-Calavi, Sô-Ava and Zè for the sustainable management of natural resources through the establishment of the PNCVS. Aware of and concerned by the situation, CREDI-NGO took the initiative to develop the project for the restoration and sustainable management of the Sitatunga Valley, Benin, in collaboration with the Forestry Administration, the Municipal Authorities and local people.**

### 2. Objectives and indicators

The project development objective is to contribute to the sustainable management of wetland forest resources in southern Benin. Impact indicators are as follows: (i) the degradation process of the Sitatunga Valley ecosystems in southern Benin is reduced by at least 30% by 2030; (ii) income of people heavily dependent on forest resources has been improved by at least 20% by project completion; (iii) the PNCVS forest landscape area has increased by at least 10% by 2030; **and (iv) biodiversity in the PNCVS has been restored by 2030.**

The project specific objective is to achieve the sustainable management of the Sitatunga Valley ecosystems by building the capacities of stakeholders with a view to improving to local people's living conditions. Outcome indicators are as follows: (i) 22 community forests have been provided with management tools by project completion; (ii) income from CFs has increased by 20% by project completion; and (iii) **22 community forests have consultation frameworks in place by project completion.**

The main expected outcomes by project completion are as follows:

1. **The PNCVS-CFs have management tools in place and are sustainably managed;**
2. **Opportunities for developing the Sitatunga Valley by local communities have been identified and are implemented;**
3. **Local community organizational skills have been strengthened.**

### 3. Beneficiaries, and expected results, outcomes and outputs

The main project beneficiaries will be: dignitaries, traditional chiefs, village chiefs, kings, land chiefs, community chiefs, communities or local people made up of men, women and children from the villages who depend on forest resources in the area, as well as farmers in the vicinity of community forests.

The main outcomes, outputs and results expected by project completion are as follows:

- Simplified management plans are in place in the 22 community forests. They will enable dignitaries and forest owners to define the terms and conditions for managing their forests, and to improve their management control and monitoring;
- The 22 community forests are issued with legal recognition deeds to prevent encroachments/sale of land plots;
- Demarcation and physical delimitation of the 22 community forests to prevent encroachments and reduce pressure on land;
- Diversification of local people's income sources through developing alternative income-generating activities, and developing socio-community infrastructure with a view to improving local people's income by at least 20%;
- Local people capacity building for at least 100 beneficiaries in development and management techniques for forests and private plantations;
- Biodiversity enhancement in the 22 community forests through plantings of appropriate high value plant species.

Development of reforestation activities such as seed collection, high quality seedling production, promoting woodfuel plantations to meet the needs in energy wood, which is the main household source of energy in rural areas. It could also contribute to improving local people's income

#### **4. Implementation strategy**

**The implementation strategy will be based on the *ITTO Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics*, including its six Principles as developed by the Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration, in combination with the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM).**

Project implementation will follow three stages:

- Stage 1: Implementing management tools, i.e. simplified management plans, in the 22 CFs.
- **Stage 2: Identifying opportunities for development by local people in the Sitatunga Valley. Grassroots communities will be organized for implementing income-generating activities with a view to improving their livelihoods.**
- **Stage 3: Establishing local management committees at the level of community forests and municipalities. The local management committees will take over at project completion with a view to integrating the PNVCS into Benin's National Protected Area System.**

#### **5. Project outcome sustainability**

The project institutional and political sustainability lies in the participation of the General Directorate of Water, Forests and Hunting, the National Center for the Management of Wildlife Reserves, and the Municipalities at all stages of project development and implementation. Furthermore, the various commitments made by Municipalities through the letter of endorsement attached in **Annex 5** testifies to the ownership of the project by the Municipal Authorities and is a clear sign of project institutional sustainability.

Project outcomes financial sustainability after project completion will be ensured by the commitment of Municipalities to fund the project and to take it into account in their Municipality Development Plan (CDP).

At the technical level, project outcomes sustainability will be ensured by taking into account traditional and modern methods of forest management as well as the technical monitoring to be provided by the national forestry administration represented at the level of all municipalities in Benin.

## 6. Assumptions and risks

The main assumptions for project success are as follows:

*The various stakeholders support and participate in the project:* Among the challenges involved in implementing forest development projects is the lack of communication between stakeholders. This project will pay particular attention to this issue by involving all stakeholders in project implementation.

*Sustainable management of wetland ecosystems remains a national priority.* Policy guidelines may change and the support of decision makers for the conservation of sacred forests decline. In view of the national and international context where climate change-related issues are a particular focus of attention, both by Benin and the international community, this risk is almost zero.

### Risks

Potential risks identified in connection with this project are as follows:

- **Opposition from some stakeholders to project activities. At present, all stakeholders support project activities as set out in the PNCVS Development and Management Plan, which has been approved by all stakeholders. Should any opposition arise, awareness-raising activities will be carried out to mitigate this potential risk.**
- Recent climate hazards and climate change could affect ecosystems, the flow rate of water streams and the health of forests in the project area, which could have negative impacts on the management efforts undertaken. This risk can be reduced by implementing appropriate adaptation measures to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change, and the use of resistant and resilient species for reforestation interventions.

## 7. Budget contributions

### SOURCES

### CONTRIBUTION IN US\$

ITTO

**453 376**

Benin (CREDI-NGO)

**101 976**

**TOTAL**

**555 352**

<u>Designation</u>	<u>Computing formula</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
<u>Share allocated to project personnel from ITTO budget</u>	<u>(93600/453376)x100</u>	<b><u>20.64%</u></b>
<u>Share allocated to project investment components (capital goods)</u>	<u>(50500/453376)x100</u>	<b><u>11.13%</u></b>

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AE	:	Executing Agency
AVGE	:	Village Environment Management Associations ( <i>Associations Villageoises de Gestion de l'Environnement</i> )
CCSI	:	Municipal Committees for the Coordination and Monitoring of Community Forest Integration ( <i>Comités Communaux de Coordination et de Suivi de l'Intégration des Forêts Communutaires</i> )
CDB	:	Convention on Biological Diversity
CF	:	Community Forest
CENAGREF	:	National Center for Wildlife Reserves Management ( <i>Centre National de Gestion des Réserves de Faunes</i> )
CITES	:	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CREDI	:	Regional Center for Integrated Development Research and Education ( <i>Centre Régional de Recherche et d'Education pour un Développement Intégré</i> )
DGEFC	:	General Directorate of Water, Forests and Hunting ( <i>Direction Générale des Eaux, Forêts et Chasse</i> )
FP	:	Forest patch
GBIF	:	Global Biodiversity Information Facility
GIS	:	Geographical Information System
ha	:	hectare
IF Atl-Lit	:	Forest Inspectorate for Atlantique and Littoral Prefectures
IGA	:	Income-Generating Activity
IPS	:	Improved Production Systems
IUCN	:	International Union for Nature Conservation
ITTA	:	International Tropical Timber Agreement
ITTC	:	International Tropical Timber Council
ITTO	:	International Tropical Timber Organization
MCVDD	:	Ministry of Living Environment and Sustainable Development ( <i>Ministère du Cadre de Vie et du Développement Durable</i> )
NGO	:	Non-governmental organization
PAE	:	Environmental Action Plan ( <i>Plan d'Action Environnemental</i> )
PDC	:	Municipal Development Plan ( <i>Plan de Développement Communal</i> )
PNCVS	:	Sitatunga Valley National Community Park
PSC	:	Project Steering Committee
RGPH4	:	General Population Census (4 <sup>th</sup> edition)
SCRIP	:	Growth Strategy for Poverty Alleviation ( <i>Stratégie de Croissance pour la Réduction de la Pauvreté</i> )
SF	:	Sacred Forest
SGM	:	Ministry General Secretary
SHs	:	Stakeholders
SPANB	:	Biodiversity Conservation Strategies and National Action Plan ( <i>Stratégies et Plan d'Action National pour la Conservation de la Biodiversité</i> )
TFPs	:	Technical and Financial Partners
ToR	:	Terms of Reference
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	:	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

## 1. PART I: PROJECT CONTEXT

### 1.1. Origin

The conservation and rational management of natural resources have become a global concern due to the high rate of ecosystem degradation and **wildlife and flora habitat** loss. The ever-increasing needs of people and resulting pressure on natural resources resulted in the degradation of ecosystems and the loss of the original values of wildlife resources and their habitats, with the reduction of ecosystem services. Fortunately, new concepts are increasingly contributing to the establishment and promotion of more rational management systems to preserve biodiversity **and ecosystems**.

In Africa, the establishment and management of protected areas is the system most conducive to a significant level of conservation, as anthropized environments are difficult to monitor in terms of controlling access to and use of resources.

For all protected areas, management planning is an essential step to ensure their good management and guarantee resource sustainability. In Benin, the development of management plans is habitual for the conventional forms of known protected areas, including gazetted forests and reforestation areas, national parks and hunting areas. In recent years, new forms of conservation have been implemented to contribute to the achievement of relevant national objectives, in particular in community conservation areas. Based on this, the Mayors of the Municipalities of Abomey-Calavi, Sô-Ava and Zè, Atlantic Prefecture, took the initiative to establish the PNCVS.

The PNCVS covers approximately an 80,000 ha area in southern Benin, and is high in biodiversity whose value is enormous given the importance of some wildlife and plant species present as well as the importance of ecosystem services provided to local communities in their daily lives. Those species include Sitatungas, an emblematic species of antelope dependent on marshes for its habitat and which gave its name to the Valley. There are also crocodilian species and several other **endemic** species such as the red-bellied monkey, which make the PNCVS a site of particular importance in the Ouémé River Basin.

**The PNCVS is an area rich in biodiversity. There are 124 plant species belonging to 111 genera in 50 families. The PNCVS flora and wildlife is rich and diverse. There are at least 46 species of mammals and the most common include the Mona monkey (*Cercopithecus mona*), the Senegal bushbaby (*Galago senegalensis*), the Sitatunga (*Tragelaphus spekei*), the harnessed bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*), the Kintampo rope squirrel (*Funisciurus substriatus*), the Red river hog (*Potamochoerus porcus*), Walter's duiker (*Philantomba walteri*), the African civet (*Civettictis civetta*), the Flat-headed kusimanse (*Crossarchus platycephalus*), and the Common slender mongoose (*Herpestes sanguinea*). The Walter's duiker (Sitatunga) and the harnessed bushbuck are well-known species but quite rare in their habitat.**

**Currently, the PNCVS is undergoing alarming degradation due to the overutilization of its resources. Population growth and its consequences, particularly increased anthropogenic pressure on the PNCVS resources, are not conducive to the sustainability of ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation. This is the reason why the three municipalities and their partners are implementing several measures aimed at the protection and sustainable management of the PNCVS resources, including the development of the PNCVS Management and Development Plan for 2020-2029. The Plan will serve as guidance for the various actor and stakeholder categories involved in the sustainable development and management of the Sitatunga Valley.**

**The project is based on the PNCVS Management and Development Plan, which was developed in 2019 following a participatory process with stakeholders. However, the Plan has not yet been implemented due to the lack of financial resources and technical capacity. CREDI-NGO has been working with the municipalities of Abomey-Calavi, Sô-Ava and Zè since 2007 to support the sustainable management of natural resources through the establishment of the PNCVS. Aware of and concerned about the situation, CREDI-NGO has taken the initiative, in collaboration with the Forestry Administration, municipal authorities and local communities, to develop the Sitatunga Valley Restoration and Sustainable Management Project. Through project implementation the PNCVS, including its network of 22 community forests (CFs), and the Sitatunga Valley forest landscape will be better managed through stakeholder capacity building.**



## 1.2. Project relevance

### 1.2.1. Conformity with ITTO objectives and priorities

ITTO is a leading international organization concerned with sustainable forest management and forest conservation. This project is in line with the ITTO objectives stated in Article 1 of ITTA, 2006, as listed in paragraphs c, j and r.

**c. Contributing to sustainable development and poverty alleviation:** This project aims to contribute to the sustainable management of the Sitatunga Valley ecosystems, in order to improve the living standards of local communities. In practice, the project will organize local people to develop sustainable income-generating activities, which will contribute to the conservation of forest resources. In addition, the project will initiate local development activities aimed at mobilizing local communities towards the project objectives. It will also facilitate training and capacity building of stakeholders directly involved in sustainably managing the PNCVS.

**j. Encouraging members to support and develop tropical timber reforestation, as well as rehabilitation and restoration of degraded forest land, with due regard for the interests of local communities dependent on forest resources:** The project will achieve the PNVCS restoration through reforestation and enrichment planting using high value indigenous species. The project will also facilitate the establishment of buffer zones and that of plantations for fuelwood, medicinal plants, and timber using native timber species, sacred timber species and others in accordance with local population needs.

**r. To encourage members to recognize the role of forest-dependent indigenous and local communities in achieving sustainable forest management and develop strategies to enhance the capacity of these communities to sustainably manage tropical timber producing forests:** The project will contribute to implementing the PNCVS Development and Management Plan le developed following a participatory approach together with local communities. In addition, the project will extend support to the managers of Forest Management Units for the development and implementation of plot management plans.

Additionally, this project is in line with the *ITTO/IUCN Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Tropical Timber Producing Forests*; especially Principle 9 pertaining to biodiversity at the level of Forest Management Units, which states that an effective process of forest management, in which economic, social and environmental issues are balanced with societal needs and priorities, is essential to define and achieve the goals of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

**This project proposal is in line with the ITTO Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics and is based on the six FLR Principles as developed by the Global Partnership for Forest and Landscape Restoration.**

#### 1.2.1.1. Conformity with ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2022-2026

**The project objective is the restoration and sustainable management of the Sitatunga Valley in Benin, and is in line with Strategic Priority 3 “Resilience, restoration and conservation”—Reduce tropical deforestation and forest degradation, enhance forest landscape restoration and the resilience of forest ecosystems to climate change, and conserve forest biodiversity and related ecosystem services.**

#### 1.2.1.2. *ITTO Policy Guidelines on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women*

**Gender equality is an issue of human rights and a core value of ITTO. The project will commit to mainstreaming gender and improving project results in terms of gender equality in all of its project work. Green loans and the development of alternative income-generating activities (AIGAs) dedicated to women will contribute to gender equality and the empowerment of women.**

Women, in spite of the important role they play in forest resource management, in particular fuelwood, non-timber forest products (NTFPs) harvesting, and in promoting alternative income-generating activities (AIGAs) with a view to improving their livelihood, are often marginalized in decision-making processes in connection with the management of forest resources. To this end, women's groups will be prioritized in umbrella organizations dealing with the production of forest tree seedlings and at all stages of project implementation to ensure that their specific interests are taken into account.

In addition, the project is in line with *ITTO Guidelines for the Establishment and Sustainable Management of Planted Tropical Forests, and in particular with Recommended Action 2* "Formulate and implement a national land-use policy which promotes the sustainable use of all natural resources, including the establishment of a permanent forest estate".

#### **1.2.1.3. Guidelines for Social and Environmental Impact Assessment**

The project is in line with Principle 1: Environmental sustainability encompasses the essential functions provided by forest ecosystems, including soil and water conservation, carbon sequestration, and forest biodiversity values. Consistent with SDG 15 and GFGs 2 and 3, the project is committed to the conservation, maintenance and, as much as possible, restoration of forest ecosystem services, and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and maintaining and improving the health of forest resources in the project area.

The project is also in line with Principle 2: Social sustainability. Social sustainability has taken into account the needs of populations, households, communities, workers and other societal groups dependent on forest resources, who are likely to be affected (favourably or unfavourably) by the project. This project will maintain and enhance the socio-economic benefits and opportunities provided by forests, support job creation and decent and healthy working conditions, and preserve the natural and cultural heritage.

#### **1.2.2. Relevance to submitting country's policies**

This project is in line with both the national and international policies of Benin in terms of forest resource management.

##### **From a national perspective:**

This project is in line with the vision of Benin's forest policy for 2021-2030, which states that "By 2030, Benin will be a green country where natural and forest resources are managed in a sustained and sustainable manner for the conservation of biodiversity, poverty alleviation, the fight against climate change and desertification". The project through the expected outcomes is also in line with Strategic Objective 2.1: Support the sustainable management of forests and natural areas; and Strategic Objective 2.2: Developing forest resources to contribute to the local economy.

The project proposal is in compliance with Law No. 93-009 of 2 July 1993 governing forests in the Republic of Benin, which states in Article 7 that, "private forests are those which are the subject of a title or possession in the name of an individual or a legal entity under private law".

The project will contribute to meet certain requirements of the Republic of Benin's Framework-Law on the Environment (Act No. 98-030 of 1 February 1999), which stipulates in Articles 55 and 56 that "forests, whether public or private, are elements of the national heritage that shall be managed while taking account environmental concerns in such a way that forest protection should not be compromised by economic, social or recreational uses." Article 56 stipulates that "forests shall be protected against all forms of degradation, pollution or destruction caused by overuse, grazing, excessive clearing, fire, burning, diseases or introduced alien species".

In addition the project is consistent with the Priority Action Program (PAG), which aims *inter alia* to:

- leverage resources for the forest sector;
- maintain the environmental, economic and social functions of forests in the land-development context;
- increase the sustainability of timber potential, in accordance with international agreements;
- promote an integrated approach to the natural resources management process at local level.

The project is also consistent with other strategies and policies of the Ministry of Forests, and in particular the following:

- the Strategy and National Action Plan for the Conservation of Biodiversity (SPANB) for 2011-2020 through its Objective 4, Focus 2, which provides for the incorporation of all forest patches and wetlands in the Benin System of Protected Areas by 2020.

- the National Strategy for the Implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2003), which emphasizes the urgent need for sustainable forest management as an adaptive measure to climate change.

### **From an international perspective:**

Benin is a signatory to a number of international conventions and agreements including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands; the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); and the International Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN). These agreements and conventions oblige Benin to implement actions to promote the sustainable management of forest resources. This project provides an opportunity to raise the necessary funds to implement actions in compliance with international commitments related to the conservation of forest resources.

## **1.3. Target area**

### **1.3.1. Geographic location**

The Sitatunga Valley is located between 2°19' and 2°27' east longitude and between 6°27' and 6°57' north latitudes. It owes its name to the presence of an antelope (the water bushbuck or Sitatunga, *Tragelaphus speckii*) dependent on swamps and living essentially in this ecosystem. It covers three municipalities in the Atlantic Prefecture, which are Abomey-Calavi, Sô-Ava and Zè. The districts as well as the district villages located in the PNCVS area as well as the community forests are shown in Table 1. The map in Figure 1 shows the geographical location and the extent of the PNCVS. The PNCVS currently covers an area of 70,880 ha extending over 11 districts, including three in the Municipality of Abomey-Calavi, one in the Municipality of Sô-Ava and seven in the Municipality of Zè. It includes 107 villages in total.

It is bounded by the Zou Prefecture to the north, and by the districts of Abomey-Calavi and Ganvié 2 to the south. On the east side, it borders the Ouémé Prefecture, and to the west, the Municipality of Toffo in the northern part, and the Dodji-Bata and Adjan Districts of the Zé Municipality in the southern part. The park is an integral part of Ramsar Site 1018.

### **1.3.2. Social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects**

Due to its location in the southern part of Benin, the PNCVS is characterized by a subequatorial climate with a bimodal distribution of rainfall: two dry seasons and two rainy seasons. However, the main rainy season has been somewhat late in recent years and the off-season reduced, showing a change towards a longer and unique dry season. The long rainy season extends annually from mid-March to July, and the short rainy season covers the months of September and October. The air is almost saturated with maximum relative humidity throughout the year (over 95% in Abomey-Calavi and Zè and 100% all year round in Sô-Ava). Average rainfall is 1093 mm per year.

The Municipality of Sô-Ava is entirely located in the wetland and has an average temperature of 27.3°C throughout the year. The average annual rainfall is 1187 mm.

The estimated population (2019) in the PNCVS was 239,562 inhabitants. The population is quite young with over 70% under 25 years old. The age distribution structure shows a high proportion of young people and working people available.

**In accordance with the ITTO Guidelines on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, gender issues will be streamlined throughout project implementation. Gender equality will be addressed in all phases of the project cycle, including formulation, implementation, monitoring, review and evaluation. Furthermore, the needs and interests of women and men, including their effective participation and benefits in terms of outcomes, will be taken into account and promoted on an equal footing throughout project implementation. Gender mainstreaming and the review of gender roles, standards and relationships, as well as their potential impact in the context of a gender analysis, will also be taken into account. The project will be designed so as to generate common benefits for both men and women.**

**Based on the ITTO Guidelines on Environmental and Social Management, the project will ensure compliance with the following five principles: Principle 1: Environmental sustainability; Principle 2: Social sustainability; Principle 3: Gender equality and women's empowerment; Principle 4: Good governance; Principle 5: Forest land tenure security and access to forest resources.**

**Based on the ITTO Environmental and Social Screening Checklist Questionnaire included in the ITTO Guidelines on Environmental and Social Management, the project falls under Category C: minimal or no risk.**

In the municipalities of Abomey-Calavi and Zè, the main economic activities are farming and livestock, followed by secondary activities such as fishing, processing and crafts, utilization of natural resources, and trade. In the municipality of Sô-Ava, fishermen and farmers constitute over than 70% of the population.

Like many other municipalities in Benin, PNCVS farmers still use slash-and-burn agriculture with rudimentary tools. Subsistence farming is widespread in the three municipalities rural areas. **Shifting cultivation is one of the main causes of degradation in the PNCVS.** Among farming activities, food crops largely dominate, with maize and cassava as the basis of the population's diet. **Local people are poor and live on under US\$ 1.00 per day.**

**The three main religions practised in the area are traditional religions, Christianity and Islam. For each religion, the number of practitioners varies across municipalities. Whereas most Muslims belong to the Nago and Yoruba people, who tend to be much more involved in trade with Nigeria, those who practise traditional religions and Christianity engage in farming and forestry.**

**Farming is Benin's primary source of wealth, contributing over 25% of GDP. It employs over 55% of the working population. Extensive farming on slash-and-burn land is the most common. Slash-and-burn agriculture is a threat to the environment and a cause of land pressure. It contributes to environmental degradation and deforestation. In general, environmental degradation has a significant impact on the national economy. According to the country environmental assessment carried out for the Republic of Benin by the World Bank, the main causes are:**

- Uncontrolled land clearing for agricultural purposes, mainly for cotton cultivation;**
- Vegetation fires linked to agriculture, livestock farming and hunting, which are thought to be responsible for the destruction of nearly 50,000 hectares of forest per year;**
- Transhumance, particularly cross-border transhumance, characterized by overgrazing;**
- Excessive exploitation of wood resources.**

## **Vegetation**

The PNCVS landscape is characteristic of that of the wetlands and adjacent land in southern Benin, including a diversity of micro-habitats with various types of plant assemblages from dense forest to cropland and different types of savannas. Localized inventories carried out in the PNCVS showed the presence of over 400 identified plant species, including species of high biological, medicinal, traditional and cultural value or of importance for timber and fuelwood use. Among others, species include: *Ceiba pentandra*, *Adansonia digitata* (baobab); *Milicia excelsa* (iroko); *Albizia adiantifolia*; *Abizia ferrugina*; *Zanthoxylum zanthoxyloides* (fagara); *Antiaris toxicaria*; *Vitex doniana* (black plum tree); *Cola gigantea*; *Dialium guineense* (CREDI-NGO 2015).

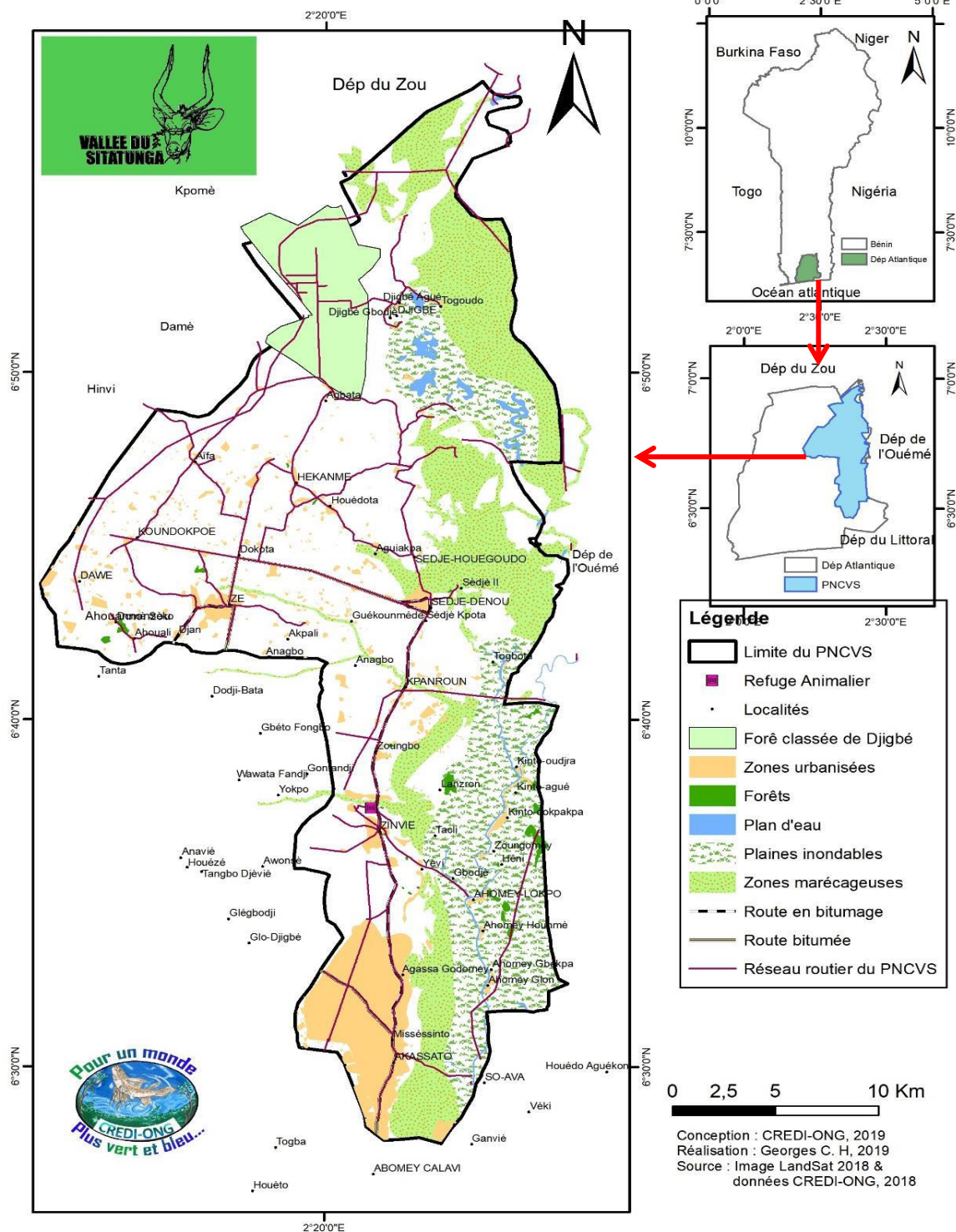
Specific environments of this environment, such as dense forests, harbour almost unique species per genus (124 species belonging to 111 genera distributed in 50 families, Hèdègbètan (2017) in Ahomey-Lokpo) while environments heavily disturbed by anthropogenic actions fall prey to a multitude of opportunistic or pioneer species.

In PNCVS areas, IUCN Red List species (*Milicia excelsa*, *Millettia warneckei* and *Albizia ferruginea*) have been identified in Benin as in great danger of extinction in the area and measures were proposed for managing their population.

The presence of multiple small-scale community forests closely linked to local people's culture is a very important attribute of the PNCVS landscape. These forest patches are very rich in biodiversity and rare and endangered species.

**Table 1: List of key community forests in the PNCVS**

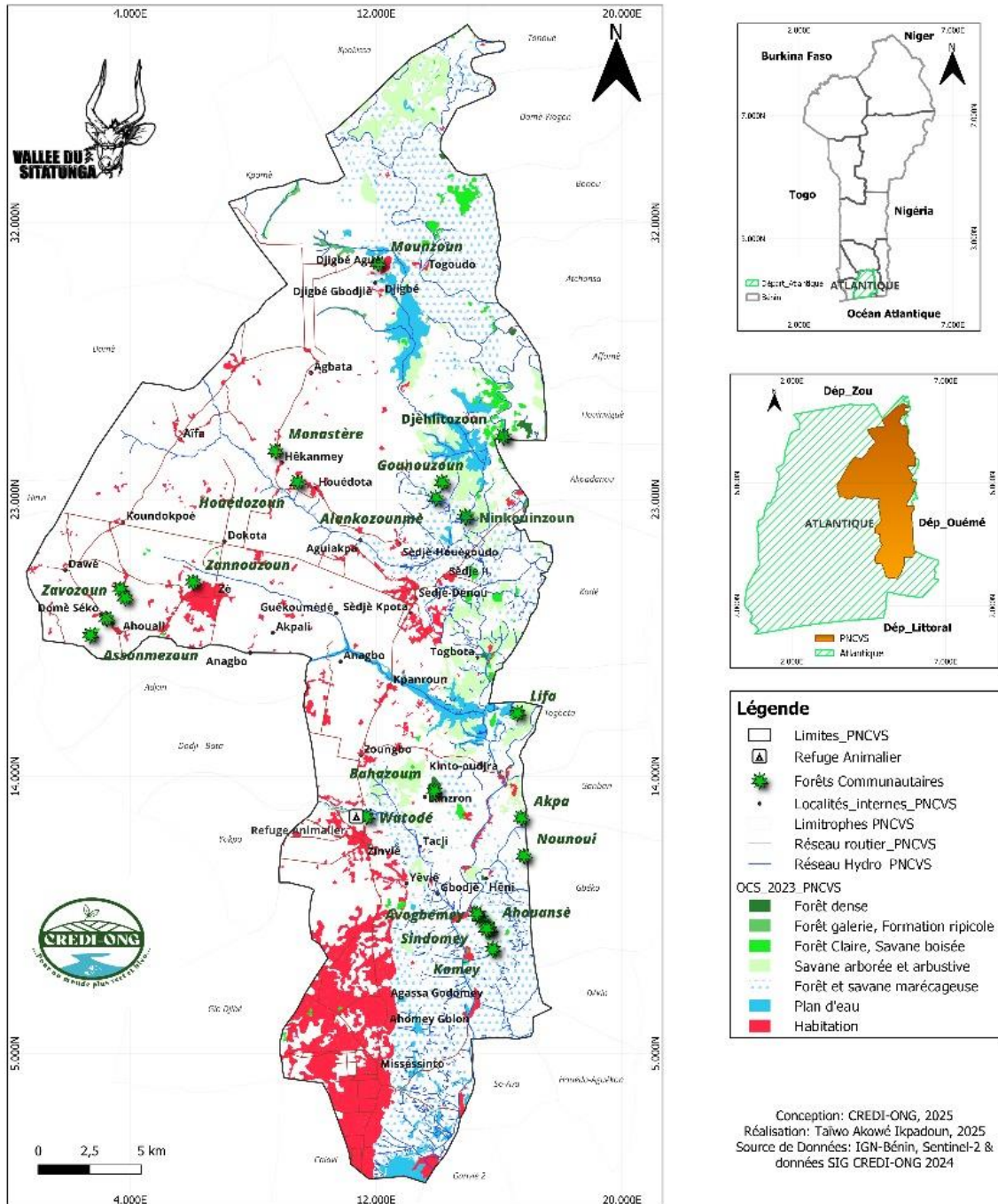
N°	Municipality	District	Village	Community Forest	Land area (ha)	Comments
1.	Abomey-Calavi	Kpanroun	Avagbé	Bahazoun	49.5	
2.	Abomey-Calavi	Zinvié	Kpotomey	Watôdé	2.3	
3.	Sô-Ava	Ahomey-Lokpo	Kinto-Oudjra	Lifa	12.77	
4.	Sô-Ava	Ahomey-Lokpo	Kinto-Agué	Akpa	14.74	
5.	Sô-Ava	Ahomey-Lokpo	Hêni	Hêni	2.65	
6.	Sô-Ava	Ahomey-Lokpo	Zounkpédé	Avogbé	11.56	
7.	Sô-Ava	Ahomey-Lokpo	Zounkpédé	Sindomey	6.44	
8.	Sô-Ava	Ahomey-Lokpo	Zounkpédé	Ahouanssè	15.33	
9.	Sô-Ava	Ahomey-Lokpo	Ounmè	Komè	9.33	
10.	Sô-Ava	Ahomey-Lokpo	Zounkpédé	Kpoèmey	17.14	
11.	Sô-Ava	Sô-Ava	Nounouizoun	Nounouizoun	75	
12.	Zè	Koundokpoé	Tangnigbadji	Hounzoun	3.9	With SMP
13.	Zè	Zè-Centre	Zannoudji	Zannouzoun	16.7	
14.	Zè	Dawé	Domè - Séko	Domèsékô	18.18	
15.	Zè	Dawé	Domè - Séko	Assanmèzoun	11.42	With SMP
16.	Zè	Hêkanmè	Hêkanmè	Houédozoun	4	With SMP
17.	Zè	Koundokpoé	Tangnigbadji	Zavozoun	4.3	With SMP
18.	Zè	Djigbé	Djigbé	Mounzoun	Unknown	
19.	Zè	Sèdjè-Houègoudo	Ayahounta fifadji	Gounnouzou	20	
20.	Zè	Sèdjè-Houègoudo	Houègoudo	Ninkouinzoun	10.45	
21.	Zè	Hêkanmè	Mangassa	Monastère	4.3	
22.	Zè	Sèdjè-Houègoudo	Akpomey	Djèhlitôzoun	53	
<b>Total</b>					<b>363.01</b>	



**Figure 1: Map of forest resources in the PNCVS**



## Parc Naturel Communautaire de la Vallée du Sitatunga



**Figure 2: Map of the Sitatunga Valley Community Natural Park showing project areas**



**Photo 1: Aerial photo of a part of project area where forest landscape rehabilitation activities are planned**



#### 1.4 Expected outcomes at project completion

At project completion, the following situation is expected:

- **The 22 community forests are provided with simplified management plans.** They will enable dignitaries and forest owners to define the terms and conditions for managing their forests, and to improve their management control and monitoring;
- Demarcation and physical delimitation of the 22 community forests to prevent encroachments and reduce pressure on land;
- Establishment of multiple-objective plantations over 100 ha to contribute to meeting local people's needs in forest products;
- Farming techniques are improved in agricultural plots covering an 80 ha-total land area selected in the immediate vicinity of community forests with a view to increasing production without encroaching on the forest estate;
- Development of alternative income-generating activities to diversify and increase local people's income by at least 20% with a view to alleviate poverty;
- Local people capacity building for at least 100 beneficiaries in development and management techniques for forests and private plantations;
- Strong involvement of Municipal Authorities through the establishment and operation of Municipal Committees for the Coordination and Monitoring of Community Forest Integration into the Municipality Protected Area System;
- Biodiversity enhancement in the 22 forests through plantings of high value plant species and the release of appropriate CITES-listed wildlife species specimens;
- Development of reforestation activities such as seed collection, high quality seedling production, promoting woodfuel plantations to meet the needs in energy wood, which is the main household source of energy in rural areas. It could also contribute to improving local people's income;
- Organizational and institutional capacity building for stakeholders through the establishment of Local Community Forest Management Committees and training of their members selected among local people.

In the medium- to long-term, an increase in the forest cover of the PNCVS is expected, together with an increase in the production of timber and fuelwood to meet local needs and slow down the rate of degradation affecting natural forests.

## 2. PART 2: PROJECT RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

### 2.1. Rationale

#### 2.1.1. Institutional set-up and organizational issues

**In Benin, government structures, civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations and local populations are responsible for the management of forest resources.**

Following the adoption of the national forestry policy establishing the participatory approach and the effectiveness of the administration decentralization process, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been heavily involved in the management of forest resources alongside local populations.

The Regional Research and Education Center for Integrated Development (CREDI-NGO) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization governed by the 1901 law governing non-profit organizations, and registered under number N°2005/0558/ DEP-ATL-LITT/SG/SAG-ASSOC, as of September 28, 2005. CREDI-NGO operates in three fields which are the promotion of sustainable farming, education for world citizenship and environmental protection. CREDI-NGO focuses most of its actions on the sustainable management of wetlands. As part of aquaculture promotion, CREDI-NGO has established and is operating since March 2006 in Zinvié-Kpotomey an aquaculture farm which serves as a training, demonstration and experimentation tool with a view to developing technologies for dissemination. CREDI-NGO is therefore part of the local community, with a special status. As a promoter of the "Sitatunga Valley" initiative, CREDI-NGO worked with the support of the communities to gain initial official recognition of the established reserve from the municipal council of Abomey-Calavi Municipality in 2010. The initiative was ratified in 2015 by the authorities of the Sô-Ava Municipality and by the Zè Municipality in 2018. CREDI-NGO has shown it had the skills to serve as facilitator and manager for implementing community management in the reserve, filling an essential role. **The project will be implemented by CREDI-NGO, which will serve as the executing agency. As such, CREDI-NGO will be supported by other government bodies, which will serve as the collaborating agencies, namely:**

- **The General Directorate for Water, Forests and Hunting (DGEFC), through the Forestry Inspectorate for Atlantique-Littoral, which is the forestry agency responsible for developing government policies and strategies, and national sustainable forest management programs. The DGEFC will validate the community forests simple management plans and ensure compliance of project activities with current forest management legislation. Furthermore, the DGEFC serves as the national focal point in charge of managing the ITTA in Benin. It will collaborate with project implementation and monitoring in compliance with relevant ITTO standards. It will serve as the collaborating Agency of the project.**
- The National Center for Wildlife Reserve Management (CENAGREF), which is responsible for the management of national parks and their hunting areas. The CENAGREF represents the government in the protected area management systems. CENAGREF is a strategic partner for integrating the PNCVS into the national protected area system and future labels.
- The Benin Environmental Agency (ABE): It serves as the National Focal Point for the management of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) in Benin. The ABE develops policies, strategies and management plans for RAMSAR Sites in Benin. It will be associated with the project to ensure compliance with plans and strategies for wetland management and develop synergies with the various ongoing actions.
- **The municipalities of Abomey-Calavi, Zè and So-Ava, where the PNCVS is located, will be the project partners that will ensure the sustainability of project activities.**
- **In the course of project implementation, local bodies involved in project implementation will be established. These include Local Community Forest Management Committees (CLGFC) and Municipal Committees for the Coordination and Monitoring of Community Forest Integration (CCSIF). The capacities CLGFCs and CCSIFs will be strengthened and,**

by the end of the project, they will be able to play a key role for sustaining project achievements and outcomes and pursuing work after project completion.

For monitoring project management and implementation, a Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be set up, and will also support the Executing Agency. The Project Steering Committee will consist of DGEFC, ABE and the representatives of municipalities, dignitaries and Technical and Financial Partners (TFPs).

### 2.1.2. Stakeholder analysis

Three broad categories of stakeholders are found in the Sitatunga Valley, as follows:

- Primary stakeholders directly involved in the management of sacred forests, namely:
  - Traditional Authorities including dignitaries, traditional chieftains, village chiefs, kings, land chiefs, community leaders and land owners. They serve as the community forest managers and owners. They derive their livelihoods and authority from natural resources;
  - Local communities or people, including men women and children allowed to access forest patches and harvest natural resources in the Sitatunga Valley;
  - Local farmers with farming activities in the immediate vicinity of community forests and potential impacts on the forests;
  - Guild of hunters.
- Secondary stakeholders include:
  - The Municipal Authorities, responsible for the development and sustainable management of municipality resources. They will support project implementation in connection with institutional and financial aspects. Municipal authorities expressed their strong approval and commitment to project implementation by issuing the endorsement and cofunding letter as included in Annex 4. These are key stakeholders for the sustainability of project activities;
  - **The CENAGREF (National Centre for Wildlife Reserve Management)—The government body responsible for the establishment of parks and protected areas.**
  - The Forestry Administration which serves as the project collaborating agency providing institutional support;
  - The Benin Environment Agency (ABE), which is also an institutional actor.
- Tertiary stakeholders include the Territorial Agency for Agricultural Development (ATDA) (Atlantique Prefecture) and development NGOs operating in the project area

**The project was developed based on a participatory approach. In theory, all stakeholders support the project. However, any opposition from stakeholders during project implementation will be addressed through awareness-raising and capacity building, while taking into account their interests and developing alternative approaches.**

Stakeholders Groups	Characteristics	Problems, needs and interests	Potential	Involvement in the project
<b><i>Primary stakeholders</i></b>				
<i>Traditional authorities:</i> (dignitaries, traditional chieftains, village chiefs, kings, land chiefs, community leaders, land owners)	Guarantors and managers of PCNVS community forests. These authorities protect community forests and edict CF access and local natural resource management rules	Lack of capacity to ensure the conservation of CFs in the current context. Main livelihoods threatened. Expect to see CFs allocated management plans and legal recognition titles	Traditional authorities wield power at village community level. Keepers and repository of local knowledge in the conservation of natural resources and CFs. Strong commitment to participatory management Guarantors of forests and endogenous culture Guarantors of social cohesion Important role in culture development	Prime project beneficiaries; they will be supported by the project in terms of capacity building for the sustainable management of community forests. They will facilitate the set-up of local CF management committees (CLGCFs) and activity implementation in CFs

<b>Stakeholders Groups</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Problems, needs and interests</b>	<b>Potential</b>	<b>Involvement in the project</b>
Local communities or populations	Users, including men, women and children of the villages who depend on forest resources	Lack of resources to secure the sustainable management of resources and the conservation of CFs; stakeholders applying their respective pressures on forest patches. Reduced stakeholders' livelihoods	Strong potential for developing IGAs to conserve CFs. Eagerly look forward to project implementation. Strong commitment to the sustainable management of forests	Prime beneficiaries and direct stakeholders for the implementation of project development activities and alternative IGAs. Forest resource users
Local farmers using land adjacent to community forests	Active group comprised of CF neighboring people; they derive their income from farming activities	Need to increase their farming output. Lack of means to apply improved production technology; encroach or "nibble at" community forests	Understand the significance of CFs. Willingness to adopt improved production technology. Welcome behaviour changes	Prime stakeholders and beneficiaries of capacity-building activities under the project and facilitation of community forest demarcation
Sitanaga Valley Hunters Guild	Hunters are a target group of particular and strategic interest in the context of issues facing the PNCVS	Necessity for the development and sustainable management of wildlife habitat to ensure wildlife survival in the forest ecosystem	Familiar with the PNCVS area. Strong willingness for game farming	Prime stakeholders and beneficiaries of capacity-building activities under the project. Hunters will facilitate the establishment of hunting areas and ecosystem restoration
<b>Secondary Stakeholders</b>				
Municipal authorities	In charge of land tenure management, and of developing and implementing municipalities' development plans	Limited knowledge of project area potential; Low use of development opportunities; Inadequate capacity to undertake integrated natural resource planning	Exercise their authority and a strong influence on land management. Support the sustainable management of CFs	Collaborate to secure the land tenure of community forests and resource allocation in project implementation (see endorsement and cofounding letters in Annex 4). Support for the establishment of Municipal Committees for the Coordination and Monitoring of Community Forest Integration
Village Environment Management Associations (AVGE)	AVGEs serve as management bodies at village level. They include all inhabitants of each village around the environment issue	Difficulty in mobilizing financial resources to address environment-related challenges and issues in the PCNVS	Familiar with environment-related challenges and issues in the PCNVS	Collaborate in awareness-raising for project activities. Partners to be consulted in connection with project activities implementation

Stakeholders Groups	Characteristics	Problems, needs and interests	Potential	Involvement in the project
	in general at the village level			
General Directorate of Water, Forests and Hunting	Represented in all project area municipalities. Responsible for implementing national forest policy, laws and regulations on forest resource sustainable management	Insufficient resources to support community forest sustainable management. Demonstrated low interest in sacred forests in the past	Increasingly aware of community forest importance and potential	Support for the development and validation of CF management plans. Support for implementation of management plans. Support partner for accessing funding sources. Support partner for law implementation
Benin Environment Agency	Agency responsible for the management of RAMSAR sites in Benin. Develops the development plans of RAMSAR sites in Benin.	Inadequate resources to ensure the conservation and sustainable management of wetlands of international importance. Concerned by natural resource degradation issues in RAMSAR sites	Strong commitment to resource conservation	Partner institution that will ensure environmental compliance of project actions. Support for the institutional set-up of the project
National Center for Wildlife Reserve Management (CENAGREF)	Agency responsible for the management of wildlife reserves	Interested in the establishment of the PNCVS in southern Benin	Strong will to re-establish a Park in southern Benin. Good knowledge of wildlife reserves management	Strategic partner for the recognition of the PNCVS in the national protected area system and future labels. Support partner for accessing funding sources
<b>Tertiary stakeholders</b>				
Agency for Agricultural Development (ATDA) (Atlantique Prefecture)	Government body responsible for rural and farming development	Concerned by the degradation of land areas adjacent to community forests and decrease in farming production	Relevant for capacity building in Improved Production Systems	Collaborate with project team for building the capacities of local farmers in the vicinity of community forests
Development NGOs	Proactively involved in implementing rural development activities	Lack resources and skills for planning sustainable rural development activities	Good experience of work in project area	Subcontracting of development activities, capacity building of direct beneficiaries and experience sharing

### 2.1.3. Problem analysis

**The main issue to be addressed is the overuse of the PNCVS natural resources, resulting in the degradation of the entire ecosystem.** The population in the Sitatunga Valley is now close to 240,000, over 70% of whom live from farming. Unfortunately, few farmers have been able to date to emerge from precariousness and poverty through their activity. **Because of the low production capacities of producers, decline in soil fertility, low level of training, low profits generated, to name a few, local communities have become highly dependent on natural resources to meet their vital needs. Their use of natural resources is uncontrolled, as they often consider them as inexhaustible. In addition, no simplified management plans are in place in the PNCVS-CFs. This situation triggers a vicious circle making communities less and less resilient every day and therefore more vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change.** This was confirmed by the Development and Management Plan which identified farming, hunting, transhumance, logging and quarrying and urbanization as environmental in the PNCVS.

This precarious situation of people and their dependence on natural resources is accentuated year after year by the impacts of poorly organized and disastrous transhumance, poor governance in the management and control of natural resources, and corruption and impunity in the natural resources sector. **As a result, there is an increasing degradation of the entire ecosystem, with three key causes identified as follows:**

#### a) Forest resource overuse

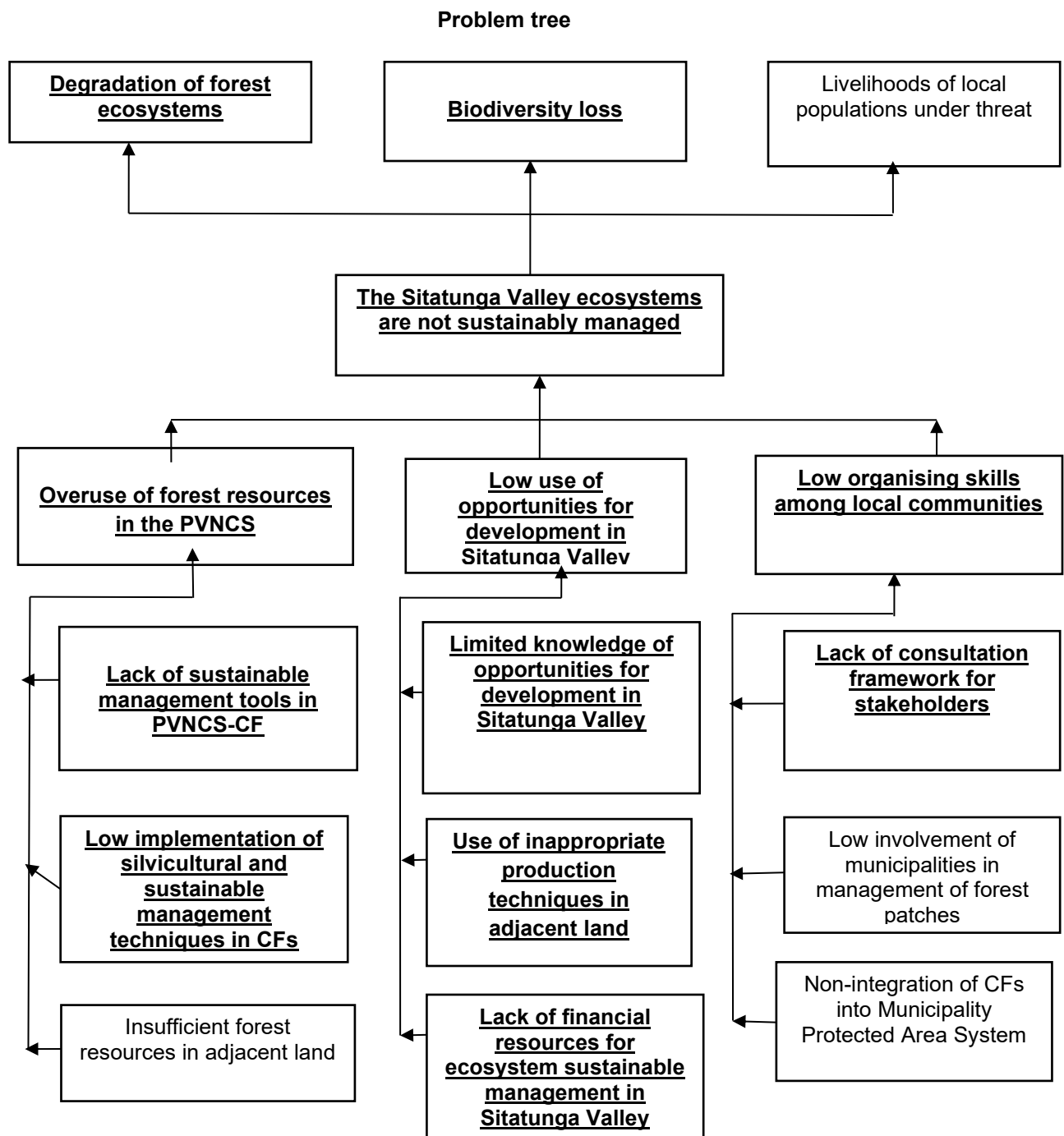
**Lack of management tools such as gazetted forests in the 22 CFs located in the PNCVS. They are severely degraded due to the decline in the power of traditional leaders, despite their desire to conserve them. The forests are no longer able to withstand the various anthropogenic pressures.** The high human population density in the Sitatunga Valley has negatively affected forest resources. Meeting needs in timber forest products, which used to be based on local resources, has been extended to community forests. It resulted in the overuse of available resources and consequently to forest degradation. The actual potential of these forests is not known. The limits of forest patches are not clearly materialized and local farmers in search of farming land to increase their production make incursions or encroachments. Due to the absence of title deeds for CFs, and their managers' declining power and poverty, land disputes and forest fragmentation followed by the sale of plots of land with forests is now common. The development of management tools (simple management development plans), the improvement of farming techniques and the development of reforestation will contribute to reducing the pressures on CFs.

#### b) Low knowledge of opportunities for development in the Sitatunga Valley

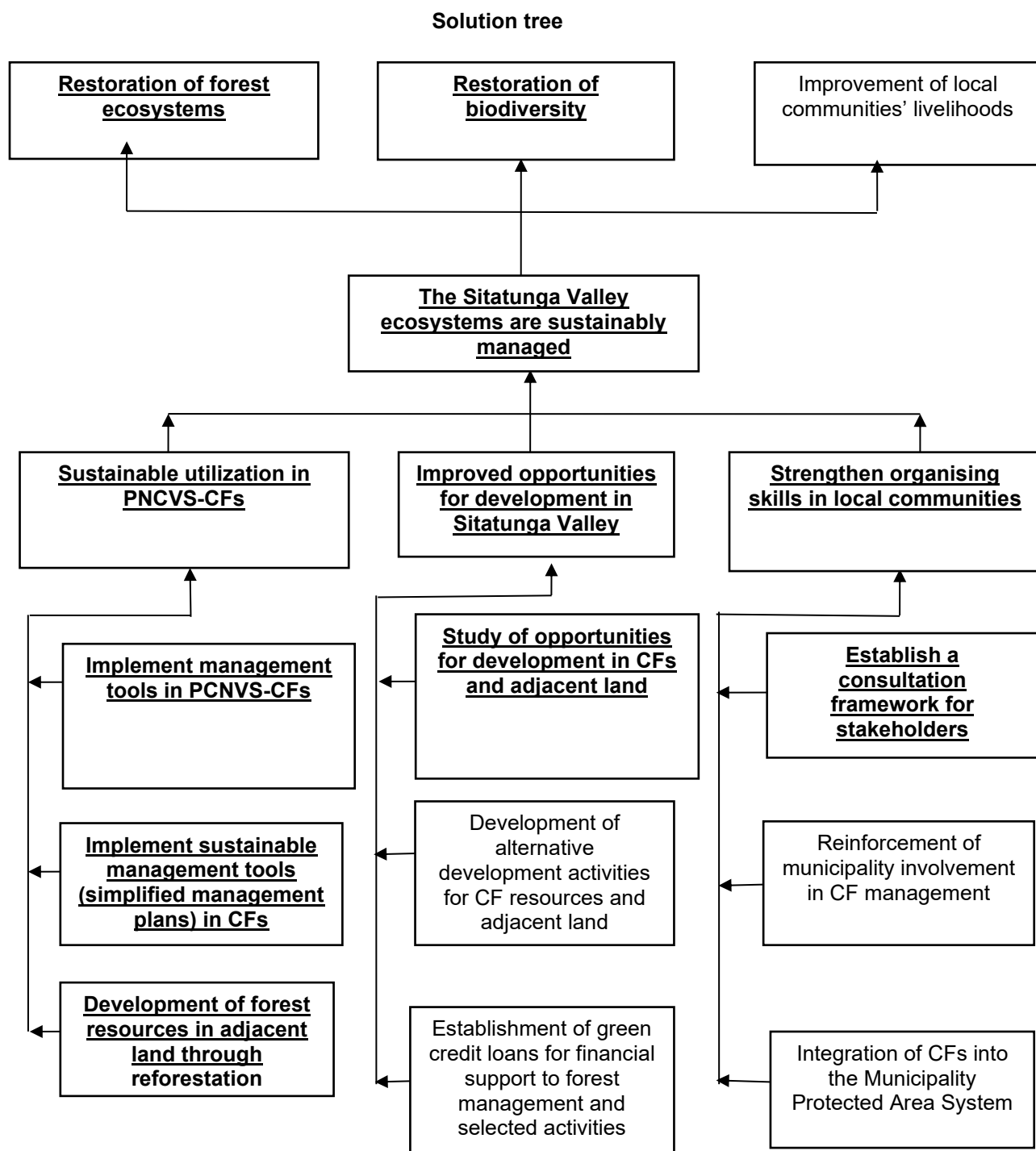
Local people derive their main income from farming and forest resources. However, there are also other opportunities for improving their income from natural resources that they're not aware of. The limited knowledge of opportunities for developing natural resources and related lack of means maintain local populations in a vicious circle of poverty resulting in the degradation of natural resources and continuous deforestation. The project will break this vicious circle through a better knowledge of different opportunities for valorization through the development of income-generating activities. Consequently, the project will help diversify sources of income and improve people's livelihoods while conserving forest resources.

#### c) Low Organizational skills among local communities

**Local communities that manage natural resources are not organized into interest advocacy groups. They act in an uncoordinated manner.** Municipal authorities in charge of local development do not give forests all the attention they deserve, and are little involved in forest management. Consequently, in most cases, community forests are not taken into account in the Municipality Development Plans (PDC). **In addition, the lack of consultation and exchange mechanisms among stakeholders responsible for CF management has also been a factor in their degradation.** As a result, forests are degraded or even disappear, including biodiversity loss and decreased means of subsistence for local communities. **Project implementation will make it possible to address the above-mentioned issues with a view to halting degradation and initiate sustainable management in the PNCVS.**







#### 2.1.4. Logical framework matrix

Intervention Strategy	Measurable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
<u>Development objective:</u> <b>To contribute to the sustainable management of the PNCVS in southern Benin</b>	<u>Impact indicators</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2030, the degradation process affecting the Sitatunga Valley ecosystems in south Benin is reduced by at least 30%;</li> <li>At project completion, income of people highly dependent on forest resources has been raised by at least 20%;</li> <li><b><u>By 2030, the PNCVS forest landscape has been restored;</u></b></li> <li><b><u>By 2030, the PNCVS biodiversity has been restored.</u></b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satellite imagery, aerial photographs, vegetation maps;</li> <li>DGEFC reports on forest resources</li> <li>Reports on project implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable management of wetland ecosystems remains a national priority;</li> <li>Ecosystems are not overly affected by climate change;</li> <li>Livelihoods derived from forest resources are competitive</li> </ul>
<u>Specific objective</u> To ensure the restoration of forest landscapes in the Sitatunga Valley through stakeholder capacity building to improve people's living conditions	<u>Outcome indicators</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At project completion, 22 community forests have been provided with operational management tools;</li> <li>At project completion, income derived from community forests has increased by 20%;</li> <li><b><u>At project completion, a stakeholder consultation framework has been established and is operational.</u></b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various project reports</li> <li>Interviews/surveys of stakeholders</li> <li>Community forest management document</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sustainable management of sacred forests remains a priority for grassroots stakeholders;</li> <li>Effective stakeholders' support to project objectives</li> </ul>
<u>Output 1</u> <b><u>Management tools and sustainable management are implemented in the PNCVS-CFs</u></b>	<u>Output indicators</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By project year 2, simplified management plans have been developed and validated following a participatory approach for the 22 forests;</li> <li>By project year 2, the boundaries of the 22 community forests are identified and demarcated;</li> <li>At project completion, at least 100 ha of plantations have been established and enrichment planting carried out in 22 community forests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management plan documents for forest communities;</li> <li>Project progress reports</li> <li>Land area of established plantations;</li> <li>Density of indigenous seedlings used for enrichment planting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local communities support project objectives,</li> <li>Participatory and iterative approach complied with</li> <li>Beneficiaries follow implemented approaches</li> </ul>
<u>Output 2</u> <b><u>Opportunities for development by local people in the Sitatunga Valley have been identified and are implemented</u></b>	<u>Output indicators</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By project year 1, the potential for socioeconomic valorization in CFs and adjacent areas have been identified;</li> <li><b><u>By project year 3, income derived from CFs and adjacent land has increased by 20%;</u></b></li> <li>By project year 2, sustainable funding mechanisms for forest communities have been identified and are being implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><u>Study of potential for socioeconomic valorization in CFs and adjacent land</u></b></li> <li><b><u>Number of sessions and participants in training sessions</u></b></li> <li>Number of mechanisms identified and implemented for sustainable funding and community forest valorization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available for session participation and receptivity to conveyed information</li> <li>Willingness of local people to implement the new funding and valorization mechanisms</li> <li>Financial resources available</li> </ul>

Intervention Strategy	Measurable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
Output 3 <u>Local communities' organizing skills have been enhanced</u>	<p>Output indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>At project completion, local stakeholder consultation frameworks have been established and are operational;</u></li> <li>• <u>By project year 1, all stakeholders are aware of the need for CF conservation and participation in consultation framework-related meetings;</u></li> <li>• At project completion, 22 community forests under management are integrated into the Municipality Protected Area System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Document establishing local community consultation framework</u></li> <li>- <u>Meeting minutes of consultation framework bureau and decentralized bodies</u></li> <li>- <u>Project progress reports</u></li> <li>- Official document establishing CF integration into the Municipality Protected Area System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The various stakeholders assume their respective roles</li> <li>- Compliance with integration process</li> </ul>

## 2.2. Objectives

### 2.2.1. Development objective and impact indicators

The project development objective is to contribute to the sustainable management of the Sitatunga Valley in southern Benin.

#### Impact indicators

- By 2030, the degradation process affecting the Sitatunga Valley ecosystems in southern Benin is reduced by at least 30%;
- At project completion, income of people highly dependent on forest resources has been raised by at least 20%;
- By 2030, the PNCVS forest landscape has been extended by at least 10%;
- By 2030, the PNCVS biodiversity has been restored.

### 2.2.2. Specific objectives and outcome indicators

The project specific objective is to ensure the restoration of forest landscapes in the Sitatunga Valley through stakeholder capacity building to improve people's living conditions.

#### Outcome indicators

- At project completion, 22 community forests are provided with operational management tools;
- At project completion, income derived from CFs has increased by **20%**;
- At project completion, consultation frameworks are in place in 22 community forests.

### **3. PART 3: DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT INTERVENTIONS**

#### **3.1 Outputs and activities**

##### **3.1.1. Outputs**

Three outputs are expected from project implementation.

**Output 1: Management tools and sustainable management are implemented in the PNCVS-CFs**

**Output 2: Opportunities for development by local people in the Sitatunga Valley have been identified and are implemented**

**Output 3: Local communities' organizing skills have been enhanced**

##### **3.1.2. Activities**

The following activities will be implemented to achieve above outputs:

**Output 1: Management tools and sustainable management are implemented in the PNCVS-CFs**

Activity 1.1: Develop and validate simplified management plans for the 22 CFs

Activity 1.2: Implement the simplified development and management plans

Activity 1.3: **Support reforestation and enrichment work in CFs and adjacent land**

**Output 2: Opportunities for development by local people in the Sitatunga Valley have been identified and are implemented**

Activity 2.1: **Conduct study of opportunities for socioeconomic development in CFs;**

Activity 2.2: Support the implementation of alternative income-generating activities in CFs and adjacent land

Activity 2.3: Identify and implement sustainable funding mechanisms for alternative IGAs and CF management

**Output 3: Local communities' organizing skills have been enhanced**

Activity 3.1: **Establish consultation frameworks for stakeholders at the CFs and PNCVS levels**

Activity 3.2: **Operationalize local stakeholder consultation frameworks**

Activity 3.3: Integrate CFs into the Municipality Protected Area System

Activity 3.4: Initiate activities for integrating the PNCVS into Benin Protected Area System

**Output 4. Appropriate project management has been achieved**

Activity 4 1: Establish project team and Project Steering Committee

Activity 4.2: Hold the project inception workshop

Activity 4.3: Carry out project activity implementation, monitoring & evaluation and reporting

Activity 4.4: Hold the project completion workshop

#### **3.2 Implementation approaches and methods**

The project aims to reduce the degradation of ecosystems in the PNCVS by addressing identified key causes. Community forests belong to local communities and their sustainable management will necessitate the adoption of a participatory approach. The project will work in collaboration with all stakeholders concerned by CF management. All project stages will be implemented following this approach. The approach based on Information, Outreach and Communication will be prioritized in all process stages, which will enable all project stakeholders to share the same vision and to work in synergy to achieve expected outcomes. In practical terms, the project will be implemented based on **the ITTO Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics, including the six Principles developed by the Global Partnership for Forest and Landscape Restoration, in combination with the Restoration Opportunity Methodology (ROAM). Forest landscape restoration is a long-term process aimed at restoring ecological functionality and improving human well-being in**

deforested or degraded forest landscapes. It focuses on 'forests' as it involves increasing the number and/or health of trees in an area. It focuses on 'landscapes' as it involves watersheds, territories or even entire countries where numerous land uses interact. It focuses on 'restoration' as it involves restoring the biological productivity in an area to generate all possible benefits for the local people.

Forest landscape restoration is an integrated approach at the scale of an entire landscape that can help reverse the process of land degradation, increase carbon storage, conserve biodiversity and create sustainable livelihoods for local communities. The methodological approach will be based on the six Principles set out in the *ITTO Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics*. These are: Principle 1: Focus on landscapes; Principle 2: Engage stakeholders and support participatory governance; Principle 3: Restore multiple functions for multiple benefits; Principle 4: Maintain and enhance natural forest ecosystems within landscapes; Principle 5: Tailor to local context using a variety of approaches; Principle 6: Manage adaptively for long-term resilience.

In addition, project implementation will be carried out by a multidisciplinary team including foresters, socio-economists and geographers/cartographers, and experts in integrated wetland management, local development officers, and with the involvement of local communities and sacred forest managers, as well as with the collaboration of Municipal Authorities and the Forestry Administration. Consultations will take place for specific surveys and evaluations. Project implementation will be undertaken in three stages corresponding to the three outputs:

### **3.2.1. Sustainable use of resources in the PNCVS-CFs**

Sustainable use of CF resources requires the development and implementation of management tools, the improvement of farming techniques in adjacent land to reduce CF incursions and the improvement of opportunities for producing timber forest products.

Management tools will be developed from project first year and implemented following a participatory approach. The proposed strategy is as follows:

- Develop CF development and management plans through consulting services. Well-experienced NGO partners or individual consultants will be recruited to develop the CF management plans. The plans will then be validated at several levels by the relevant authorities and environmental compliance certificates will be issued by the relevant agencies. The project team jointly with the communities will implement the management plan specifications (including reforestation, protection, enrichment and planting activities). Aspects relating to the physical demarcation will be taken into account in plan implementation;
- Strengthen the capacities of local stakeholders to improve production systems in adjacent areas through identifying appropriate techniques and support for their implementation;
- Improve the potential in timber forest product production through reforestation both in adjacent land and in CFs, and enrichment planting in CFs.

All above project activities will be carried out with the involvement of local communities based on a participatory and inclusive approach.

### **3.2.2. Opportunities for development by local people in the Sitatunga Valley have been identified and are implemented**

The level of poverty among local people is a limiting factor for the sustainable management of CFs. To survive, CF managers are left with no other choice than overusing CF resources or even selling plots of CF land. Output 2 is based on an approach aimed at alleviating poverty and the various pressures on CFs by local people. The fear of the sacred having fallen into disuse, the sustainable conservation of CFs should be based not only on its religious and cultural roles but also and above all on their contribution to improving forest managers' income. Project output 2 will contribute to diversifying users' sources of income by developing income-generating activities in order to alleviate poverty and consequently the pressure on forest resources. The feasibility of developing activities identified by local stakeholders will be considered. Activities include potamopig, rabbit, snail and cane rat farming. Particular emphasis will be placed on economic reforestation activities, i.e. the production of service wood and firewood through plantations in adjacent land.

To this end, a study on socio-economic cost-efficiency will be conducted and a business plan developed from project first year. The key beneficiaries will then be selected and trained. The means required to initiate activities will be made available to beneficiaries as loans, i.e., green microcredits. The loans will not be managed by the project executing agency, but by a microfinance institution. The US\$ 10,000 amount will serve as collateral for the microfinance institution. At the end of the cycle, the starting capital made available to each beneficiary will be recovered and allocated to other beneficiaries and so on. This approach will ensure sustainable and continuous funding of activities in adjacent land with a view to alleviating poverty and subsequent pressures on forest resources.

### **3.2.3. Local communities' organising skills have been enhanced**

Local communities are not organized into interest advocacy groups or associations. Their efforts are uncoordinated and such a situation does not encourage support from partners. To this end, the proposed strategy is to establish management bodies such as Local Community Forest Management Committees (CLGFC) at the local level and the Municipal Committees for the Coordination and Monitoring of Community Forest Integration (CCSIF) at the municipality level. The CLGFCs and CCSIFs will be in charge of application procedures for legal recognition, and of CF integration into the municipality permanent forest estate. At project completion, the CLGFCs and CCSIFs will ensure outcomes sustainability and the continuation of project activities.

### 3.3 Work plan

Outputs/Activities	Party in charge/ collaborator	Work plan											
		Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Output 1: <u>Management tools and sustainable management are implemented in the PNCVS-CFs</u></b>													
Activity 1.1: Develop and validate simplified management plans for the 22 CFs	Consultant/ Project coordinator												
Activity 1.2: Implement the simplified development and management plans	<b><u>Project Coordinator/ Communities</u></b>												
Activity 1.3: <b><u>Support reforestation and enrichment work in CFs and adjacent land</u></b>	<b><u>Communities/ Project Coordinator</u></b>												
<b>Output 2: <u>Opportunities for development by local people in the Sitatunga Valley have been identified and are implemented</u></b>													
Activity 2.1: <b><u>Conduct study of opportunities for socioeconomic development in CFs;</u></b>	Consultant/ Project Coordinator												
Activity 2.2: Support the implementation of alternative income-generating activities in CFs and adjacent land	<b><u>Consultant/ Local communities</u></b>												
Activity 2.3: Identify and implement sustainable funding mechanisms for alternative IGAs and CF management	Project Coordinator /Decentralized Funding Structures												
<b>Output 3: <u>Local communities’ organizing skills have been enhanced</u></b>													
Activity 3.1: <b><u>Establish consultation frameworks for stakeholders at the CFs and PNCVS levels</u></b>	Project Coordinator /Consultant												
<b><u>Activity 3.2: Operationalize local stakeholder consultation frameworks</u></b>	Project Coordinator / Consultant												
Activity 3.3: Integrate CFs into the Municipality Protected Area System	Project Coordinator/ Communities												
Activity 3.4: Initiate activities for integrating the PNCVS into Benin Protected Area System	Project Coordinator/ Municipal authorities/ CENAGREF												
<b>4. <u>Appropriate project management has been achieved</u></b>													
Activity 4 1: Establish the project team and Project Steering Committee	Project Coordinator												
Activity 4.2: Hold the project inception workshop	Project Coordinator												
Activity 4.3: Carry out project activity implementation, monitoring & evaluation and reporting	Project Coordinator												
Activity 4.4: Hold the project completion workshop	Project Coordinator												

### 3.4 Budget

The project budget is shown in the master budget schedule below. It provides the details of the costs of project activities and lists the quantities, respective unit costs, the total and distribution by funding sources.

#### 3.4.1 Master budget schedule

Outputs/ Activities	Description	Budget component	Quantity			Units	Coût unitaire \$ EU	Total cost \$ EU	ITTO			EA		
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3				Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Output 1:	Management tools and sustainable management are implemented in the 22 PNCVS-CFs													
Activity 1.1:	Develop and validate simplified management plans for the 22 CFs													
	Hiring of Consultants for development of SMPs for 22 CFs	211	22			Lump sum	1200	26400	26400	0	0			
	Validation workshops for 22 CF-SMPs (11 workshops, x 11 days/workshop x 25 participants/workshop US\$80/day)	611	11			11	2000	22000	22000		0			
	Rental of meeting room	612	5	5		Lump sum	200	2200	2 200	0	0			
	Organize 6 IEC missions (5 days x 4 participants)	311	3	3		6	1600	9600	4800	4800	0			
	<b>Fuel for duty travel (missions)</b>	<b>312</b>	3	3		Lump sum	100	600	300	300	0			
Activity 1.2:	Implement the simplified management plans (SMP)													



Outputs/ Activities	Description	Budget component	Quantity			Units	Coût unitaire \$ EU	Total cost \$ EU	ITTO			EA		
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3				Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	Materialize boundaries of 22 CFs (landmarking and marking of boundaries with plantations)	212		300		Ha	140	42000	0	42000	0			
	Edit and disseminate validated SMPs <b>(10 copies/SMP)</b>	213		220		unit	20	<b>4400</b>	<b>0</b>	4400				
	Enrichment planting in CFs	214	50	50		ha	200	20000	0	10000	10000			
<b><u>Activity 1.3:</u></b>	Support reforestation and enrichment work in CFs and adjacent land													
	Carry out reforestation work in adjacent land	216	50	50		ha	300	30000	15000	15000				
<b>Output 2: <u>Opportunities for development by local people in the Sitatunga Valley have been identified and are implemented</u></b>														
Activity 2.1	<b><u>Conduct study of opportunities for socioeconomic development in CFs</u></b>													
	Recruit socio-economic Consultant for natural resource valorization	221	2			p.-m.	3000	<b>6 000</b>	<b>6 000</b>	0	0			
	Workshop for validating study of opportunities for socioeconomic development in CFs and adjacent land	621	30			Participant	80	2400	2400	0	0			

Outputs/ Activities	Description	Budget component	Quantity			Units	Coût unitaire \$ EU	Total cost \$ EU	ITTO			EA		
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3				Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Activity 2.2	Support the implementation of alternative income-generating activities in CFs and adjacent land													
	Technical training for 2 IGA groups per CF (1 IGA per CF)	622		44		Group	100	4400	0	4400	0			
	Financial support to groups for IGAs launch	623		22		Group	500	11000	0	11000	0			
Activité 2.3	Establish green credit loans for financial support to CF management and selected activities	624		1		Group	Lump sum	10000		10000				
<b>Output 3: Local communities' organizing skills have been enhanced</b>														
Activity 3.1:	<b><u>Establish consultation frameworks for stakeholders at the CFs and PNCVS levels</u></b>													
	Meetings for establishing Local Community Forest Management Committees	631	22			Meeting	100	2200	2200	0	0			
Activity 3.2:	Reinforce Municipalities' capacity in CF management													

Outputs/ Activities	Description	Budget component	Quantity			Units	Coût unitaire \$ EU	Total cost \$ EU	ITTO			EA		
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3				Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	<u>Meeting for establishing Municipal Committees responsible for the Coordination and Monitoring of Community Forest Integration</u>	<u>632</u>		<u>04</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>Commitees</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>2000</u>		<u>1000</u>	<u>1000</u>			
Activity 3.3:	Integrate CFs into the Municipality Protected Area System													
	Public consultation	633		22		Lump sum	<u>200</u>	4400			0		4400	
	Costs for CF integration application procedure	634		22		unit	<u>200</u>	4400					4400	
<b>4</b>	<b>Appropriate project management has been achieved</b>													
<b>Activity 4.1:</b>	Establish the project team and Project Steering Committee													
	1 Project Coordinator	11.1	12	12	12	p.-m.	1200	43200				14400	14400	14400
	1 project monitoring and evaluation assistant	11.2	12	12	12	p.-m.	1000	36000	12000	12000	12000			
	1 Secretary/accountant	11.3	12	12	12	p.-m.	600	21600	7200	7200	7200			
-	<b>2 Facilitators (local development officers)</b>	11.4	12	12	12	p.-m.	1000	36000	12000	12000	12000			
	1 Vehicle driver	11.5	12	12	12	p.-m.	300	10800				3600	3600	3600
	1 All-terrain vehicle (pick up)	441	1			Unit	40000	40000	40000	0	0			
-	<b>2 All-terrain motorbikes</b>	442	2			Unit	2 000	4000	4000	0	0			
	Vehicle insurance	541	1	1	1	Unit	300	900	300	300	300			

Outputs/ Activities	Description	Budget component	Quantity			Units	Coût unitaire \$ EU	Total cost \$ EU	ITTO			EA		
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3				Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	Vehicle servicing and maintenance	542		1	1	Unit	Lump sum	2500	500	1000	1000			
	Fuel and lubricants	543 1	12	12	12	m	250	9000	3 000	3000	3000			
	Laptops	444	5			Unit	1000	5000	5000	0	0			
	Printers	445	1			Unit	1200	1200	0	0	0	1200		
	Photocopy machine	446	1			Unit	1500	1500	1 500	0	0			
	Video-projector	447	1			Unit	1200	1200	0	0	0	1 200		
	Networks and utilities	543	12	12	12	m	200	7200	2 400	2400	2400			
	Office supplies	544	12	12	12	m	Lump sum	4500	1500	1500	1500			
	Office rental & utilities	641	12	12	12	m	800	28800				9600	9600	9600
	6 Meetings of Project Steering Committee	642	2	2	2	unit	500	3000	1000	1000	1000			
	Internal audit (3)	643	1	1	1	p.-m.	2000	6000	2000	2000	2000			
	EA's Management costs	71	1	1	1	Lump sum	30000	30000				10000	10000	10000
<b>Activity 4.2:</b>	Hold the project inception workshop													
	1 workshop x 1 day x 40 participants	644	40			Particip ant	80	3200	3200					
	Duty travel for project inception workshop	342	40			Particip ant	20	800	800					
	Rental of room for project inception workshop	645	1			1	200	200	200	0	0			
Activity 4.3:	Carry out project activity implementation, monitoring & evaluation and reporting													

Outputs/ Activities	Description	Budget component	Quantity			Units	Coût unitaire \$ EU	Total cost \$ EU	ITTO			EA		
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3				Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	Quarterly mission for project activity monitoring													
Activity 4.4:	Hold the project completion workshop													
	1 workshop x 1 day x 40 participants	646	40			Participant	80	3200			3200			
	Duty travel for project completion workshop	343	40			Participant	20				800			
	Rental of room	647	1			Lump sum	200	200		0	200			

### 3.4.2 Consolidated budget by component

Component	Description	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<b>10</b>	<b>Personnel</b>				
11.1	1 Project coordinator	43 200	14 400	14 400	14 400
11.2	1 project monitoring & evaluation assistant	36000	12000	12000	12000
11.3	1 Secretary/accountant	21600	7200	7200	7200
11.4	2 Local development officers	36000	12000	12000	12000
11.5	1 vehicle driver	9000	3000	3000	3000
<b>19</b>	<b>Component total</b>	<b>145 800</b>	<b>48 600</b>	<b>48 600</b>	<b>48 600</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Subcontracting</b>				
211	Hiring of consultants for developing simple management plans for 22 CFs	26400	26400		
212	Materialize boundaries of 22 CFs (landmarking and marking of boundaries with plantations)	21000	0	21000	
213	Edit and distribute validated SMPs	4400	0	4400	
214	<u>Enrichment</u> planting in CFs	20000	10000	10000	
216	Reforestation work in adjacent land	30000	15000	15000	
221	Hiring of a socio-economics consultant for natural resource valorization	6 000	6 000		
<b>29</b>	<b>Component total</b>	<b>107800</b>	<b>57400</b>	<b>50400</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>Duty travel</b>				
311	Organize 6 IEC missions (5 days x 4 participants)	9600	4 800	4800	
312	<u>Fuel for duty travel (missions)</u>	600	300	300	
342	Duty travel for project inception workshop	800	800		
332	Duty travel for project completion workshop	800			800
<b>39</b>	<b>Component total</b>	<b>11800</b>	<b>5900</b>	<b>5100</b>	<b>800</b>
<b>40</b>	<b>Capital items</b>				
441	1 All-terrain vehicle	40000	40000		
442	2 All-terrain motorbikes	4000	4000		
444	5 Laptops	5000	5000		

Component	Description	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
445	1 Printer	1200	1200		
446	1 Photocopy machine	1500	1500		
447	Video-projector	1200	1200		
<b>49</b>	<b>Component total</b>	<b>52 900</b>	<b>52 900</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>50</b>	<b>Consumable items</b>				
541	Vehicle insurance	900	300	300	300
542	Vehicle repair and servicing	2500	500	1000	1000
542	Fuel and lubricants	9000	3 000	3000	3000
543	Networks and utilities	7200	2 400	2400	2400
544	Office supplies	4 500	1 500	1500	1500
<b>59</b>	<b>Component total</b>	<b>24100</b>	<b>7700</b>	<b>8200</b>	<b>8200</b>
<b>60</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>				
611	Validation workshops for 22 CF-SMPs (11 workshops x 2 days x 25 participants)	22 000	22000		
612	Rental of room	2 200	2200		
621	Validation of study of socio-economic valorization opportunities in CFs and adjacent land	2400	2400		
622	Technical training for IGA groups (1 IGA per CF)	4400	0	4400	
623	Financial support to groups for IGA launch	11 000	0	11000	
624	Establish green credit lines for financial support to CF management and selected activities	10 000		10000	
631	Meetings for establishing Local Community Forest Management Committees	2200	2200		
<b>632</b>	<b><u>Meetings for establishing Municipal Committees responsible for the coordination and Monitoring of Community Forests Integration</u></b>	<b>2000</b>		<b>1000</b>	<b>1000</b>
633	Public consultation	4400	0	4400	0
634	Procedure costs for CF integration	4400	0	4400	0
641	Rental of offices, and utilities	<b>28800</b>	<b>9600</b>	<b>9600</b>	<b>9600</b>
642	6 project steering committee meetings	3 000	1000	1000	1000
643	Project audits x 3	6000	2000	2000	2000
644	Organization of project inception workshop (1 day x 40 participants)	3200	3200		
645	Rental of room for project inception workshop	200	200		

Component	Description	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
646	Organization of project completion workshop (1 day x 40 participants)	3200			3200
647	Rental of room for project completion workshop	200			200
<b>69</b>	<b>Component total</b>	<b>109 600</b>	<b>44 800</b>	<b>47 800</b>	<b>17 000</b>
<b>70</b>	Executing Agency/National management costs	9776	9776		
<b>79</b>	<b>Component total</b>	<b>9776</b>	<b>9776</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>80</b>	<b>Project monitoring and administration</b>				
<b>81</b>	ITTO monitoring and review	30 000			
<b>82</b>	<u>Ex-post evaluation</u>	15 000			
<b>83</b>	<b>Total 10-83 above items</b>	<b>461 776</b>			
<b>84</b>	ITTO program support (12% on 10-83 above items)	<b>48 576</b>			
<b>89</b>	<b>Component total</b>	<b>93 576</b>			
<b>100</b>	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>555 352</b>			

### 3.4.3 Yearly budget contribution by component - ITTO

Component	Description	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<b>10</b>	<b>Personnel</b>				
11.1	1 Project Coordinator				
11.2	1 project monitoring & evaluation assistant	36000	12000	12000	12000
11.3	1 Secretary/accountant	21600	7200	7200	7200
11.4	2 Local development officers	36000	12000	12000	12000
11.5	1 vehicle driver	0	0	0	0
<b>19</b>	<b>Total component</b>	<b>93 600</b>	<b>31 200</b>	<b>31 200</b>	<b>31 200</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Subcontracting</b>				
211	Hiring of consultants for developing simple management plans for 22 CFs	26400	26400		
212	Materialize boundaries of 22 CFs (landmarking and marking of boundaries with plantations)	21000	0	21000	
213	Edit and disseminate validated SMPs	4400	0	4400	
214	Enrichment planting in CFs	20000	10000	10000	
216	Reforestation work in adjacent land	30000	15000	15000	
221	Hiring of a socio-economics consultant for natural resource valorization	6 000	6 000		
<b>29</b>	<b>Total component</b>	<b>107 800</b>	<b>57 400</b>	<b>50 400</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>Duty travel</b>				
311	6 IEC missions (5 days x 4 participants)	9600	4 800	4800	
312	<b>Fuel for duty travel (missions)</b>	600	300	300	
342	Duty travel for project inception workshop	800	800		



Component	Description	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
332	Duty travel for project completion workshop	800			800
<b>39</b>	<b>Total component</b>	<b>11800</b>	<b>5900</b>	<b>5100</b>	<b>800</b>
<b>40</b>	<b>Capital items</b>				
441	1 All-terrain vehicle	40000	40000		
442	2 All-terrain motorbikes	4000	4000		
444	5 Laptops	5000	5000		
446	1 Photocopy machine	1500	1500		
<b>49</b>	<b>Total component</b>	<b>50 500</b>	<b>50 500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>50</b>	<b>Consumables items</b>				
541	Vehicle insurance	900	300	300	300
542	Vehicle servicing and maintenance	2500	500	1000	1000
542	Fuel and lubricants	9000	3 000	3000	3000
543	Networks and utilities	7200	2 400	2400	2400
544	Office supplies	4 500	1 500	1500	1500
<b>59</b>	<b>Total component</b>	<b>24100</b>	<b>7700</b>	<b>8200</b>	<b>8200</b>
<b>60</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>				
611	Validation workshops for 22 CF-SMPs ( <b>11</b> workshops x 2 days x 25 participants)	22 000	22000		
612	Rental of room	2 200	2200		
621	Validation of study on valorization of socio-economic opportunities in CFs and adjacent land	2400	2400		
622	Technical training for IGA groups (1 IGA per CF)	4400	0	4400	
623	Financial support to groups for IGA launch	11 000	0	11000	
624	Establish green credit lines for financial support to CF management and selected activities	10 000		10000	
631	Meetings for establishing Local Community Forest Management Committees	2200	2200		
632	Meetings for establishing Municipal Committees responsible for the Coordination and Monitoring of Community Forest Integration	2 000		1000	1000
642	6 project steering committee meetings	3 000	1000	1000	1000
643	Project audits x 3	6000	2000	2000	2000
644	Organization of project inception workshop (1 day x 40 participants)	3200	3200		
645	Rental of room for project inception workshop	200	200		
646	Organization of project completion workshop (1 day x 40 participants)	3200			3200
647	Rental of room for project completion workshop	200			200
<b>69</b>	<b>Total component</b>	<b>72000</b>	<b>35200</b>	<b>29400</b>	<b>7400</b>
<b>70</b>	National / EA management costs				
<b>79</b>	<b>Total component</b>				

Component	Description	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<b>80</b>	<b>Project monitoring and administration</b>				
<b>81</b>	ITTO monitoring and review	30 000			
<b>83</b>	Ex-post evaluation	15 000			
<b>84</b>	Subtotal 10-83 above items	<b>404 800</b>			
<b>85</b>	ITTO program support (12% on 10-83 above items)	<b>48576</b>			
<b>89</b>	<b>Total component</b>	<b>93 576</b>			
<b><u>100</u></b>	<b><u>GRAND TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>453 376</u></b>			

### 3.4.4. Yearly budget contribution by component – Executing Agency

Component	Description	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<b>10</b>	<b>Personnel</b>				
11.1	1 Project coordinator	43 200	14 400	14 400	14 400
11.5	1 Driver	9 000	3 000	3 000	3 000
<b>19</b>	<b>Total component</b>	<b>52 200</b>	<b>17 400</b>	<b>17 400</b>	<b>17 400</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Subcontracting</b>				
216	Planting in CF-adjacent land				
<b>29</b>	<b>Total component</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>40</b>	<b>Capital items</b>				
444	Printers	1 200	1200		
447	Video-projector	1 200	1 200		
<b>49</b>	<b>Total component</b>	<b>2 400</b>	<b>2 400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>60</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>				
633	Public consultation	4 400		4400	
634	Procedure costs for CF integration	4 400		4400	
641	Office rental and utilities	28 800	9600	9600	9600
<b>69</b>	<b>Total component</b>	<b>37 600</b>	<b>9 600</b>	<b>18 400</b>	<b>9 600</b>
<b>70</b>	<b>National /EA project management costs</b>				
	Project management costs	<b>9 776</b>	<b>9 776</b>		
	<b>Total component</b>	<b>9 776</b>	<b>9 776</b>		
<b>100</b>	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>101 976</b>	<b>39 176</b>	<b>35 800</b>	<b>27 000</b>

### 3.5. Assumptions, risks and sustainability

#### 3.5.1. Assumptions and risks

The main assumptions for project success are as follows:

*Sustainable management of wetland ecosystems remains a national priority:* One of the reasons that motivates stakeholders at both national and local level is the growing awareness of the roles and functions of wetland ecosystems in improving people's living conditions, in particular in rural areas. Based on this, Benin took commitments, including at international level, by joining the RAMSAR Convention. Authorities wish to prevent Ramsar sites to become overly degraded. **The project aims to reverse the degradation process and will contribute to increasing stakeholder involvement at various levels for the conservation of these areas of global significance.**

The project aims to reverse the process of degradation of the Sitatunga Valley and will contribute to an increased mobilization of stakeholders at various levels for the conservation of these areas of global significance.

Climate change does not unduly affect the Sitatunga Valley ecosystems to the point of hindering project objectives achievement. **Where necessary, adaptation measures will be implemented using resilient species.**

Livelihoods dependent on forest resources are competitive: the spatio-temporal dynamics shows the importance of land use, change in land use and allocation and forestry. Promoting both IGAs and economic reforestation would generate complementary income from forest resources. Pilot experiences in the sustainable use of forest resources are attracting the attention of the Government of Benin's agencies and of communities. Local participation remains strong and current market conditions are favourable.

The sustainable management of community forests remain a priority for grassroots stakeholders. Local communities show interest in the project, which will secure their (*sic*)

#### Risks

Potential risks identified for this project are as follows:

Policy guidelines may change and the support of decision makers for the conservation of sacred forests decline. In view of the national and international context where climate change-related issue is a particular focus of attention both by Benin and the international community, this risk is almost zero.

The cultural and religious interests and perceptions of community forests and their uses may sometimes diverge and could prevent the development of partnerships and make collaboration between key stakeholders in CF management difficult. However, this risk will be reduced by awareness-raising and outreach activities. Whenever required, it should be made clear to communities the aim is not expropriation, but to provide support for the sustainable management of sacred forests in the current situation. Continuing IEC actions will completely eliminate this risk.

**The project was developed based on a participatory approach. In theory, all stakeholders support the project. However, any opposition from stakeholders during project implementation will be addressed through awareness-raising and capacity building, while taking into account their interests and developing alternative approaches.**

*Climate hazards observed lately and climate change could affect ecosystems*

Climate hazards observed lately and climate change could affect ecosystems, the flow rate of water streams and the health of forests in the project area, which could have negative impacts on the management efforts undertaken. This risk can be reduced by taking appropriate adaptation measures to mitigate the adverse effects of the most immediate climate changes, and the use of resistant and resilient species.

### 3.5.2. Sustainability

This project will address a long expressed need expressed by a number of local stakeholders and will make it possible to restore the forest estate of local communities and to establish protected areas in the municipalities. Project sustainability will depend on its ownership by all stakeholders at the technical, institutional and political, financial and economic levels, as follows:

- In terms of institutional and political sustainability, the involvement of the General Directorate of Forests and Natural Resources and of the Benin Environment Agency at all stages of project development and implementation will serve as a strong sign that will ensure the institutional and political sustainability of project activities. In addition, the various commitments made by the municipalities through the letters of endorsement attached in Annex demonstrate project appropriation by the municipal authorities and is an indication of project sustainability at the institutional level. At project completion, the municipal authorities will take over the actions initiated through the Municipal Committees for the Coordination and Monitoring of Community Forest Integration which will be established. At the local level, the establishment and strengthening of Local Committees for Community Forest Management will ensure project outcomes sustainability. Integrating the CFs into the Municipality Protected Area System will institutionalize and sustain community forest protection and conservation.
- In terms of financial sustainability, the letters of financial commitment from the Municipalities to contribute to the funding of project activities is a strong sign that financial support to project outcomes sustainability will be continued by the municipalities which are institutions with an autonomous budget, provides outcomes are satisfactory. At project completion, the various Committees set up will require funds to cover meetings and other operating costs. The principle of financing these recurrent costs at project completion has been acknowledged by the municipalities. At the local committee level, it is proposed that part of revenues from green credits and economic reforestation be retained to cover operating costs at project completion. **Green credits will not be managed by the project implementation agency, but by a microfinance institution. The US\$ 10,000 amount will serve as collateral for loans from the microfinance institution. At project completion, activities will be continued.**
- At the socio-economic level, the development of sustainable alternative income-generating activities will ensure project outcomes sustainability through the self-financing mechanism. Poverty alleviation will reduce the pressures on forest patches in a sustainable way through the development of income-generating activities.

## **4. PART 4: IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

### **4.1. Organizational structure and stakeholders involvement mechanism**

#### **4.1.1. Executing agency and partners**

CREDI-NGO will serve as the project Executing Agency and includes a multidisciplinary team. The project will be implemented by a steering unit composed of the CREDI-NGO Executive Director who will also serve as the project coordinator; a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer; a secretary/accountant and two facilitators (see project Organizational Chart in Annex 1). The project steering unit will be responsible for implementing the various project activities.

The Executing Agency (CREDI-NGO) will work together with the Collaborating Agencies, namely the General Directorate for Water, Forests and Hunting (DGEFC) and the CENAGREF, which will be required to make respective contributions for appropriate project implementation. All other stakeholders identified during project development will also be involved in project implementation.

#### **4.1.2. Project management team**

In addition to members of the Steering Committee, the project management team will be composed of the Coordinator, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, the Facilitators, the Accountant/Secretary and the official driver. In addition to this full-time project staff, consultants and other service providers will also be involved.

The executing agency profile and Organizational Chart are contained in Annex 2.

The tasks and duties of key des experts provided by the executing agency are detailed in Annex 4.

The terms of reference of personnel and consultants funded by the ITTO are included in Annex 5.

#### **4.1.3. Project Steering Committee**

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be established in accordance with the *ITTO Manual for Project Formulation*. As part of its duties, the Steering Committee shall oversee project implementation, approve expenditures, ensure compliance of project work with the procedures in force, review the activities that have been carried out, and consider and propose changes in budgets and activities. The Project Steering Committee shall monitor the overall strategic management of the project and ensure that it proceeds in a timely, efficient and effective manner in accordance with its logical framework matrix, and other aspects of the project document.

The PSC will comprise 11 members, as follows:

- One (representative of the Embassy of the country/ies funding the project;
- One ITTO representative;
- One representative of DGEFC who is the ITTO Focal Point in the Governmental administration;
- One CENAGREF representative;
- Three representatives of municipalities representing the municipalities concerned;
- The CREDI-NGO Executive Director; and
- Three representatives of CF dignitaries.

The PSC will convene at least twice a year.

#### **4.1.4. Stakeholders involvement mechanism**

The stakeholder participation mechanism will operate at three levels:

- At the central level, through the strong involvement of the Project Steering Committee in the implementation and monitoring of activities at field level. As described above, the Project Steering Committee includes some key actors likely to take action at the political, legal and policy level. Their participation in the project will be an asset.
- At the decentralized level, through the participation of Municipal Committees for the Coordination and Monitoring of Community Forest Integration into the Municipality Protected Area System; and
- At the local level through the Local Community Forest Management Committees (CLFSs) established for each forest to ensure the monitoring and continuation of project activities after project completion.

At these different levels, the Committees could also play a role of mediation in resolving problems that may arise during project implementation.

## **4.2. Reporting, review and monitoring & evaluation**

The Executing Agency will submit reports to the ITTO with a frequency that is suitable for projects with a three years' duration. Monitoring and evaluation missions will be conducted by ITTO appointed officers at such intervals as it deems appropriate.

The project will be monitored and evaluated by ITTO representatives in accordance with the usual procedures of the Organization as described in the *ITTO Manual for Project Monitoring, Review, Reporting and Evaluation*.

### **4.2.1 Project progress report**

A project inception report and the first Annual Operation Plan (AOP) will be submitted for the transfer of the first ITTO funding installment needed to start the project. Semestrial progress reports will be periodically submitted to ITTO. The annual financial audit report will also be prepared and submitted each year for the entire project duration.

### **4.2.2 Project completion report**

At project completion, the Coordinator will prepare the project completion report for submission to the ITTO within three months following project completion together with the audit report in compliance with ITTO standards and requirements. The completion report will summarize all project activities, achievements and outcomes, project learning, objective achievement levels, implemented structures and systems, etc. The completion report will serve as the final description of project activities implemented during project duration. It will also formulate recommendations for the sustainability and replication of project activities.

### **4.2.3 Project technical reports**

The Executing Agency will make available to the ITTO and other interested structures all technical reports and studies reports to be prepared by consultants during project implementation.

## **4.3. Project learning dissemination and mainstreaming**

### **4.3.1. Project learning dissemination**

The project inception and concluding workshops to be held and highly publicized will be an effective way to disseminate relevant information on the project nationally and internationally, and its contribution to the conservation of nature and rural poverty alleviation through improving the standard of living of local populations.

Locally, community or local radio stations will be used intensively for Information, Education and raising public awareness during project year one and year two. During year three, the radio programs will focus on the dissemination of outcomes and lessons learned from the project.

At the national and international levels, the project team will make use of the opportunities provided by the publication of project results during the workshops, seminars and conferences to which the project will participate. Presentations on project outcomes and results will be made in the form of oral communications, published papers and posters.

ITTO will disseminate project results through technical reports, progress reports and the completion report. Reports of workshops to be held for stakeholder awareness raising and training will also be disseminated. Furthermore, the websites of the ITTO, the BCH, the Satoyama Initiative, the RAMSAR Convention, etc., will also be used to disseminate relevant results

### **4.3.2. Project learning mainstreaming**

The main project innovations are twofold: the development of a sustainable management model combining traditional management practices and the modern management of sacred forests based on the development of local human resources; and the integration of SFs into the Municipality Protected Area System. Moreover, the establishment of green credit lines to support local communities in reforestation activities represents an innovation in the conservation of natural forests. The potential for success of such models is very high considering the enthusiastic support received from dignitaries and the official commitments from municipal authorities. However, there are challenges to be met.

Project outcomes will be disseminated within and beyond the project area through the above mentioned dissemination channels. The project will identify, analyse and share the lessons learned that could be beneficial for the development and implementation of similar future projects in municipalities or areas not covered by this project. In addition, experience-sharing visits will be organized towards the end of the project for local stakeholders to foster the development of initiatives for other specific ecosystems such as mangroves and gallery forests. This could also facilitate the renewal of commitments by municipal authorities in support of project objectives.

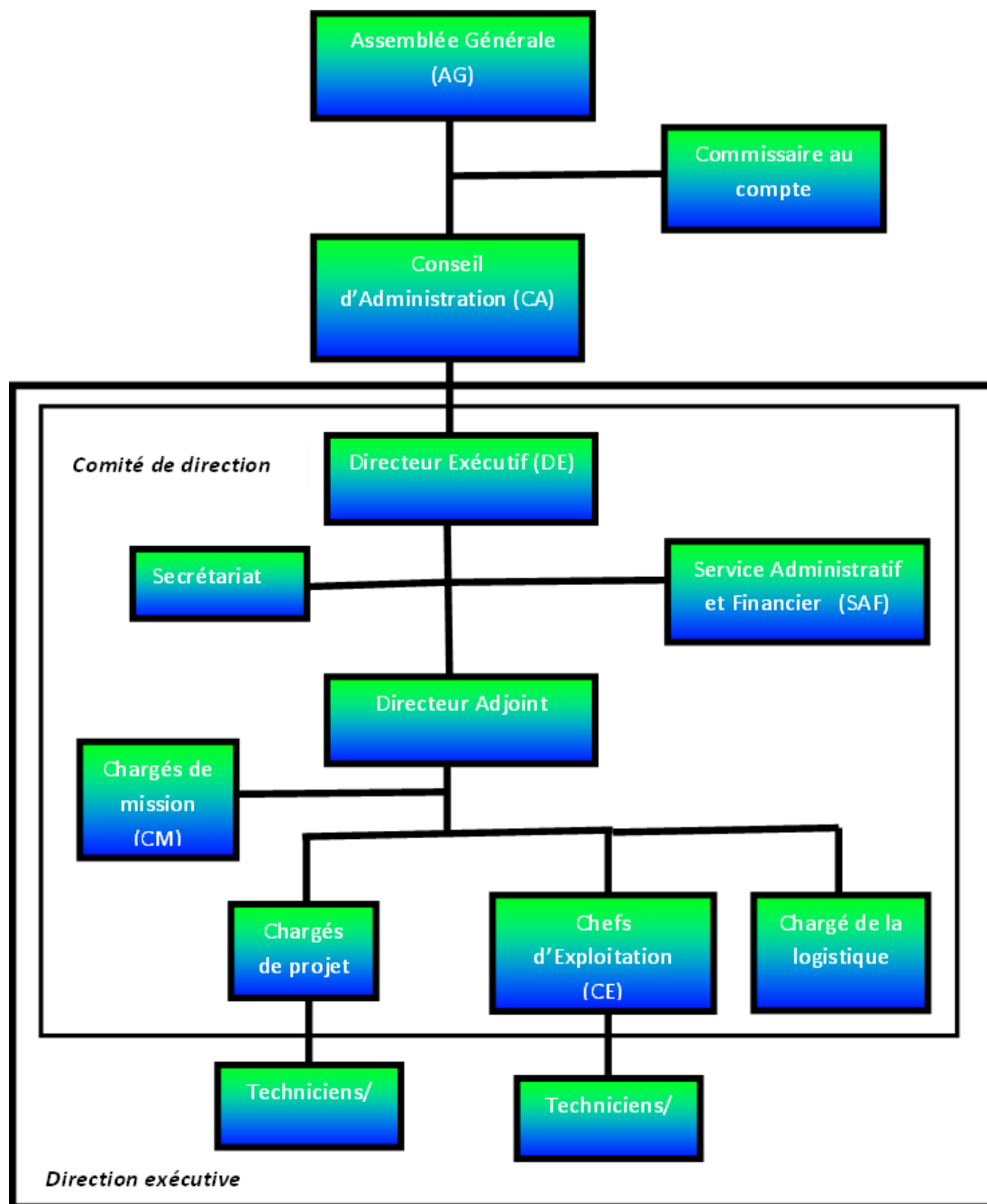
## **ANNEXES**

### **Annex 1: Profile of the Executing Agency (CREDI-NGO)**

The Regional Research and Education Center for Integrated Development (CREDI-NGO) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization governed by the 1901 Law governing non-profit organizations. Registered under number N°2005/0558/ DEP-ATL-LITT/SG/SAG-ASSOC of September 28, 2005, CREDI-NGO operates in three fields: the promotion of sustainable farming, education for global citizenship and environmental protection. The organization focuses most of its actions on the sustainable management of wetlands. As part of the promotion of aquaculture, CREDI-NGO established and operates since March 2006 an aquaculture farm in Zinvié-Kpotomey, which serves as a training, demonstration and experimentation tool to develop technologies for dissemination. CREDI-NGO is part of the local community and enjoys a special status. As a promoter of the "Sitatunga Valley" initiative, CREDI-NGO worked with the support of communities to obtain initial official recognition of the reserve establishment by the municipal authorities of Abomey-Calavi in 2010. In 2015 the initiative was ratified by the municipality of Sô-Ava and by the municipality of Zè in 2018. CREDI-NGO demonstrated it had the skills to serve as facilitator and manager for implementing community management in the reserve, filling an essential role.



## CREDI-NGO Organizational chart



Office address: Abomey-Calavi, Kpota, RNIE2, Maison TANKAYA Bernard, Immeuble Banque Atlantique

City and ZIP code: Abomey-Calavi, BP 471, Abomey-Calavi

Country: Benin

E-mail: [crediongbenin@gmail.com](mailto:crediongbenin@gmail.com) ou [makko25jn@gmail.com](mailto:makko25jn@gmail.com) ou [crediong@credi-ong.org](mailto:crediong@credi-ong.org)

Telephone (office): (+229) 62 39 67 67

Telephone (cell phone): (+229) 96 16 83 10

Website: [www.credi-ong.org](http://www.credi-ong.org)

Projects implemented by CREDI-NGO over the past three years are included in the table below:

Project title	Technical and financial partners	CREDI-NGO contribution (in US\$)	Partner contribution (in US\$)	Total budget (in US\$)
Project "Saving the ZINKAKA in the Sitatunga Valley"	Equestrio Foundation	0	12 856	12 856
Women's resilience to climate change in the Sitatunga Valley (FRéCC-VS)	Support Fund for Innovating Projects by civil society and Stakeholder Coalitions (PISCCA), French Embassy in Benin	9 335	17 863	27 356
Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Change in the Sitatunga Valley	Audemars Piguet Foundation	32 182	344 847	379 086
Ex situ conservation in the Sitatunga Valley and institutional support to fund raising	Programme des petites initiatives (PPI) du Comité Français de l'UICN	966	36 381	37 347
Support project for ex situ conservation and natural translocation of dwarf crocodile ( <i>Osteolaemus tetraspis</i> ) (VU) and Western Africa crocodile ( <i>Crocodylus suchus</i> ) in the Sitatunga Valley	IUCN-PACO	14216	48088	62305
Project for promoting the groundnut oil industry, Agonlin	French Committee for International Solidarity (CFSI)	11 675	66 156	77 830
Strengthening governance for ecotourism attractiveness in the Sitatunga Valley Community Natural Park	IUCN/PACO/BIOPAMA	26 746	100 615	127 361
Conservation of red-bellied monkeys in the Sitatunga Valley Community Natural Park	Mohamed Bin Zayed Foundation	0	6 111	6 111

#### CREDI-NGO budget (CFA francs)

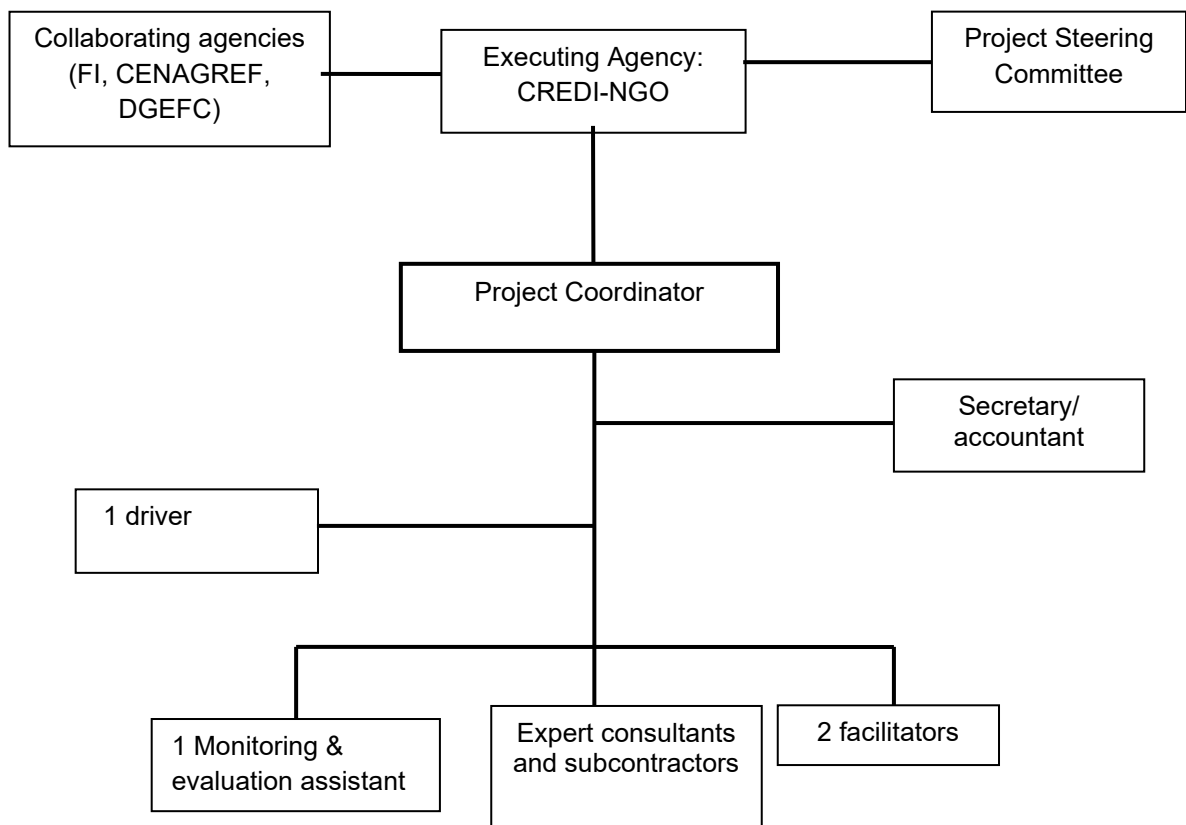
Budget	Year		
	2021	2022	2023
Investment	21 183 124	39 645 498	81 180 644
Personnel	29 160 902	25 503 583	30 365 852
Subcontracting	25 939 341	14 668 418	23 390 543
Duty Travel	418 350	5 306 300	3 579 450
Missions	524 550	3 239 435	4 514 200
Consumables	21 850 048	20 779 779	25 701 820
<b>Total</b>	<b>99 076 315</b>	<b>109 143 013</b>	<b>168 732 509</b>

#### CREDI-NGO budget in US\$

Budget	Year		
	2 021	2 022	2 023
Investment	33 517	62 728	128 446
Personnel	46 139	40 352	48 046
Subcontracting	41 042	23 209	37 009

Duty travel	662	8 396	5 664
Mission	830	5 126	7 142
Consumables	34 572	32 878	40 666
<b>Total</b>	<b>156 761</b>	<b>172 689</b>	<b>266 973</b>

**Project organizational chart**



## Annex 2. CV of personnel provided by the Executing Agency

CV of Project Coordinator

### NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS

**Martial K. KOUDERIN**

*Agronomist engineer, expert in natural resource development and management*

**Tel:** +229 95 96 34 33 / 96 16 83 10 [makko25in@gmail.com](mailto:makko25in@gmail.com)

### PERSONAL DETAILS

- Date of birth: 25-06-1980
- Nationality: Benin
- Marital status: Married, two children
- Driving licence (B)
- Leisure: soccer, travelling, swimming

### FOCUS FIELDS

- Community-based sustainable management of natural resources
- Sustainable agriculture
- Aquaculture and fisheries
- Global citizenship education

### TRAINING/DIPLOMAS

- 2005 – 2007, Master degree in natural resource development and management, Abomey-Calavi University, BENIN. MAJOR: *Ecological characterization of the Zinvié marsh forest for the sustainable management of natural resources*. Mention: **Very good; under the supervision of Prof. Brice SINSIN**
- 1999 – 2004, Agronomist engineer diploma, Faculty of Agronomics / Benin National University, MAJOR: *Ecology of the Iguidi-river and potential in aquarium fishes, South-East Benin*. Mention: **Good; under the supervision of Prof. Philippe LALEYE**

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **November 2020-October 2021:** Project Coordinator, Project “Strengthening governance for ecotourism attractiveness in the Sitatunga Valley Community National Park; Funding: BIOPAMA Program Action fund, IUCN, funded by the European Union.
- **September 2017-December 2020:** Coordinator for Project “Governance and community management of natural resources in South-Benin; Co-funding: IUCN-Netherlands and FFEM.
- **January 2014-December 2018:** Coordinator for Project “Community management of natural resources and rural development in the Sitatunga Valley (GECODER-Phases I et II)”; Funding: Pain pour le Monde (PPLM)
- **May 2012-June 2015:** Coordinator for Project “Shared resources and shared solutions in the Sitatunga Valley”; Funding: Community of the Netherlands, International Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN-NL).
- **September 2011-December 2013:** Coordinator for Project “Community management of natural resources and rural development in the Sitatunga Valley” (GECODER-Pilot Phase); Funding: French Fund for World Environment (FFEM) and German Department of Evangelic Churches for Development (EED).
- **January 2010-September 2011:** Coordinator for Project “Valorization of Cultural Idiosyncrasies in connection with Natural Environment (PCREN) in the Sitatunga Valley”; **Funding:** Social Fund for Development; French Embassy in Benin and Cooperation Service for Development (SCD), France.

### OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES AND MISCELLANEOUS

- **2007-Present:** Executive Director of CREDI-NGO
  - General Secretary of Benin Farm Fishing Interbranch Organization (IPEB)
  - General Secretary of Benin Federation of Producer Trade Unions (FUPRO-Benin)
  - Fully proficient in French and English
  - Good computer skills and ability to use presentation and video editing software



Martial K. KOUDERIN

## **CV of Officer responsible for project monitoring and evaluation**

**Name: Ms Dossoumou C. Eliane**

**Date of birth: 1970/10/08, Pira**

- Vocational education :

Year	Institution/University	Fields of competence	Diploma
2006-2007	University Institute of Benin (Cotonou)	Economics, Planning	Master in Project Management
2005-2006	University Institute of Benin (Cotonou)	Communication, sociology	Master in Communication
2004-2005	University of Abomey-Calavi (Bénin)	Sociology	Elementary University Diploma
1992-1996	Médji Agriculture High School, Sekou (Benin)	Agriculture, Extension, Plant Protection, Plant Production	Diploma in Tropical Agriculture (DEAT)

- Technical training

Year	Name and location	Diploma	Observation
2010	Project Identification Technique, Cotonou	Certificate	Climate Change
2009	Result-based management, (GAR) Cotonou	Attestation	
2006	Development of annual work plan, Cotonou	Certificate	
2005	Decentralisation and local development	Certificate	
2004	Lobbying and advocacy techniques	Attestation	

- Professional experience

2016-2019: In charge of monitoring and evaluation, CeSaReN NGO, Project PD 754 (F) **Restoration and Sustainable Management of Sacred Forests in RAMSAR sites 1017 and 1018 in Benin.**

- Assist Coordinator with project management tasks,
- Develop project detailed plan
- Carry out monitoring and evaluation of project implementation
- Develop terms of reference and monitor procurement
- Supervise conduct of studies
- Responsible for communication and outreach targeting stakeholders
- Produce final project technical report, including summary of studies, and project proposal as annexes.

2007-2006: Project Assistant, Office for Development Projects and Social Work-NGO

Tasks:

- Institutional and organisational support for associations, long-term sustainability of outcomes in associations and organisations
- Facilitation of multi-stakeholder platforms at municipal and departmental level for the benefit of associations and municipal authorities in Mono
- Support for the use of the EPRACCC tool: Participatory Assessment of Risks in connection with Disasters and Climate Change
- Organization and facilitation of training workshops on psychosocial care for vulnerable people
- Organization and facilitation of training workshops for dissemination, information and awareness-raising
- Organization of recovery sessions for malnourished children
- Managing a listening, counselling and guidance centre
- Support for the development of income-generating activities

Signature

DOSSOUMOU Eliane

### Annex 3. Terms of reference of key personnel and consultants funded by the ITTO

Experts or key personnel	Experience	Tasks and responsibilities
<u>Project Assistant responsible for monitoring and evaluation</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>At least 5 years' experience in monitoring and evaluating projects funded by TFPs;</u></li> <li>• <u>Development of at least 3 projects in forestry or local development;</u></li> <li>• <u>Experience of working in a bilingual environment (French and English)</u></li> <li>• <u>Experience with the ITTO POLMS (Project Online Monitoring System) online project monitoring platform would be an asset</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Assist Coordinator in project management tasks</u></li> <li>• <u>Develop the detailed project work plan</u></li> <li>• <u>Conduct project monitoring &amp; evaluation and implementation</u></li> <li>• <u>Draft terms of reference and supervise procurement</u></li> <li>• <u>Monitor the implementation of studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Take charge of stakeholder outreach and awareness-raising work</u></li> <li>• <u>Produce the final project technical report, including annex containing the summary of conducted studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Update project-related information in ITTO POLMS (Project Online Monitoring System)</u></li> </ul>
<u>Secretary-accountant</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>At least 5 years' experience as Secretary-accountant for FTP-funded projects,</u></li> <li>• <u>Three years' experience in project-related bookkeeping and financial operations;</u></li> <li>• <u>Experience in bilingual working environment (French/English)</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Assist Coordinator with secretariat duties</u></li> <li>• <u>Typing, editing, filing and storage of project documents</u></li> <li>• <u>Field telephone calls for the Coordinator</u></li> <li>• <u>Manage Coordinator work schedule</u></li> <li>• <u>Edit reports on meetings chaired by the project Coordinator</u></li> <li>• <u>Design recording media for project accounting and financial operations;</u></li> <li>• <u>Record all project accounting transactions</u></li> <li>• <u>Prepare the cash flow plan</u></li> <li>• <u>Prepare all documents required for project accounts auditing</u></li> </ul>
<u>National consultants responsible for developing simplified management plans</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Forest Engineer with 5 years' college training and a minimum of 10 years' experience. Proven record of experience in developing development and management plans for forests and/or forest plantations.</u></li> <li>• <u>Strong document drafting and communication skills,</u></li> <li>• <u>Good command of participatory approach</u></li> <li>• <u>Good knowledge of Benin forestry-related law and regulations</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Prepare a summary report on the situation of selected 22 CFs</u></li> <li>- <u>Propose a zoning plan for CFs, including CF-adjacent land if possible</u></li> <li>- <u>Develop CF simplified management plans based on a participatory approach</u></li> <li>- <u>Develop management plans for each respective CF</u></li> <li>- <u>Develop monitoring and evaluation plans for each respective CF</u></li> <li>- <u>Organize consultation workshops to validate the proposed zoning plan for forest plantations,</u></li> <li>- <u>Organize workshops to validate the simplified management plans, including management and monitoring plans, and to incorporate therein any improvement put forward by workshop participants</u></li> </ul>
<u>National consultant responsible for materializing the boundaries of (Demarcation and delimitation plantings)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>NGOs, consultant firm with at least 3 years' experience in demarcation and delimitation in rural areas, and in carrying out related work with the participation of grassroots populations.</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Identify the boundaries of selected CFs</u></li> <li>- <u>Demarcate CFs together with local stakeholders</u></li> <li>- <u>Materialize the boundaries using concrete and trees based on a participatory approach</u></li> <li>- <u>Produce detailed map of each CF according to agreed format and scale</u></li> </ul>

Experts or key personnel	Experience	Tasks and responsibilities
<u>Forestry consultants in CF enrichment planting and rural land reforestation activities</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>NGOs, Consultants' firm, or Cooperatives having at least three years of experience in participatory reforestation work, community plantations and/or forest enrichment planting.</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Identify CF enrichment planting methods jointly with grassroots communities</u></li> <li>- <u>Identify and analyse with local communities the tree species to be used for CF enrichment planting and rural land reforestation</u></li> <li>- <u>Organize grassroots communities for participatory reforestation activities, community plantation establishment and/or forest enrichment planting</u></li> <li>- <u>Monitor reforestation and enrichment planting activities</u></li> <li>- <u>Support project beneficiaries in plantation establishment and management activities</u></li> <li>- <u>Identify appropriate plantation management procedures</u></li> <li>- <u>Facilitate availability of community land for reforestation activities</u></li> </ul>
<u>National consultant in socioeconomics for natural resource development</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Agrieconomics/socioeconomics engineer with 5 years' college training and a minimum of 10 years' experience. Proven record of experience in developing agrieconomics/socioeconomics studies. Good knowledge of microcredits for IGAs promotion</u></li> <li>• <u>Good knowledge of organizing methods in rural areas</u></li> <li>• <u>Strong document drafting and communication skills</u></li> <li>• <u>Good command of participatory approach</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Select potential IGAs to be supported technically and financially at the level of the populations in order to reduce pressure on resources forestry, on the basis of well-defined criteria, including those of the participatory approach and economic and financial cost-efficiency and environmental sustainability</u></li> <li>- <u>Assess the level of community organization around each type of IGA selected</u></li> <li>- <u>Identify and assess capacity building needs for the promotion of selected IGAs</u></li> <li>- <u>Propose an operating account for each type of selected IGA</u></li> <li>- <u>Present study findings during a validation workshop and integrate improvements made by participants</u></li> </ul>



## Annex 4. ITTO Environmental and Social Screening Checklist Questionnaire

Project document number (included in project document): PD 930 (F) Rev.1

Evaluator: LOKOSSOU Achille Orphée

Date: 15/12/2024

This environmental and social (ES) checklist questionnaire is for use by project proponents in conducting initial ES screening of the potential risks/impacts of a project proposal based on available data and information <sup>1</sup> . For each question, please provide one of the following answers: yes, no, unknown or not applicable (n/a). Based on the completed checklist, please rate potential project risks/impacts as category A (high risk), category B (moderate risk) or category C (low/no risk).	
PART I—PRINCIPLES  Questions 1–11 – Do project activities/interventions have the potential to—	Answer (yes, no, unknown or N/A)
<b>Principle 1: Environmental sustainability</b>	
1. Adversely affect the essential functions of forest ecosystems, for example by reducing carbon sequestration, increasing disaster risk or impairing forest health, water quality or air quality?	No
2. Adversely affect (directly or indirectly) nationally or internationally threatened or endangered species (listed or proposed for listing) or their habitats?	No
Brief justification of answers to questions 1 and 2.  <i>The project will have a positive impact on the essential functions of forest ecosystems and will conserve species that are threatened or endangered at the national or international level.</i>	
<b>Principle 2: social sustainability</b>	
3. Adversely affect the livelihoods, subsistence or well-being of communities of people, including marginalized or vulnerable individuals or groups or people living in poverty?	No
4. Adversely affect forest-based socioeconomic benefits and opportunities, working conditions or cultural heritage?	No
Brief justification of answers to questions 3 and 4.  <i>This project will contribute to poverty reduction by improving the livelihoods of local communities.</i>	
<b>Principle 3: gender equality and empowering women</b>	
5. Adversely affect gender equality or the situation of women and girls?	No
6. Discriminate against women based on gender or make it difficult for women to participate in, influence and benefit from project design and implementation?	No
Brief justification of answers to questions 5 and 6.  <i>This project proposal will reduce gender inequalities and promote women's empowerment. Women's groups participated in the design of the project.</i>	
<b>Principle 4: Good governance</b>	
7. Provide less than meaningful stakeholder participation during any part of the project process or demonstrate a lack of transparency, accountability or inclusive decision-making?	No
8. Foster a non-cross-sectoral approach to issue identification and resolution?	No

9. Fail to follow the rule of law?	No
<p>Brief justification of answers to questions 7 to 9.</p> <p><i>The project provided for the creation of local committees at the community forest level and the participation of local stakeholders in the Project Steering Committee, which is the project's decision-making body.</i></p>	
<b>Principle 5: Security of tenure to forest land and access to forest resources</b>	
10. Trigger land conflicts or worsen unresolved issues concerning legal or customary rights to forest land or access to forest resources?	No
11. Negatively affect indigenous peoples in terms of their rights, lands, resources or traditional livelihoods, or encroach on territories customarily used or occupied by indigenous peoples?	No
<p>Brief justification of answers to questions 10 and 11.</p> <p><i>This project will secure land rights for indigenous peoples.</i></p>	
<b>PART 2: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL STANDARD</b>	<b>Answer</b> (yes, no, unknown or N/A)
Questions 1 to 30 – If implemented, is the project likely to—	
<b>ESS 1: Stakeholder analysis</b>	
1. Ensure that stakeholders will be engaged in all stages of the project cycle, including implementation, monitoring and evaluation?	Yes
2. Improve existing forest-related land-tenure arrangements?	Yes
<b>ESS 2: Gender analysis</b>	
3. Provide equitable opportunities for men and women in stakeholder consultations and decision-making during project formulation, implementation and evaluation?	Yes
4. Generate gender co-benefits in project interventions?	Yes
5. Include the collection of quantitative or qualitative sex-disaggregated data?	Yes
<b>ESS 3: Conservation of biodiversity and protection of ecosystem services</b>	
6. Reflect an integrated conservation and development approach in defining project interventions to manage impacts?	Yes
7. Adhere to the ITTO/IUCN Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Tropical Timber Production Forests?	Yes
8. Comply with relevant national/subnational/local environmental laws and regulation	Yes
9. Comply with your country's international obligations (e.g. as a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance)?	Yes
10. Exacerbate human–wildlife conflicts or bushmeat issues?	No
11. Degrade primary forests, critical habitats or environmentally sensitive or high-conservation-value areas, or pose risks to endangered or threatened species?	No
12. Increase forest vulnerability to diseases, pests, invasive alien species or wildfire?	No
13. Increase the risk of disasters (e.g. floods, landslides)?	No

<b>ESS 4: Forest-based climate-change mitigation (including carbon storage in wood products) and adaptation</b>	
14. Maintain or increase/enhance forest area and/or carbon stocks?	Yes
15. Increase the risk of wildfire?	No
16. Maintain or increase the resilience and adaptive capacity of forest ecosystems and local communities to natural disasters and the impacts of climate change?	Yes
17. Comply with your country's relevant international obligations as a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on climate change and contribute to its forest-related nationally determined contributions?	Yes
<b>ESS 5: Sustainable management of natural tropical forests</b>	
18. Benefit local communities?	Yes
19. Adhere to the ITTO Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests?	Yes
20. Apply reduced impact logging techniques?	Yes
21. Comply with applicable national/subnational/local SFM performance standards and safety standards for forest workers (e.g. loggers and equipment operators)?	Yes
22. Comply with your country's relevant international obligations (e.g. as a member of the International Labour Organization)?	Yes
<b>ESS 6: Restoration and rehabilitation of degraded forest landscapes</b>	
23. Adhere to the ITTO Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics?	Yes
24. Adhere to the ITTO Guidelines for the Establishment and Sustainable Management of Planted Tropical Forests?	Yes
25. Select tree species for planting in close consultation with local stakeholders, taking into account the ecological, social, cultural and economic values of the species?	Yes
<b>ESS 7: Forest product production and processing (wood and non-wood)</b>	
26. Create local employment, business or market opportunities?	N/A
27. Promote the efficient and innovative production and processing of forest products?	N/A
28. Comply with national/subnational/local air- and water-quality standards and labour standards for production workers (e.g. regarding health and safety, child labour and sexual harassment)?	
29. Comply with your country's relevant international obligations (e.g. as a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, or as a member of the International Labour Organization)?	Yes
30. Reduce waste and/or increase recycling?	N/A



**République du Bénin**  
**COMMUNAUTE DES COMMUNES DE LA VALLEE DU SITATUNGA**

Abomey-Calavi, le 13 décembre 2021

Réf. 1/1312/ST/Pdt

**LE PRESIDENT**

A

Monsieur le Directeur Exécutif de  
l'Organisation Internationale des Bois  
Tropicaux (OIBT)  
**YOKOHAMA (JAPON)**

**Objet :** Endossement et accord de principe de contribution pour la mise en œuvre du projet intitulé « Restauration Ecologique et Gestion Durable du Parc Naturel Communautaire de la Vallée du Sitatunga au Bénin »

Monsieur le Directeur Exécutif,

La Vallée du Sitatunga est un Parc Naturel Communautaire d'une grande importance pour les Communes d'Abomey-Calavi, de Zè et de So-Ava qui ont créé avec l'appui de CREDI-ONG une intercommunalité au sud du Bénin. Des efforts sont engagés pour aménager et gérer de façon durable cette Réserve Naturelle Communautaire. A cet effet, un Plan d'Aménagement et de Gestion du Parc Naturel Communautaire de la Vallée du Sitatunga a été élaboré et validé par toutes parties prenantes.

Dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de ce Plan, le Centre Régional de Recherche et d'Education pour un Développement Intégré (CREDI-ONG) en qualité de structure technique pour la Communauté des Communes de la Vallée du Sitatunga (CCVS) a élaboré avec la participation de tous les acteurs un projet intitulé « **Restauration Ecologique et Gestion Durable du Parc Naturel Communautaire de la Vallée du Sitatunga au Bénin** ».

La Communauté des Communes de la Vallée du Sitatunga par la présente, endosse ledit projet et donne son accord de principe pour une participation active et une contribution en nature à sa mise en œuvre.

Par conséquent, nous recommandons vivement que le présent projet soit financé par votre Organisation.

Je vous prie de recevoir Monsieur le Directeur Exécutif mes salutations distinguées.

Le Président



**Evariste Angelo AHOUANJINOU**  
Maire de la commune d'Abomey-Calavi

## Annex 6. Project assessment by the Fifty-seventh Expert Panel

PD 930/22 (F)

### Ecosystem Restoration and Sustainable Forest Management of the Sitatunga Valley Community Natural Park, Benin

#### Assessment by the Fifty-seventh Panel

##### A) Overall Assessment

The Panel took note on the importance of this project which could contribute to the sustainable management of the Sitatunga Valley in Southern Benin, by specifically ensuring the restoration of forest landscapes in the Sitatunga Valley through stakeholder capacity for improving people's living conditions.

The Panel noted that the project proposal was well formulated but there was still a need for improvement in the following sections and sub-sections: (1) present situation of the future project sites not described as required in the structure of project brief included in the ITTO manual for project formulation; (2) the project sites are not clearly indicated on the map for the forest landscape rehabilitation activities; (3) insufficient information on Sitatunga Valley National Park Committee (PNCVS), from which the project originates, as well its current development status; (4) insufficient information provided on social, cultural, economic and environment aspects; (5) lack of information on the institutions involved in forest resource management which were identified in relation to the institutional arrangements and organization issues regarding the project implementation; (6) stakeholders were well identified but not categorized in pros and cons regarding the project implementation; (7) Problem analysis weakly performed with the direct and indirect causes not clearly described; (8) problem tree weakly developed; (9) logical framework weakly defined at all levels; (10) impact indicators not realistically defined for the development objective; (11) outcome indicators defined only in relation to 22 community forests (CFs) for the specific objective; (12) there is a need to have consistency between the project outputs defined in Sub-section 3.1.1 and the objective tree and logical framework matrix; (13) there is a need to have consistency between the project activities defined in Sub-section 3.1.2 and the objective tree; (14) implementation approaches and methods described using incorrect outputs and activities; (15) work plan developed with incorrect activities; (16) master budget table developed using incorrect project activities and subsequently impacting the tables of budget by component (consolidated, ITTO and Executing Agency); (17) Section 3.5 weakly developed regarding the assumptions and risks, and sustainability; (18) terms of reference for consultants and sub-contractors to be paid under the ITTO budget item 20 (subcontracting) are missing as annexes; (19) the ESIA screening check list questionnaire is missing as annex.

##### B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following:

1. Improve the project brief, following the format recommended in the ITTO manual for project formulation, by further describing the current situation.
2. Improve the main map by clearly indicating the project sites to be subject to forest landscape rehabilitation activities.
3. Improve the project origin by providing more information on PNCVS and its current development status.
4. Improve the section dealing with the social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects of the project target area by taking into account the ITTO policy guidelines on gender equality and empowering women (GEEW) and the guidelines for environmental and social risk impact assessment (ESIA).
5. Further elaborate the institutional set-up and organizational issues in compliance with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation, by providing more information on main institutions to be involved in the project implementation.
6. Identify opposing and supporting stakeholders and describe how to manage opposing ones.
7. Re-do the problem analysis while making sure to identify the relevant and logical direct and indirect causes of the key problem.
8. Develop a problem tree based on new problem analysis and associated objective tree.
9. Redefine the logical framework matrix with elements the new objective tree, while making sure to comply with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation.
10. Subsequent to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> specific recommendations, here above, redefine the development objective with its associated impacts indicators, as well as the specific objective with its outcome indicators.
11. Properly redefine the project outputs in consistency with the new objective and the redefined logical framework matrix.

12. Redefine the project activities in consistency with the objective tree.
13. Improve the project implementation approaches and methods in correlation with the redefined work plan, while making sure to comply with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation.
14. Improve the work plan in correlation with the revised objective tree and the redefined project activities associated with each project output.
15. Revise the section dealing with the key assumptions and potential risks in consistency with the logical framework matrix while developing relevant risk mitigating measures.
16. Improve the section dealing with the project sustainability in compliance with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation.
17. Add the terms of reference (TOR) for consultants and subcontracts to be paid under the ITTO budget item 20 (subcontracting), as annexes, in compliance with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation (1-page maximum for each TOR following the structure proposed in annex 3, on page 68, in French version).
18. Add the ESIA screening check list, as annex, for the assessment of environmental and social aspects linked to the project implementation.
19. Amend the ITTO budget in line with the above overall assessment considering to reduce the overall budget **and** specific recommendations, and also in the following way:
  - a) Revise the master budget table (by activity) in correlation with the improved work plan and its associated activities, as required in the ITTO manual for project formulation,
  - b) Readjust the budget by component for ITTO and for the Executing Agency in correlation with the revised master budget,
  - c) Adjust the budget item 81 to the standard rate of US\$10,000.00 per year for the monitoring and review costs (US\$30,000 for 3 years) and the budget item 82 to the standard rate of US\$15,000 for ex-post evaluation costs,
  - d) Recalculate the ITTO Programme Support Costs (sub-item 83) so as to conform with standard rate of **12%** of the total ITTO project costs (on budget items 10 to 82); and
20. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 57<sup>th</sup> Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (**bold and underline**) in the text.

C) Conclusion

Category 2: The Panel concluded that the project proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised project proposal before it can commend it to the Committee for final appraisal.

## Annex 7. Project assessment by the Fifty-seventh Expert Panel and resulting amendments

<u>Assessment by the Fifty-seventh Panel</u>	Amendments in project document
A) Overall Assessment	
<p>The Panel took note on the importance of this project which could contribute to the sustainable management of the Sitatunga Valley in Southern Benin, by specifically ensuring the restoration of forest landscapes in the Sitatunga Valley through stakeholder capacity for improving people's living conditions.</p> <p>The Panel noted that the project proposal was well formulated but there was still a need for improvement in the following sections and sub-sections: (1) present situation of the future project sites not described as required in the structure of project brief included in the ITTO manual for project formulation; (2) the project sites are not clearly indicated on the map for the forest landscape rehabilitation activities; (3) insufficient information on Sitatunga Valley National Park Committee (PNCVS), from which the project originates, as well its current development status; (4) insufficient information provided on social, cultural, economic and environment aspects; (5) lack of information on the institutions involved in forest resource management which were identified in relation to the institutional arrangements and organization issues regarding the project implementation; (6) stakeholders were well identified but not categorized in pros and cons regarding the project implementation; (7) Problem analysis weakly performed with the direct and indirect causes not clearly described; (8) problem tree weakly developed; (9) logical framework weakly defined at all levels; (10) impact indicators not realistically defined for the development objective; (11) outcome indicators defined only in relation to 22 community forests (CFs) for the specific objective; (12) there is a need to have consistency between the project outputs defined in Sub-section 3.1.1 and the objective tree and logical framework matrix; (13) there is a need to have consistency between the project activities defined in Sub-section 3.1.2 and the objective tree; (14) implementation approaches and methods described using incorrect outputs and activities; (15) work plan developed with incorrect activities; (16) master budget table developed using incorrect project activities and subsequently impacting the tables of budget by component (consolidated, ITTO and Executing Agency); (17) Section 3.5 weakly developed regarding the assumptions and risks, and sustainability; (18) terms of reference for consultants and sub-contractors to be paid under the ITTO budget item 20 (subcontracting) are missing as annexes; (19) the ESIA screening check list questionnaire is missing as annex.</p>	<p>The required amendments were reflected in the project document (all amendments in bold and underlined in relevant pages).</p>
B) <u>Specific Recommendations</u>	
<p>1. Improve the project brief, following the format recommended in the ITTO manual for project formulation, by further describing the current situation.</p>	<p>The project brief was improved following the format recommended in the <i>ITTO manual for project formulation</i>. See pages 1-3</p>
<p>2. Improve the main map by clearly indicating the project sites to be subject to forest landscape rehabilitation activities.</p>	<p>The map was improved and an additional aerial photo of a part of project sites was added (see pages 11-13).</p>

3.	Improve the project origin by providing more information on PNCVS and its current development status.	The project origin was Improved in the Project brief (Page 1) and under Project Origin (see pages 5-6).
4.	Improve the section dealing with the social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects of the project target area by taking into account the ITTO policy guidelines on gender equality and empowering women (GEEW) and the guidelines for environmental and social risk impact assessment (ESIA).	The section dealing with the social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects was improved (See pages 8-9).
5.	Further elaborate the institutional set-up and organizational issues in compliance with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation, by providing more information on main institutions to be involved in the project implementation.	The institutional set-up and organizational issues were improved (See page 15).
6.	Identify opposing and supporting stakeholders and describe how to manage opposing ones.	The project was developed based on a participatory approach. Theoretically all stakeholders support the project. However, during project implementation, any opposing stakeholder will be managed through awareness-raising and capacity building while taking into account their interests and developing alternative approaches (See page 16).
7.	Re-do the problem analysis while making sure to identify the relevant and logical direct and indirect causes of the key problem.	The problem analysis was re-done (See pages 19-20).
8.	Develop a problem tree based on new problem analysis and associated objective tree.	The problem tree was redrafted (See page 20).
9.	Redefine the logical framework matrix with elements the new objective tree, while making sure to comply with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation.	The logical framework matrix was redefined (See pages 22-23).
10.	Subsequent to the 7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> specific recommendations, here above, redefine the development objective with its associated impacts indicators, as well as the specific objective with its outcome indicators.	The development objective and the specific objective indicators were redefined (See pages 23-25).
11.	Properly redefine the project outputs in consistency with the new objective and the redefined logical framework matrix.	The logical framework matrix was redefined (See pages 22-23).
12.	Redefine the project activities in consistency with the objective tree.	The project activities were redefined and made consistent with the new objective tree (See page 24).
13.	Improve the project implementation approaches and methods in correlation with the redefined work plan, while making sure to comply with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation.	The project implementation approaches and methods were improved (See pages 26-28).
14.	Improve the work plan in correlation with the revised objective tree and the redefined project activities associated with each project output.	The work plan was improved (See page 27).
15.	Revise the section dealing with the key assumptions and potential risks in consistency with the logical framework matrix while developing relevant risk mitigating measures.	The section dealing with the key assumptions and potential risks was revised (See page 40).



16. Improve the section dealing with the project sustainability in compliance with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation.	The section dealing with project sustainability was improved (See page 41).
17. Add the terms of reference (TOR) for consultants and subcontracts to be paid under the ITTO budget item 20 (subcontracting), as annexes, in compliance with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation (1-page maximum for each TOR following the structure proposed in annex 3, on page 68, in French version).	The terms of reference (ToR) for consultants and subcontracting to be funded under the ITTO budget were added (See pages 50-51).
18. Add the ESIA screening check list, as annex, for the assessment of environmental and social aspects linked to the project implementation.	The ESIA screening checklist was added (See pages 52-54).
19. Amend the ITTO budget in line with the above overall assessment considering to reduce the overall budget <b><u>and</u></b> specific recommendations, and also in the following way: a) Revise the master budget table (by activity) in correlation with the improved work plan and its associated activities, as required in the ITTO manual for project formulation, b) Readjust the budget by component for ITTO and for the Executing Agency in correlation with the revised master budget, c) Adjust the budget item 81 to the standard rate of US\$10,000.00 per year for the monitoring and review costs (US\$30,000 for 3 years) and the budget item 82 to the standard rate of US\$15,000 for ex-post evaluation costs, d) Recalculate the ITTO Programme Support Costs (sub-item 83) so as to conform with standard rate of <b>12%</b> of the total ITTO project costs (on budget items 10 to 82); and	The ITTO budget was amended (See pages 31-39).
20. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 57 <sup>th</sup> Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted ( <b><u>bold and underline</u></b> ) in the text.	Annex 7 was included (See pages 58-60).

## Annex 8. Project assessment by the Sixtieth Expert Panel and resulting amendments

Assessment by the Sixtieth Expert Panel	Amendments in project document and relevant pages
<p>A) Overall Assessment</p> <p>The Panel recognize the importance of this project which could contribute to the sustainable management of the Sitatunga Valley in Southern Benin, by specifically ensuring the restoration of forest landscapes in the Sitatunga Valley through stakeholder capacity for improving people's living conditions. It was also recognized that efforts had been made to address most of the comments in the overall assessment, as well as most of the specific recommendations made by the Fifty-seventh Expert Panel.</p> <p>However, the Panel noted that the new Figure 2 "Map of the project area" does not show the project target intervention sites in relation to the 22 community forests (CF) which should be depicted in it. There is a need to clearly explain how the project activities should be planned for implementation in the CFs, as well as in the adjacent lands as appropriate. If it is just the surface area of CFs to be considered as the project intervention target zones, it is relatively small and the very ambitious impact indicators of the development objective and specific objective will not be realized with such size of the project intervention target zones ("degradation process affecting the Sitatunga Valley ecosystems in south Benin is reduced by at least 30%"; "income of people highly dependent on forest resources has been raised by at least 20%."). While the project target zones for enrichment planting (100 ha) and reforestation (100 ha) activities are clearly indicated, there is no explanation on how the estimation of 344 ha was made for landmarking and demarcating boundaries of plantations.</p> <p>For the Panel, the sustainability of established plantations and enriched CFs is questionable because the project will mobilize subcontractors, so that it could make it difficult to ensure ownership by local communities, which is an important prerequisite for the sustainability of project main achievements. There is no explanation on how, after the project completion, the established plantations and enriched CF-based plantations will be maintained by relevant CF stakeholders because it is well known that planting trees are not enough as in many seedlings do not survive. There is a need to describe in detailed way the target population, including an estimate of the number of beneficiaries, by category or social group (defined with quantitative and qualitative data). The target population could, for example, be broken down into groups such as men, women, youth, forest-dependent families, poor households, and elites.</p> <p>The Panel noted that the description of Activity 2.3 ("establish green credit loans for financial support to Cf management and selected activities") is not consistent with description in Sub-section 3.1.1 (Outputs) and Section 3.3 (Work plan). This has been added since the last review of the project proposal without clear technical explanation provided in section 3.2 (Implementation approach and methods) on how to administer the budgeted amount of USD10,000 (conditions for lending the money after project completion) while not providing evidence any experience of the project executing agency and collaborating agency regarding the management of green credit loans. It is important to note the main challenge in relation to the project duration of three years making it difficult to have financial returns with some income generating revenue activities (pig, rabbit, snail and cane rat farming and economic reforestation activities, including service wood and firewood from plantations) to pay back green credit loans.</p> <p>The Panel also noted that Local Community Forest Management Committees (CLGFC) at the local level and the Municipal Committees for the Coordination and Monitoring of Community Forest Integration (CCSIF) at the municipality level have been added. This could be a very valuable new component as local governance is key to the smooth project implementation, but there is a need to specifically describe their role and</p>	<p>The required changes have been made in the project document (all parts highlighted in red and bold and underlined in relevant pages. The new Figure 2 "Map of the project area" shows the project target intervention areas in relation to the 22 community forests (CFs).</p>

competences, as well as operational working systems. Activity 3.2 is planned in the second and third years, but in the master budget table (table 3.4.1) there is an amount of USD1,500 budgeted for the first year. Activity 3.4 is missing in the master budget table (table 3.4.1) but it is planned in Section 3.3 (Work plan) while no explanation is provided on how some CFs could be in correlation with the Benin Protected Areas System.	
<b>B) Specific Recommendations</b>	
1. Further improve the Figure 2 regarding the map of PNCVS showing the project area, by clearly indicating the project sites to be subject to forest landscape rehabilitation activities (22 Community Forests and adjacent lands).	The Figure 2 was improved by indicating the project areas where forest landscape rehabilitation activities will be implemented. (See page 12)
2. Further improve the section dealing with the social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects of the project target area by taking into account the ITTO policy guidelines on gender equality and empowering women (GEEW) and for the environmental and social management guidelines (ESM), mainly in relation to the above overall assessment.	This section was improved by taking into account the <i>ITTO Policy Guidelines on Gender Equality and Empowering Women (GEEW)</i> and the <i>ITTO Environmental and Social Management Guidelines (ESM)</i> . (See page 8)
3. Furthermore elaborate the institutional set-up and organizational issues in compliance with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation, by providing more information on main institutions to be involved in the project implementation, by including the Local Community Forest Management Committees (CLGFC) and the Municipal Committees for the Coordination and Monitoring of Community Forest Integration (CCSIF) in relation to the above overall assessment.	The institutional set-up and organizational issues were further elaborated in compliance with the requirements of the <i>ITTO Manual for Project Formulation</i> . (See pages 15-16)
4. Further improve the project implementation approaches and methods in correlation with the improved Logical Framework Matrix and in relation to the above overall assessment.	The project implementation approaches and methods were improved. (See pages 25-26)
5. Further improve the section dealing with the project sustainability by considering the green credit loans and in relation to the above overall assessment, as appropriate.	The section dealing with the project sustainability was improved. (See page 42)
6. Amend the ITTO budget in line with the above overall assessment <b>and</b> specific recommendations, and also in the following way: a) Further revise the master budget schedule table (by activity) in correlation with the work plan and its associated activities, in relation to the above overall assessment, b) Readjust the budget by component for ITTO and for the Executing Agency in correlation with the further revised master budget, c) Recalculate the ITTO Programme Support Costs (sub-item 83) so as to conform with standard rate of <b>12%</b> of the total ITTO project costs (on budget items 10 to 82); and	The ITTO budget was amended. (See pages 29 to 39)
7. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the combined 60 <sup>th</sup> and 61 <sup>st</sup> Expert Panels and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted ( <b><u>bold and underline</u></b> ) in the text.	
<b>C) Conclusion</b>	
<p><u>Category 1:</u> The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.</p> <p><u>Category C</u> on the Environmental and Social Management Guidelines (ESM) checklist</p>	