



1. Project Data

Project ID
P113167

Project Name
Regional REDD Congo Basin

Country
Africa

Practice Area(Lead)
Environment & Natural Resources

L/C/TF Number(s)
TF-10038

Closing Date (Original)
31-Aug-2016

Total Project Cost (USD)
13,000,000.00

Bank Approval Date
14-Jul-2011

Closing Date (Actual)
31-Jul-2018

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	13,000,000.00	13,000,000.00
Revised Commitment	13,000,000.00	13,000,000.00
Actual	13,000,000.00	13,000,000.00

Prepared by
Ebru Karamete

Reviewed by
Vibecke Dixon

ICR Review Coordinator
Christopher David Nelson

Group
IEGSD (Unit 4)

2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The formulations of the project development objectives were identical in the Project Appraisal Document (page 6) and in the Global Environment Facility Grant Agreement (page 9), which were: **“to strengthen the capacities of the Congo Basin countries on REDD+ issues and on forest carbon stock measurements, in particular”**.



For this ICR Review, IEG has parsed the PDO into two objectives: (i) to strengthen the capacities of the Congo Basin countries on REDD+ issues; and (ii) to strengthen the capacities of the Congo Basin countries on forest carbon stock measurements.

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

No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

The project had four components:

1. Improving knowledge and coordination on REDD+ in the Congo Basin (Appraisal Estimate: US\$4.7 million, Actual: US\$4.7 million).

The Component aimed to support, improve and accelerate the regional knowledge and coordination on REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), as well as conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks) by: (i) strengthening the regional dialogue on REDD+ across the Congo Basin countries (Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Cameroon and Gabon) with a specific focus on learning and knowledge exchange between the political and technical levels; (ii) promoting inclusive participation and representation of stakeholder groups in policy and strategy discussions at the regional level; and (iii) responding to incremental capacity building needs to maintain regional cohesion.

2. Building technical capacities for measurement and monitoring of carbon stocks in the Congo Basin Forests (Appraisal Estimate: US\$4.0 million, Actual: US\$4.5 million).

The Component aimed to carry out: (i) the setup of a scientific partnership for forest carbon measurement and monitoring; and (ii) the elaboration of specific allometric equations for the Congo Basin forests to enable countries to accurately report changes in forest carbon stock for a future results-based financial incentive system for REDD+. Other aspects of the Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) system was planned to be supported by other partners (e.g. Congo Basin Forest Partnership-CBFF and French development Agency- AFD) in collaboration with this project.

3. Mainstreaming REDD+ Concept into sustainable forest management projects (Appraisal Estimate: US\$3.0 million, Actual: US\$2.5 million).

The Component aimed to support REDD+ project developers to enhance their capacity, through exchanges of information as well as preparation of methodologies and technical guidelines for REDD+ project preparation and implementation.



4. Project Management (Appraisal Estimate: US\$1.3 million, Actual: US\$1.3 million).

The Component would support overall project management including monitoring and evaluation, fiduciary aspects and auditing.

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

Project Cost: Total project cost at appraisal was estimated at US\$16.0 million, actual costs were US\$13.0 million (81 percent).

Financing. According to the PAD (p. 7), the project was planned to be financed by a GEF grant with the amount of US\$13 million, with the International Development Association (IDA) acting as the implementing agency for the GEF. At project closing, 100 percent of the GEF grant was disbursed.

Borrower Contribution. The Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) and the Congo Basin countries would provide in-kind contributions of in-kind staff time and office operational costs estimated at \$3.0 million. It had not been possible at project closure to estimate the real value of the Borrower's contribution as the COMIFAC Executive Secretariat had three full time institutional members and about 10 technical experts one of which was mandated to oversee the technical aspects of project. As reported by the project team (meeting with IEG on March 18, 2019), there was no time reporting system for their staff, nor a financial management accounting system to track how much this work represented, it was not possible to quantify precisely the value of this in-kind contribution. The project team reported that from a technical and operational point of view, the contribution (in time and administrative resource) that was expected from COMIFAC Executive Secretariat was delivered.

Dates: The project was approved on July 14th, 2011 and effective three months later, on Nov 30th, 2011. The original closing date was August 31st, 2016. This date was extended for 23 months through restructurings in April 2016 and March 2018 to make up for the time lost during the start-up phase of the project and the longer than expected time needed to launch the field activities under component 2 in six countries. The actual closing date became July 31st, 2018.

Restructuring: The project went through two Level II restructuring. The first restructuring in April 2016 revised some indicators and targets to reflect the project priorities and the closing date was extended for 19 months. The second restructuring in March 2018 extended the closing date for an additional four months until July 31, 2018, making it a total extension of 23 months. A reallocation of US\$0.5 million was also made from component 3 to component 2b (allometric equations) which was facing additional cost increases due to logistical challenges.



3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

The Project development objectives were **highly** relevant to the global environment, the World Bank, and to the Congo Basin country strategies in general. The Congo Basin forest is the world's second largest tropical forest with large amounts of carbon stored in its rich flora, encompassing the territories of Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of Congo. Under the climate change agreements, the Kyoto Protocol only rewarded reforestation (restocking of existing forests that have been depleted usually through deforestation) or afforestation (establishment of a new forest) activities; and thus, the Congo Basin countries, which had a low historic deforestation rate, could not benefit from a significant incentive for protecting their forests. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) launched negotiations to formally establish the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) mechanism to compensate countries in their efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation. The Congo Basin countries had to advocate in the subsequent negotiations to ensure that the REDD+ mechanism would be tailored to their situation. The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) spearheaded by the World Bank, would be the first step to pioneer how a REDD+ mechanism could work before the official UNFCCC system was operational. The idea for the Regional REDD+ Project came from a Global Environment Facility (GEF) sponsored meeting in February 2008 in Libreville, Gabon, where the six Congo Basin countries decided to propose a regional REDD+ project to the GEF to access specific climate change funding aimed at strengthening capacities in these countries to complement the activities that were supposed to take place under the backing of the FCPF. Five of the six countries (except for Equatorial Guinea) had indicated their interest to develop national REDD+ mechanisms to anticipate the future UNFCCC mechanism and to join the FCPF initiative.

The Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC) was established in 2005 as the regional body to guide, monitor and coordinate conservation and sustainable management of the Central African forest ecosystems. A Convergence Plan for the period 2005-2014 was adopted in February 2005 by the heads of state to provide a joint vision and implementation plan for sustainable forest management in the region. A second phase of the Convergence Plan was adopted in July 2014 to cover the years 2015-2025, with a stronger focus on REDD+.

The project development objectives were highly relevant to the World Bank regional and country strategies. The Regional Integration Assistance Strategy (RIAS) for Sub-Saharan Africa, aimed to strengthen collaboration across borders. In addition, forestry as a sector was mentioned in the Country Assistance Strategies (CAS) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) of five of the countries, except for Equatorial Guinea, which did not have a country strategy document. At appraisal REDD+ was specifically mentioned in the CAS/CPS of Cameroon (FY2010-2013), CAR (FY2009-2012) and DRC (2008-2011) as an important approach to explore to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources as well as the access to future carbon finance resources. At completion, REDD+ was mentioned in Cameroon (FY 2017-2021), DRC (FY 2013-2017), and ROC (FY 2013-2016) (ICR para 44-45).



Regarding GEF strategies, the project fell under the larger framework of the GEF Strategic Program for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in the Congo Basin during the GEF's 4th replenishment cycle.

The project was developed alongside parallel work supported by the FCPF, the Forest Investment Program (FIP), as well as the UN-REDD+ Program (a joint program of UNEP, UNDP, and FAO), and the Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF).

Rating
High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

Objective 1 **Objective**

To strengthen the capacities of the Congo Basin countries on REDD+ issues.

Rationale

Theory of Change (TOC)

The TOC developed by the ICR (pages 8-10) was clear in terms of the types of inputs/activities and their links to the outputs and the expected outcome. While the PDO was not clear in terms of what type of capacities were to be strengthened, this was however clarified via the selected PDO indicators. According to the TOC, the project aimed to improve capacities in the project countries to increase their influence in international climate negotiations as the REDD+ mechanism was being developed and the FCPF was taking its first steps and to lay some of the building blocks needed to create an enabling environment for the development of REDD+ activities particularly on forest carbon measurements and monitoring. Project activities were identified based on the needs that were identified during appraisal. Activities under Component 1, improving knowledge and coordination, and under Component 3, mainstreaming REDD+ concept in sustainable forest management projects, were mainly linked to the first objective. Particularly the project would train delegations and civil society from Congo Basin countries on international negotiations, would support REDD+ developers for advisory services through an incubator and define methodologies to promote REDD+ projects in the Congo basin. Assumptions were mainly regarding COMIFAC's ability to form strong collaboration between the countries and its convening power.

Outputs:

1.Improving Knowledge and Coordination on REDD+ in the Congo Basin



- 13 Climate Working Group (GTC), made up of climate focal points of the countries and the COMIFAC secretariat, meetings held, exceeding the target of 10 meetings.
- One South-South exchange held (against an original target of three and a revised target of two).
- 20 consultative meetings on REDD+ held, exceeding the target of 16 meetings.
- 1,780 direct project beneficiaries reached, exceeding the target of 1,000 people.
- 21% of beneficiaries were female, which was less than the target of 30 % female beneficiaries.

2. Mainstreaming REDD+ Concept in Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Projects

- Regional Environmental and Social Assessment (RESA) was prepared to identify themes for technical guidelines (this was reported as an output but was not included as part of the result framework)
- Incubator for REDD+ established and functioning (no target provided).

Outcomes:

1. The PDO indicator “Coordinated submissions on a future REDD+ mechanism to the international UNFCCC negotiations”, was achieved (11 submissions against an original target of 4 and a revised target of 8). The indicator measured position papers prepared jointly by the six participating Congo Basin countries and submitted to the various UNFCCC meetings. The Bank team received these submissions and verified them. The project achieved this through supporting the governments with the UNFCCC negotiations in Paris (COP21) and the REDD+ agenda, including by financing the finalization of various studies and key REDD+ documents (Readiness Preparation Proposals (RPPs), Emission Reduction-ER Program Documents). The project helped the countries to understand the legal implications of the Paris Agreement and prepare their technical and legal framework for the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Specifically, COMIFAC helped CAR to get "Readiness" resources from the Green Climate Fund (GCF), which is a concrete result of project support; the project also supported civil society organizations to submit GCF proposals.

GTC is the main driving force for the political agenda on REDD+. However, the GTC was constrained by limited facilitation support and by inadequate technical input. The project helped to build this capacity.

2. The PDO indicator, “Technical guidelines on prioritized REDD+ issues developed and approved by the Project Steering Committee”, was not achieved. This indicator was dropped because the countries had already progressed beyond the stage where guidelines would have been useful.

3. The PDO indicator “Percentage of beneficiaries satisfied with the REDD+ negotiations at the international level and by the knowledge sharing provided in the regional studies”, was achieved as it met the target of 80 percent satisfaction by beneficiaries. This new PDO indicator was introduced at the 2016 restructuring, and was measured through a beneficiary survey conducted by an individual consultant interviewing 24 key beneficiaries, including the national climate change focal points and national REDD+ coordinators. A total of 19 beneficiaries were satisfied or very satisfied with the preparation sessions prior to the international events, the logistical support provided to the official delegation and civil society, as well as the increased participation to the REDD+ discussions that the project allowed. The project team reported that for the



beneficiaries that reported not being satisfied by the support, the main issue mentioned was the delays and the perception of slow implementation, as well as weak financial support, the complexity of the procedures (and the rejection of some proposed activities that would not be compliant or would be deemed as redundant with national level FCPF operations), and the late involvement of some Civil Society organizations.

Nevertheless, the project helped sub-regional civil society prepare a regional message for COP 21 and actively participated in the negotiations, as well as supported “Network for Indigenous People and Local Stakeholders for Sustainable Management of Forests in Central Africa” design and validate its 2017-2025 strategy. The REDD+ Incubator provided support to project developers in getting ready to launch REDD+ projects.

Rating

Substantial

Objective 2

Objective

To strengthen the capacities of the Congo Basin countries on forest carbon stock measurements.

Rationale

Activities under Component 2, building capacities for measurement and monitoring of carbon stocks were linked to the second objective. Specifically, these activities included setting up scientific partnership for forest carbon measurement and monitoring and elaborating allometric equations for tree species representative of forest types in the Congo Basin. These activities expected to result in an operational scientific platform; country teams trained and deployed on field work on measurement and monitoring of carbon stocks, and publicly available database and relevant scientific publications. All of these outcomes would lead to building capacities on measurement and monitoring of carbon stocks. The increased capacity on carbon was measured through achieving the identified milestones and resulting publications from field studies.

Outputs:

Building Technical Capacities for Measurement and Monitoring of Carbon Stocks in the Congo Basin Forests

- Scientific platform operational, as targeted.
- 65 people active on the platform, exceeding the target of 60 people.
- One scientific report on defined allometric equations published, 3 publications being worked on; this was less than the original and revised target of 8 scientific reports.
- 37 students participating in field work, exceeding the target of 30 students.
- All six countries have national teams trained and deployed on field work, as targeted.



Outcomes:

The PDO indicator: "Milestones for the elaboration of allometric equations specific to the Congo Basin", was achieved. The defined milestones were: (1) methodology defined; (2) national teams operational and field work initiated; (3) field work completed by national teams and (4) analysis completed, data available in publicly accessible database and scientific publication prepared for submission. The project supported a study in the six countries to produce new allometric equations for each of the countries and a sub-regional one for the Congo Basin. After some delays, work on the ground was conducted and completed in all six countries. The project produced high-fidelity datasets that will allow future REDD+ projects to use accurate data to capture the magnitude of emission reductions. Scientific papers are being prepared using the data gathered and the first published article appeared in the journal Forest Ecology and Management in July 2018. The equations constitute a regional public good which can be utilized in the future if any of the Congo Basin countries enters into carbon transactions under the mechanisms foreseen by the Paris Agreement or through the FCPF. In fact, DRC has now signed an Emission Reductions Payment Agreement (ERPA) with the FCPF and the RoC is planning to negotiate one shortly.

Rating

Substantial

Rationale

There is sufficient evidence that the Congo basin countries were able to engage effectively in REDD+ at the international level and influence the development of REDD+ rules. Most of the targets were achieved or exceeded, except for PDO indicator #2, which became redundant over the course of implementation.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

Economic Efficiency: Due to the technical assistance nature of the project, an economic analysis was not carried out, therefore it is difficult to quantify the efficiency of the project. As per the requirement for all the GEF projects, an incremental cost analysis was prepared. The GEF alternative provided financing for some key activities that were not covered by other donors. The ICR reported that (para 63), similar work on allometric equations was also conducted in the Amazon but detailed costs for those studies were not available for comparison purposes.



Administrative and Operational Efficiency: There were procurement delays in the beginning of the project due to lack of capacity regarding procurement to deal with large and complex contracts that was not handled adequately during preparation. This was resolved over time. However, the project completion date had to be extended twice for a total of 23 months mainly to complete the activities on allometric equations. Also, since it was decided to introduce country envelopes for country-specific purposes, this required an additional layer of financial and procurement capacity in-country, which proved to be cumbersome to manage. However, project management costs of 10% of the project amount were lower than for regional projects in general. The project also did not encounter cost over-runs.

Due to the lack of an economic analysis or cost efficiency analysis in addition to administrative inefficiencies at the beginning of the project, overall efficiency is rated **modest**.

Efficiency Rating

Modest

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

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

6. Outcome

The Project development objectives were highly relevant to the global environment, World Bank, and Congo Basin country strategies in general. Efficacy is rated substantial as both project development objectives were substantially achieved. Due to the lack of an economic analysis/cost efficiency analysis in addition to administrative inefficiencies of the project, overall efficiency is rated modest. These ratings result in a moderately satisfactory outcome rating.

a. Outcome Rating

Moderately Satisfactory



7. Risk to Development Outcome

Financial and Institutional Risks: There is some risk that development outcomes might not be sustained as the capacity building that the project started needs to be continued through continuing financial means. Capacities in the individual countries were increased through the project both at the governmental and civil society levels and most concretely by the preparation of the allometric equations. This allows them to engage in future REDD+ opportunities when they emerge. However, this capacity building needs further strengthening, as REDD+ was and still is an emerging concept in the Congo Basin countries. Gabon particularly needs more resources as it remained outside the project for most of the project lifetime. While the country eventually agreed to a partial Implementation Agreement, this did not allow the country to benefit from the country envelope under the project. Thus, COMIFAC is identifying other sources of funds to allow capacity building to continue for Gabon and for the other participating countries as well. Regarding the work on allometric equations, the data collected is planned to be further distilled into more publications, and again more funds are needed, and external funds are being sought for this purpose as well.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The project had the following strengths regarding quality at entry:

- The project was reinforced by the fact that all six Congo Basin countries had indicated their interest to develop national REDD+ programs and formal agreements (by at least three countries) was an effectiveness condition.
- Civil society was largely involved in preparation through various workshops.
- As part of the preparation work, a comprehensive assessment was also conducted on potential future trends of deforestation in the Congo Basin, which demonstrated the research gaps related to knowledge on carbon stocks in the Congo Basin forest ecosystems.
- Country specific envelopes were allocated to each of the national REDD+ coordination teams (\$350,000) to ensure that they received the needed technical support to fully engage and contribute to the regional processes. While this might have reduced power struggles among countries, it also brought other challenges, as the PMU was not responsible for the envelopes, but each envelope needed its own additional capacity in-country to effectually implement.

One weakness was related to M&E design, i.e. some project activities were not monitored via indicators, and concrete criteria to define capacity improvements under the project was not adequately defined.

Quality-at-Entry Rating
Satisfactory



b. Quality of supervision

There were four task team leaders (TTLs), but the ICR reported that this did not significantly affect continuity of leadership and decision making on the Bank side (ICR para. 111). The TTL supervising the second half of the project had been part of the preparation team, which prevented loss of institutional memory (ICR para. 89). The Bank undertook two supervision mission per year, and mission teams were in general adequately staffed. The Implementation Supervision Reports candidly disclosed issues that the project encountered needing client and management attention. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) was conducted with a delay in January 2015 due to the slow start of the activities.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The M&E design did not create strict criteria for how the increased capacity in REDD+ issues would be determined, but it included some proxy output level indicators to measure outcomes. For example, while the PDO indicator “Number of UNFCCC submissions” sounds like an output-oriented indicator, the submissions to the UNFCCC captured the importance and effect of background efforts required to prepare these submissions, and the increasing capacity and collaboration needed. A beneficiary survey also assessed the beneficiaries’ perception of the project’s support on improved capacity. The increased capacity on carbon was measured through achieving the identified milestones and resulting publications from field studies. Also, further indicators to capture the results of activities to regional civil society as well as the REDD+ incubator to develop projects could have been designed and monitored.

b. M&E Implementation

The quarterly, semi-annual and annual reports that were prepared by PMU were shared with the World Bank, COMIFAC, and focal points in the six countries. A project website was also created for the publication of all the documents of the project concerning the development of allometric equations. In addition, some reports were posted on COMIFAC’s website, but since this was done later and as not all reports were available, the project had poor visibility. Two reports were prepared at the end of the project, one report on achievements prepared in-house and one final evaluation prepared by an independent consultant.



c. M&E Utilization

The M&E reports were used by the Project Steering Committee (PSC), the World Bank team and PMU to monitor implementation progress. The M&E data were used to record the achievements, provide feedback on the operational issues and take timely actions on implementation and make revisions in project design.

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was classified as Category B (Partial Assessment) for the Safeguards Category, triggering OP/BP 4.01 (Environmental Assessment). As this is a regional technical assistance project, the Regional Environmental and Social Assessment (RESA) was identified as the appropriate safeguards instrument for the project. The RESA was prepared to guide the preparation of possible REDD+ projects, and it was presented locally via a workshop, but it was not officially disclosed via the World Bank (the ICR did not provide the reasons for that). Thus, the project has not fully complied with this requirement. The project team informed IEG (on March 18, 2019) that not disclosing the document was probably an oversight on the Bank side. However, it was also noted that the document was disclosed by the COMIFAC, put on the project website and shared broadly at the time it was approved via a workshop. The RESA was seen at that time an exercise of strategic brainstorming on the potential implications of REDD+ at Regional level. Thus, the most important part was the brainstorming process, not the final document, as those discussions influenced the Region, and contributed to REDD+ becoming part of the COMIFAC Regional second “Plan de convergence” that was designed in 2016. In addition, the REDD+ projects were independent from the project and were following the national safeguard systems designed by the FCPF, they were not concerned by the RESA.

While five of the Congo Basin countries are members of the FCPF and thus committed to conduct a SESA as part of their readiness process, the intent was for the RESA not to duplicate aspects that were anticipated to be covered by the national-level SESAs but rather focused on environmental and social issues of regional relevance. The ICR reported that no issues on safeguard mitigation was encountered on the ground (ICR para. 105). The ICR also did not report on whether RESA guided preparation of any REDD+ projects (in DRC and ROC).



b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial Management. The ICR reported that (para. 107) the FM performance of the project was mostly rated moderately satisfactory during the implementation period. Interim Financial Reports were submitted on time and were deemed acceptable. Audit and FM supervision recommendations were followed up appropriately despite not all of them being implemented in a timely manner. The 2017 external audit issued a qualified opinion pointing out the delay in the justification of the advances while the internal control revealed some issues pertaining to the lack of systematic annual asset inventories, the deficiencies in the supervision of the records and the lack of proper follow up and justification of mission advances.

Procurement. Procurement of equipment needed for the project was managed centrally from COMIFAC with equipment subsequently shipped to where it was needed, which caused considerable delays. Capacities with procurement were initially limited within the PMU but improved over time with Bank support. Procurement support training was given over several months in September 2013.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

No unintended impacts were reported by the ICR.

d. Other

11. Ratings

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

12. Lessons

The ICR provided some important lessons particularly for regional projects. The most relevant ones follow with some modification of language.

Addressing complex coordination needs between regional and national activities as well as among donors can lead to successful implementation of regional projects. The coordination between national



and regional activities remained a challenge. With four national level FCPF REDD+ readiness activities implemented at the same time as the project, extra work was needed to avoid duplication and ensure alignment with FCPF. In addition, it is critical for national projects to pay close attention to the regional context during their design, this can also be resolved through coordination. The support provided by Forest Carbon Partnership Facility to civil society and indigenous peoples reshuffled the distribution of power within the civil society organizations nationally. Meanwhile, leaders at the regional level were not involved nor in control of the events at the national level, which led to a disconnect between the national and the regional levels. This created issues with the legitimacy of the civil society groups working on climate change under the project. In addition, in order to avoid duplication of works and activities, communication was established between national FCPF projects and FAO, and no-objections were only provided by the World Bank after verification with these parties.

Including small budget envelopes for country-specific activities in regional projects can increase buy-in of countries. Although the amounts under the national envelopes was administratively cumbersome (created procurement challenges), these were very useful and flexible. These envelopes helped to have direct discussions with the national teams; therefore, to keep them engaged and involved with the project. Also, this led to the regional team better understand the challenges and be perceived as a service provider.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The report was comprehensive, followed the guidelines, and was focused on results. The project's theory of change was adequately presented and clear in terms of how the ratings had been reached. The ICR's lessons were useful. The only weakness was at times the ICR did not report on the underlying reasons for shortcomings in the project achievements. For example, the ICR did not report on why the Borrower in-kind contribution was not reported; or why the RESA was not published by the Bank and whether it was used to guide any REDD+ initiation.

a. Quality of ICR Rating Substantial